

ALSO BY ROBERT FITZGERALD

TRANSLATIONS

The Iliad

The Odyssey

Oedipus at Colonus

Chronique by St. John Perse

Birds by St. John Perse

(with Dudley Fitts)

Oedipus Rex

Antigone

Alcestis

POEMS

Poems 1935

A Wreath for the Sea

In the Rose of Time

Spring Shade

THE AENEID

THE
AENEID

VIRGIL

TRANSLATED BY
ROBERT FITZGERALD



RANDOM HOUSE
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For Penny

Aeternum dictis da diva leporem.

DE RERUM NATURA

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A FATEFUL HAVEN

|| sing of warfare and a man at war.
From the sea-coast of Troy in early days
He came to Italy by destiny,
To our Lavinian western shore,
A fugitive, this captain, buffeted
Cruelly on land as on the sea
By blows from powers of the air—behind them
Baleful Juno in her sleepless rage.
And cruel losses were his lot in war,
Till he could found a city and bring home
His gods to Latium, land of the Latin race,
The Alban lords, and the high walls of Rome.
Tell me the causes now, O Muse, how galled
In her divine pride, and how sore at heart
From her old wound, the queen of gods compelled him—
A man apart, devoted to his mission—
To undergo so many perilous days
And enter on so many trials. Can anger
Black as this prey on the minds of heaven?
Tyrian settlers in that ancient time
Held Carthage, on the far shore of the sea,
Set against Italy and Tiber's mouth,
A rich new town, warlike and trained for war.
And Juno, we are told, cared more for Carthage
Than for any walled city of the earth,
More than for Samos, even. There her armor

And chariot were kept, and, fate permitting,
 Carthage would be the ruler of the world.
 So she intended, and so nursed that power.
 But she had heard long since
 That generations born of Trojan blood
 Would one day overthrow her Tyrian walls,
 And from that blood a race would come in time
 With ample kingdoms, arrogant in war,
 For Libya's ruin: so the Parcae spun.
 In fear of this, and holding in memory
 The old war she had carried on at Troy
 For Argos' sake (the origins of that anger,
 That suffering, still rankled: deep within her,
 Hidden away, the judgment Paris gave,
 Snubbing her loveliness; the race she hated;
 The honors given ravished Ganymede),
 Saturnian Juno, burning for it all,
 Buffeted on the waste of sea those Trojans
 Left by the Greeks and pitiless Achilles,
 Keeping them far from Latium. For years
 They wandered as their destiny drove them on
 From one sea to the next: so hard and huge
 A task it was to found the Roman people.

They were all under sail in open water
 With Sicily just out of sight astern,
 Lighthearted as they plowed the whitecapped sea
 With stems of cutting bronze. But never free
 Of her eternal inward wound, the goddess
 Said to herself:

"Give up what I began?
 Am I defeated? Am I impotent
 To keep the king of Teucrians from Italy?
 The Fates forbid me, am I to suppose?
 Could Pallas then consume the Argive fleet

With fire, and drown the crews,
 Because of one man's one mad act—the crime
 Of Ajax, son of Oileus? She—yes, she!—
 Hurl'd out of cloudland lancing fire of Jove,
 Scattered the ships, roughed up the sea with gales,
 Then caught the man, bolt-struck, exhaling flames,
 In a whirlwind and impaled him on a rock.
 But I who walk as queen of all the gods,
 Sister and wife of Jove, I must contend
 For years against one people! Who adores
 The power of Juno after this, or lays
 An offering with prayer upon her altar?"

Smouldering, putting these questions to herself,
 The goddess made her way to stormcloud country,
 Acolia, the weather-breeding isle.
 Here in a vast cavern King Aeolus
 Rules the contending winds and moaning gales
 As warden of their prison. Round the walls
 They chafe and bluster underground. The din
 Makes a great mountain murmur overhead.
 High on a citadel enthroned,
 Scepter in hand, he mollifies their fury,
 Else they might flay the sea and sweep away
 Land masses and deep sky through empty air.
 In fear of this, Jupiter hid them away
 In caverns of black night. He set above them
 Granite of high mountains—and a king
 Empowered at command to rein them in
 Or let them go. To this king Juno now
 Made her petition:

"Aeolus, the father
 Of gods and men decreed and fixed your power
 To calm the waves or make them rise in wind.
 The race I hate is crossing the Tuscan sea,
 Transporting Ilium with her household gods—
 Beaten as they are—to Italy.

Put new fury
 Into your winds, and make the long ships founder!

Drive them off course! Throw bodies in the sea!
 I have fourteen exquisite nymphs, of whom
 The loveliest by far, Deïopĕa,
 Shall be your own. I'll join you two in marriage,
 So she will spend all future years with you,
 As you so well deserve,
 And make you father of her lovely children."

Said Aeolus:

"To settle on what you wish
 Is all you need to do, your majesty.
 I must perform it. You have given me
 What realm I have. By your good offices
 I rule with Jove's consent, and I recline
 Among the gods at feasts, for you appoint me
 Lord of wind and cloud."

Spearhaft reversed,
 He gave the hollow mountainside a stroke,
 And, where a portal opened, winds in ranks,
 As though drawn up for battle, hurtled through,
 To blow across the earth in hurricane.
 Over the sea, tossed up from the sea-floor,
 Eastwind and Southwind, then the wild Southwest
 With squall on squall came scudding down,
 Rolling high combers shoreward.

Now one heard
 The cries of men and screech of ropes in rigging
 Suddenly, as the stormcloud whipped away
 Clear sky and daylight from the Tcucrians' eyes,
 And gloom of night leaned on the open sea.
 It thundered from all quarters, as it lightened
 Flash on flash through heaven. Every sign
 Portended a quick death for mariners.
 Aeneas on the instant felt his knees
 Go numb and slack, and stretched both hands to heaven,
 Groaning out:

"Triply lucky, all you men
 To whom death came before your fathers' eyes
 Below the wall at Troy! Bravest Danaan,

Diomedes, why could I not go down
 When you had wounded me, and lose my life
 On Ilium's battlefield? Our Hector lies there,
 Torn by Achilles' weapon; there Sarpedon,
 Our giant fighter, lies; and there the river
 Simoïs washes down so many shields
 And helmets, with strong bodies taken under!"

As he flung out these words, a howling gust
 From due north took the sail aback and lifted
 Wavetops to heaven; oars were snapped in two;
 The prow sheered round and left them broadside on
 To breaking seas; over her flank and deck
 A mountain of grey water crashed in tons.
 Men hung on crests; to some a yawning trough
 Uncovered bottom, boiling waves and sand.
 The Southwind caught three ships and whirled them down
 On reefs, hidden midsea, called by Italians
 "The Altars"—razorbacks just under water.
 The Eastwind drove three others from deep water
 Into great shoals and banks, embedding them
 And ringing them with sand, a desperate sight.
 Before Aeneas' eyes a toppling billow
 Struck the Lycians' ship, Orontès' ship,
 Across the stern, pitching the steersman down
 And overboard. Three times the eddying sea
 Carried the ship around in the same place
 Until the rapid whirlpool gulped it down.
 A few men swimming surfaced in the welter.
 So did shields, planks, precious things of Troy.
 Ilioneus' good ship, brave Achatès' ship,
 The ship that carried Abas, and the one
 Aletès sailed in, hale in his great age,
 Were all undone by the wild gale: their seams
 Parted and let the enemy pour in.
 During all this, Neptune became aware
 Of hurly-burly and tempest overhead,
 Bringing commotion to the still sea-depth
 And rousing him. He lifted his calm brow

Above the surface, viewing the great sea,
 And saw Acneas' squadron far and wide
 Dispersed over the water, saw the Trojans
 Overwhelmed, the ruining clouds of heaven,
 And saw his angry sister's hand in all.
 He called to him Eastwind and South and said:

"Are you so sure your line is privileged?
 How could you dare to throw heaven and earth
 Into confusion, by no will of mine,
 And make such trouble? You will get from me—
 But first to calm the rough sea; after this,
 You'll pay a stricter penalty for your sins.
 Off with you! Give this message to your king:
 Power over the sea and the cruel trident
 Were never his by destiny, but mine.
 He owns the monstrous rocks, your home, Eastwind.
 Let Aeolus ruffle in that hall alone
 And lord it over winds shut in their prison."

Before the words were out, he quieted
 The surging water, drove the clouds away,
 And brought the sunlight back. Cymothoë
 And Triton, side by side, worked to dislodge
 The grounded ships; then Neptune with his trident
 Heaved them away, opened the miles of shoals,
 Tempered the sea, and in his car departed
 Gliding over the wave-tops on light wheels.

When rioting breaks out in a great city,
 And the rampaging rabble goes so far
 That stones fly, and incendiary brands—
 For anger can supply that kind of weapon—
 If it so happens they look round and see
 Some dedicated public man, a veteran
 Whose record gives him weight, they quiet down,
 Willing to stop and listen.
 Then he prevails in speech over their fury
 By his authority, and placates them.

Just so, the whole uproar of the great sea
 Fell silent, as the Father of it all,
 Scanning horizons under the open sky,
 Swung his team around and gave free rein
 In flight to his eager chariot.

Tired out,
 Aeneas' people made for the nearest land,
 Turning their prows toward Libya. There's a spot
 Where at the mouth of a long bay an island
 Makes a harbor, forming a breakwater
 Where every swell divides as it comes in
 And runs far into curving recesses.
 There are high cliffs on this side and on that,
 And twin peaks towering heavenward impend
 On reaches of still water. Over these,
 Against a forest backdrop shimmering,
 A dark and shaggy grove casts a deep shade,
 While in the cliffside opposite, below
 The overhanging peaks, there is a cave
 With fresh water and seats in the living rock,
 The home of nymphs. Here never an anchor chain,
 Never an anchor's biting fluke need hold
 A tired ship.

Aeneas put in here,
 With only seven ships from his full number,
 And longing for the firm earth underfoot
 The Trojans disembarked, to take possession
 Of the desired sand-beach. Down they lay,
 To rest their brinesoaked bodies on the shore.
 Achatës promptly struck a spark from flint
 And caught it in dry leaves; he added tinder
 Round about and waved it for a flame-burst.
 Then they brought out the grain of Ceres, tainted
 By sea water, and Ceres' implements,
 And, weary of their troubles, made all ready
 To dry and grind with millstones what they had.

Meanwhile, Aeneas climbed one of the peaks
 For a long seaward view, hoping to sight

Gale-worn Antheus and the Phrygian biremes,
 Capys, or high poops bearing Caicus' arms.
 He found no ship in sight, but on the shore
 Three wandering stags. Behind them whole herds followed,
 Grazing in a long line down the valleys.
 Planting his feet, he took in hand the bow
 And arrows carried by his aide, Achatès,
 Then, aiming for the leaders with heads high
 And branching antlers, brought them first to earth.
 Next he routed the whole herd,
 Driving them with his shafts through leafy places,
 Shooting and shooting till he won the hunt
 By laying seven carcasses on the ground,
 A number equal to his ships. Then back
 To port he went, and parcelled out the game
 To his ships' companies. There he divided
 The wine courtly Acestès had poured out
 And given them on the Sicilian shore—
 Full jugs of it—when they were about to sail.
 By this and by a simple speech Aeneas
 Comforted his people:

"Friends and companions,
 Have we not known hard hours before this?
 My men, who have endured still greater dangers,
 God will grant us an end to these as well.
 You sailed by Scylla's rage, her booming crags,
 You saw the Cyclops' boulders. Now call back
 Your courage, and have done with fear and sorrow.
 Some day, perhaps, remembering even this
 Will be a pleasure. Through diversities
 Of luck, and through so many challenges,
 We hold our course for Latium, where the Fates
 Hold out a settlement and rest for us.
 Troy's kingdom there shall rise again. Be patient:
 Save yourselves for more auspicious days."

So ran the speech. Burdened and sick at heart,
 He feigned hope in his look, and inwardly
 Contained his anguish. Now the Trojan crews

Made ready for their windfall and their feast.
 They skinned the deer, bared ribs and viscera,
 Then one lot sliced the flesh and skewered it
 On spits, all quivering, while others filled
 Bronze cooking pots and tended the beach fires.
 All got their strength back from the meal, reclining
 On the wild grass, gorging on venison
 And mellowed wine. When hunger had been banished,
 And tables put away, they talked at length
 In hope and fear about their missing friends:
 Could one believe they might be still alive,
 Or had they suffered their last hour,
 Never again to hear a voice that called them?
 Aeneas, more than any, secretly
 Mourned for them all—for that fierce man, Orontës,
 Then for Amycus, then for the bitter fate
 Of Lycus, for brave Gyas, brave Cloanthus.

|| It was the day's end when from highest air
 Jupiter looked down on the broad sea
 Flecked with wings of sails, and the land masses,
 Coasts, and nations of the earth. He stood
 On heaven's height and turned his gaze toward Libya,
 And, as he took the troubles there to heart,
 Venus appealed to him, all pale and wan,
 With tears in her shining eyes:

“My lord who rule
 The lives of men and gods now and forever,
 And bring them all to heel with your bright bolt,
 What in the world could my Aeneas do,
 What could the Trojans do, so to offend you
 That after suffering all those deaths they find
 The whole world closed to them, because of Italy?
 Surely from these the Romans are to come
 In the course of years, renewing Teucer's line,
 To rule the sea and all the lands about it,

According to your promise. What new thought
 Has turned you from them, Father? I consoled myself
 For Troy's fall, that grim ruin, weighing out
 One fate against another in the scales,
 But now, when they have borne so many blows,
 The same misfortune follows them. Great king,
 What finish to their troubles will you give?
 After Antenor slipped through the Achaeans
 He could explore Illyrian coves and reach
 In safety the Liburnians' inland kingdoms
 And source of the Timavus. Through nine openings
 With a great rumble in the mountain wall
 It bursts from the ground there and floods the fields
 In a rushing sea. And yet he chose that place
 For Padua and new homes for Teucrians,
 Gave them a name, set up the arms of Troy,
 And now rests in his peace. As for ourselves,
 Your own children, whom you make heirs of heaven,
 Our ships being lost (this is unspeakable!),
 We are forsaken through one enemy's rage
 And kept remote from Italy. Is this
 The palm for loyalty? This our power restored?"

He smiled at her, the father of gods and men,
 With that serenity that calms the weather,
 And lightly kissed his daughter. Then he said:

"No need to be afraid, Cytherëa.
 Your children's destiny has not been changed.
 As promised, you shall see Lavinium's walls
 And take up, then, amid the stars of heaven
 Great-souled Aeneas. No new thought has turned me.
 No, he, your son—now let me speak of him,
 In view of your consuming care, at length,
 Unfolding secret fated things to come—
 In Italy he will fight a massive war,
 Beat down fierce armies, then for the people there
 Establish city walls and a way of life.

When the Rutulians are subdued he'll pass
 Three summers of command in Latium,
 Three years of winter quarters. But the boy,
 Ascanius, to whom the name of Iulus
 Now is added—Ilus while Ilium stood—
 Will hold the power for all of thirty years,
 Great rings of wheeling months. He will transfer
 His capital from Lavinium and make
 A fortress, Alba Longa. Three full centuries
 That kingdom will be ruled by Hector's race,
 Until the queen and priestess, Ilia,
 Pregnant by Mars, will bear twin sons to him.
 Afterward, happy in the tawny pelt
 His nurse, the she-wolf, wears, young Romulus
 Will take the leadership, build walls of Mars,
 And call by his own name his people Romans.
 For these I set no limits, world or time,
 But make the gift of empire without end.
 Juno, indeed, whose bitterness now fills
 With fear and torment sea and earth and sky,
 Will mend her ways, and favor them as I do,
 Lords of the world, the toga-bearing Romans.
 Such is our pleasure. As the years fall away,
 An age comes when Assaracus' royal house
 Will bring to servitude Thessalian Phthia,
 Renowned Mycenae, too; and subjugate
 Defeated Argos. From that comely line
 The Trojan Caesar comes, to circumscribe
 Empire with Ocean, fame with heaven's stars.
 Julius his name, from Iulus handed down:
 All tranquil shall you take him heavenward
 In time, laden with plunder of the East,
 And he with you shall be invoked in prayer.
 Wars at an end, harsh centuries then will soften,
 Ancient Fides and Vesta, Quirinus
 With Brother Remus, will be lawgivers,
 And grim with iron frames, the Gates of War
 Will then be shut: inside, unholy Furor,

Squatting on cruel weapons, hands enchained
 Behind him by a hundred links of bronze,
 Will grind his teeth and howl with bloodied mouth.”

That said, he sent the son of Maia down
 From his high place to make the land of Carthage,
 The new-built town, receptive to the Trojans,
 Not to allow Queen Dido, all unknowing
 As to the fated future, to exclude them.
 Through the vast air with stroking wings he flew
 And came down quickly on the Libyan coast,
 Performing Jove's command, so that at once
 Phoenicians put aside belligerence
 As the god willed. Especially the queen
 Took on a peaceful mood, an open mind
 Toward Teucrians.

But the dedicated man,
 Aeneas, thoughtful through the restless night,
 Made up his mind, as kindly daylight came,
 To go out and explore the strange new places,
 To learn what coast the wind had brought him to
 And who were living there, men or wild creatures—
 For wilderness was all he saw—and bring
 Report back to his company. The ships
 He hid beneath a hollowed rocky cliff
 And groves that made a vault, trees all around
 And deep shade quivering. He took his way
 With only one man at his side, Achatës,
 Hefting two hunting spears with broad steel points.
 Then suddenly, in front of him,
 His mother crossed his path in mid-forest,
 Wearing a girl's shape and a girl's gear—
 A Spartan girl, or like that one of Thrace,
 Harpalycë, who tires horses out,
 Outrunning the swift Hebrus. She had hung

About her shoulders the light, handy bow
 A huntress carries, and had given her hair
 To the disheveling wind; her knees were bare,
 Her flowing gown knotted and kirtled up.

She spoke first:

“Ho, young fellows, have you seen—
 Can you say where—one of my sisters here,
 In a spotted lynx-hide, belted with a quiver,
 Scouting the wood, or shouting on the track
 Behind a foam-flecked boar?”

To Venus then

The son of Venus answered:

“No, I’ve heard
 Or seen none of your sisters—only, how
 Shall I address you, girl? Your look’s not mortal,
 Neither has your accent a mortal ring.
 O Goddess, beyond doubt! Apollo’s sister?
 One of the family of nymphs? Be kind,
 Whoever you may be, relieve our trouble,
 Tell us under what heaven we’ve come at last,
 On what shore of the world are we cast up,
 Wanderers that we are, strange to this country,
 Driven here by wind and heavy sea.
 By my right hand many an offering
 Will be cut down for you before your altars.”

Venus replied:

“Be sure I am not fit
 For any such devotion. Tyrian girls
 Are given to wearing quivers and hunting boots
 Of crimson, laced on the leg up to the knee.
 This is the Punic kingdom that you see,
 The folk are Tyrian, the town Agenor’s.
 But neighboring lands belong to Libya,
 A nation hard to fight against in war.
 The ruler here is Dido, of Tyre city,
 In flight here from her brother—a long tale
 Of wrong endured, mysterious and long.

But let me tell the main events in order.
 Her husband was Sychaeus, of all Phoenicians
 Richest in land, and greatly loved by her,
 Ill-fated woman. Her father had given her,
 A virgin still, in marriage, her first rite.
 Her brother, though, held power in Tyre—Pygmalion,
 A monster of wickedness beyond all others.
 Between the two men furious hate arose,
 And sacrilegiously before the altars,
 Driven by a blind lust for gold, Pygmalion
 Took Sychaeus by surprise and killed him
 With a dagger blow in secret, undeterred
 By any thought of Dido's love. He hid
 What he had done for a long time, cozening her,
 Deluding the sick woman with false hope.
 But the true form of her unburied husband
 Came in a dream: lifting his pallid face
 Before her strangely, he made visible
 The cruel altars and his body pierced,
 Uncovering all the dark crime of the house.

He urged her then to make haste and take flight,
 Leaving her fatherland, and to assist the journey
 Revealed a buried treasure of old time,
 Unknown to any, a weight of gold and silver.
 Impelled by this, Dido laid her plans
 To get away and to equip her company.
 All who hated the tyrant, all in fear
 As bitter as her own, now came together,
 And ships in port, already fitted out,
 They commandeered, to fill with gold: the riches
 Pygmalion had itched for went to sea,
 And captaining the venture was a woman.
 They sailed to this place where today you'll see
 Stone walls going higher and the citadel
 Of Carthage, the new town. They bought the land,
 Called Drumskin from the bargain made, a tract
 They could enclose with one bull's hide.

But now,
 What of yourselves? From what coast do you come?
 Where are you bound?"

Then to the questioner
 He answered sighing, bringing out the words
 From deep within him:

"Goddess, if I should tell
 Our story from the start, if you had leisure
 To hear our annals of adversity,
 Before I finished, the fair evening star
 Would come to close Olympus and the day.
 From old Troy—if the name of Troy has fallen
 Perhaps upon your ears—we sailed the seas,
 And yesterday were driven by a storm,
 Of its own whim, upon this Libyan coast.
 I am Aeneas, duty-bound, and known
 Above high air of heaven by my fame,
 Carrying with me in my ships our gods
 Of hearth and home, saved from the enemy.
 I look for Italy to be my fatherland,
 And my descent is from all-highest Jove.
 With twenty ships I mounted the Phrygian sea,
 As my immortal mother showed the way.
 I followed the given fates. Now barely seven
 Ships are left, battered by wind and sea,
 And I myself, unknown and unprovisioned,
 Cross the Libyan wilderness, an exile
 Driven from Europe and from Asia—"

But Venus chose to hear no more complaints
 And broke in, midway through his bitterness:

"Whoever you are, I doubt Heaven is unfriendly
 To you, as you still breathe life-giving air
 On your approach to the Tyrian town. Go on:
 Betake yourself this way to the queen's gate.
 Your friends are back. This is my news for you:
 Your ships were saved and brought to shore again

By winds shifting north, or else my parents
 Taught me augury to no purpose. Look:
 See the twelve swans in line rejoicing there!
 Jove's eagle, like a bolt out of the blue,
 Had flurried them in open heaven, but now
 They seem to be alighting one by one
 Or looking down on those already grounded.
 As they disport themselves, with flapping wings,
 After their chanting flight about the sky,
 Just so your ships and your ships' companies
 Are either in port or entering under sail.
 Go on then, where the path leads, go ahead!"

On this she turned away. Rose-pink and fair
 Her nape shone, her ambrosial hair exhaled
 Divine perfume, her gown rippled full length,
 And by her stride she showed herself a goddess.
 Knowing her for his mother, he called out
 To the figure fleeing away:

"You! cruel, too!
 Why tease your son so often with disguises?
 Why may we not join hands and speak and hear
 The simple truth?"

So he called after her,
 And went on toward the town. But Venus muffled
 The two wayfarers in grey mist, a cloak
 Of dense cloud poured around them, so that no one
 Had the power to see or to accost them,
 Make them halt, or ask them what they came for.
 Away to Paphos through high air she went
 In joy to see her home again, her shrine
 And hundred altars where Sabaeon incense
 Fumed and garlands freshened the air.

Meanwhile
 The two men pressed on where the pathway led,
 Soon climbing a long ridge that gave a view
 Down over the city and facing towers.
 Aeneas found, where lately huts had been,
 Marvelous buildings, gateways, cobbled ways,

And din of wagons. There the Tyrians
 Were hard at work: laying courses for walls,
 Rolling up stones to build the citadel,
 While others picked out building sites and plowed
 A boundary furrow. Laws were being enacted,
 Magistrates and a sacred senate chosen.
 Here men were dredging harbors, there they laid
 The deep foundation of a theatre,
 And quarried massive pillars to enhance
 The future stage—as bees in early summer
 In sunlight in the flowering fields
 Hum at their work, and bring along the young
 Full-grown to beehood; as they cram their combs
 With honey, brimming all the cells with nectar,
 Or take newcomers' plunder, or like troops
 Alerted, drive away the lazy drones,
 And labor thrives and sweet thyme scents the honey.
 Aeneas said: "How fortunate these are
 Whose city walls are rising here and now!"

He looked up at the roofs, for he had entered,
 Swathed in cloud—strange to relate—among them,
 Mingling with men, yet visible to none.
 In mid-town stood a grove that cast sweet shade
 Where the Phoenicians, shaken by wind and sea,
 Had first dug up that symbol Juno showed them,
 A proud warhorse's head: this meant for Carthage
 Prowess in war and ease of life through ages.
 Here being built by the Sidonian queen
 Was a great temple planned in Juno's honor,
 Rich in offerings and the godhead there.
 Steps led up to a sill of bronze, with brazen
 Lintel, and bronze doors on groaning pins.
 Here in this grove new things that met his eyes
 Calmed Aeneas' fear for the first time.
 Here for the first time he took heart to hope
 For safety, and to trust his destiny more
 Even in affliction. It was while he walked
 From one to another wall of the great temple

And waited for the queen, staring amazed
 At Carthaginian promise, at the handiwork
 Of artificers and the toil they spent upon it:
 He found before his eyes the Trojan battles
 In the old war, now known throughout the world—
 The great Atridae, Priam, and Achilles,
 Fierce in his rage at both sides. Here Aeneas
 Halted, and tears came.

“What spot on earth,”

He said, “what region of the earth, Achatës,
 Is not full of the story of our sorrow?
 Look, here is Priam. Even so far away
 Great valor has due honor; they weep here
 For how the world goes, and our life that passes
 Touches their hearts. Throw off your fear. This fame
 Insures some kind of refuge.”

He broke off

To feast his eyes and mind on a mere image,
 Sighing often, cheeks grown wet with tears,
 To see again how, fighting around Troy,
 The Greeks broke here, and ran before the Trojans,
 And there the Phrygians ran, as plumed Achilles
 Harried them in his warcar. Nearby, then,
 He recognized the snowy canvas tents
 Of Rhesus, and more tears came: these, betrayed
 In first sleep, Diomedes devastated,
 Swording many, till he recked with blood,
 Then turned the mettlesome horses toward the beachhead
 Before they tasted Trojan grass or drank
 At Xanthus ford.

And on another panel

Troilus, without his armor, luckless boy,
 No match for his antagonist, Achilles,
 Appeared pulled onward by his team: he clung
 To his warcar, though fallen backward, hanging
 On to the reins still, head dragged on the ground,
 His javelin scribbling S's in the dust.
 Meanwhile to hostile Pallas' shrine
 The Trojan women walked with hair unbound,

Bearing the robe of offering, in sorrow,
 Entreating her, beating their breasts. But she,
 Her face averted, would not raise her eyes.
 And there was Hector, dragged around Troy walls
 Three times, and there for gold Achilles sold him,
 Bloodless and lifeless. Now indeed Aeneas
 Heaved a mighty sigh from deep within him,
 Seeing the spoils, the chariot, and the corpse
 Of his great friend, and Priam, all unarmed,
 Stretching his hands out.

He himself he saw

In combat with the first of the Achaeans,
 And saw the ranks of Dawn, black Memnon's arms;
 Then, leading the battalion of Amazons
 With half-moon shields, he saw Penthesilēa
 Fiery amid her host, buckling a golden
 Girdle beneath her bare and arrogant breast,
 A girl who dared fight men, a warrior queen.
 Now, while these wonders were being surveyed
 By Aeneas of Dardania, while he stood
 Enthralled, devouring all in one long gaze,
 The queen paced toward the temple in her beauty,
 Dido, with a throng of men behind.

As on Eurotas bank or Cynthus ridge
 Diana trains her dancers, and behind her
 On every hand the mountain nymphs appear,
 A myriad converging; with her quiver
 Slung on her shoulders, in her stride she seems
 The tallest, taller by a head than any,
 And joy pervades Latona's quiet heart:
 So Dido seemed, in such delight she moved
 Amid her people, cheering on the toil
 Of a kingdom in the making. At the door
 Of the goddess' shrine, under the temple dome,
 All hedged about with guards on her high throne,
 She took her seat. Then she began to give them
 Judgments and rulings, to apportion work
 With fairness, or assign some tasks by lot,

When suddenly Aeneas saw approaching,
 Accompanied by a crowd, Antheus and Sergestus
 And brave Cloanthus, with a few companions,
 Whom the black hurricane had driven far
 Over the sea and brought to other coasts.
 He was astounded, and Achatës too
 Felt thrilled by joy and fear: both of them longed
 To take their friends' hands, but uncertainty
 Hampered them. So, in their cloudy mantle,
 They hid their eagerness, waiting to learn
 What luck these men had had, where on the coast
 They left their ships, and why they came. It seemed
 Spokesmen for all the ships were now arriving,
 Entering the hall, calling for leave to speak.
 When all were in, and full permission given
 To make their plea before the queen, their eldest,
 Ilioneus, with composure said:

"Your majesty,
 Granted by great Jupiter freedom to found
 Your new town here and govern fighting tribes
 With justice—we poor Trojans, worn by winds
 On every sea, entreat you: keep away
 Calamity of fire from our ships!
 Let a godfearing people live, and look
 More closely at our troubles. Not to ravage
 Libyan hearths or turn with plunder seaward
 Have we come; that force and that audacity
 Are not for beaten men.

There is a country
 Called by the Greeks Hesperia, very old,
 Potent in warfare and in wealth of earth;
 Oenotrians farmed it; younger settlers now,
 The tale goes, call it by their chief's name, Italy.
 We laid our course for this.
 But stormy Orion and a high sea rising
 Deflected us on shoals and drove us far,
 With winds against us, into whelming waters,
 Unchanneled reefs. We kept afloat, we few,
 To reach your coast. What race of men is this?

What primitive state could sanction this behavior?
 Even on beaches we are denied a landing,
 Harried by outcry and attack, forbidden
 To set foot on the outskirts of your country.
 If you care nothing for humanity
 And merely mortal arms, respect the gods
 Who are mindful of good actions and of evil!

We had a king, Aeneas—none more just,
 More zealous, greater in warfare and in arms.
 If fate preserves him, if he does not yet
 Lie spent amid the insensible shades but still
 Takes nourishment of air, we need fear nothing;
 Neither need you repent of being first
 In courtesy, to outdo us. Sicily too
 Has towns and plowlands and a famous king
 Of Trojan blood, Acestës. May we be
 Permitted here to beach our damaged ships,
 Hew timbers in your forest, cut new oars,
 And either sail again for Latium, happily,
 If we recover shipmates and our king,
 Or else, if that security is lost,
 If Libyan waters hold you, Lord Aeneas,
 Best of Trojans, hope of Iulus gone,
 We may at least cross over to Sicily
 From which we came, to homesteads ready there,
 And take Acestës for our king.”

Ilioneus

Finished, and all the sons of Dardanus
 Murmured assent. Dido with eyes downcast
 Replied in a brief speech:

“Cast off your fear,
 You Teucrians, put anxiety aside.
 Severe conditions and the kingdom’s youth
 Constrain me to these measures, to protect
 Our long frontiers with guards.

Who has not heard
 Of the people of Aeneas, of Troy city,
 Her valors and her heroes, and the fires

Of the great war? We are not so oblivious,
 We Phoenicians. The sun yokes his team
 Within our range at Carthage. Whether you choose
 Hesperia Magna and the land of Saturn
 Or Eryx in the west and King Acestës,
 I shall dispatch you safely with an escort,
 Provisioned from my stores. Or would you care
 To join us in this realm on equal terms?
 The city I build is yours; haul up your ships;
 Trojan and Tyrian will be all one to me.
 If only he were here, your king himself,
 Caught by the same easterly, Aeneas!
 Indeed, let me send out trustworthy men
 Along the coast, with orders to comb it all
 From one end of Libya to the other,
 In case the sea cast the man up and now
 He wanders lost, in town or wilderness.”

Elated at Dido’s words, both staunch Achatës
 And father Aeneas had by this time longed
 To break out of the cloud. Achatës spoke
 With urgency:

“My lord, born to the goddess,
 What do you feel, what is your judgment now?
 You see all safe, our ships and friends recovered.
 One is lost; we saw that one go down
 Ourselves, amid the waves. Everything else
 Bears out your mother’s own account of it.”

He barely finished when the cloud around them
 Parted suddenly and thinned away
 Into transparent air. Princely Aeneas
 Stood and shone in the bright light, head and shoulders
 Noble as a god’s. For she who bore him
 Breathed upon him beauty of hair and bloom
 Of youth and kindled brilliance in his eyes,
 As an artist’s hand gives style to ivory,
 Or sets pure silver, or white stone of Paros,
 In framing yellow gold. Then to the queen

He spoke as suddenly as, to them all,
He had just appeared:

“Before your eyes I stand,
Aeneas the Trojan, that same one you look for,
Saved from the sea off Libya.

You alone,
Moved by the untold ordeals of old Troy,
Seeing us few whom the Greeks left alive,
Worn out by faring ill on land and sea,
Needy of everything—you’d give these few
A home and city, allied with yourselves.
Fit thanks for this are not within our power,
Not to be had from Trojans anywhere
Dispersed in the great world.

May the gods—
And surely there are powers that care for goodness,
Surely somewhere justice counts—may they
And your own consciousness of acting well
Reward you as they should. What age so happy
Brought you to birth? How splendid were your parents
To have conceived a being like yourself!
So long as brooks flow seaward, and the shadows
Play over mountain slopes, and highest heaven
Feeds the stars, your name and your distinction
Go with me, whatever lands may call me.”

With this he gave his right hand to his friend
Ilioneus, greeting Serestus with his left,
Then took the hands of those brave men, Cloanthus,
Gyas, and the rest.

Sidonian Dido
Stood in astonishment, first at the sight
Of such a captain, then at his misfortune,
Presently saying:

“Born of an immortal
Mother though you are, what adverse destiny
Dogs you through these many kinds of danger?
What rough power brings you from sea to land
In savage places? Are you truly he,

Aeneas, whom kind Venus bore
 To the Dardanian, the young Anchisēs,
 Near to the stream of Phrygian Simois?
 I remember the Greek, Teucer, came to Sidon,
 Exiled, and in search of a new kingdom.
 Belus, my father, helped him. In those days
 Belus campaigned with fire and sword on Cyprus
 And won that island's wealth. Since then, the fall
 Of Troy, your name, and the Pelasgian kings
 Have been familiar to me. Teucer, your enemy,
 Spoke often with admiration of the Teucrians
 And traced his own descent from Teucrian stock.
 Come, then, soldiers, be our guests. My life
 Was one of hardship and forced wandering
 Like your own, till in this land at length
 Fortune would have me rest. Through pain I've learned
 To comfort suffering men."

She led Aeneas
 Into the royal house, but not before
 Declaring a festal day in the gods' temples.
 As for the ships' companies, she sent
 Twenty bulls to the shore, a hundred swine,
 Huge ones, with bristling backs, and fatted lambs,
 A hundred of them, and their mother ewes—
 All gifts for happy feasting on that day.

Now the queen's household made her great hall glow
 As they prepared a banquet in the kitchens.
 Embroidered table cloths, proud crimson-dyed,
 Were spread, and set with massive silver plate,
 Or gold, engraved with brave deeds of her fathers,
 A sequence carried down through many captains
 In a long line from the founding of the race.
 Meanwhile paternal love would not allow
 Aeneas' mind to rest. He sent Achatēs
 On a quick mission to the ships, to tell
 Ascanius and bring him to the city—
 Fond father, as always thoughtful of his son—
 And told Achatēs to fetch gifts as well,

Relics of Ilium: a robe stiff with figures
 Worked in gold, and a veil woven round
 With yellow acanthus flowers—both adornments
 Worn by Argive Helen when she sailed
 For Pergamum and her forbidden marriage,
 Marvelous keepsakes of her mother, Leda.
 Along with these, a scepter Ilionē,
 Eldest of Priam's daughters, once had used,
 A collar hung with pearls, and a coronet
 Doubled in gems and gold,

Given these orders,
 Achatēs lost no time seeking the ships.



ur Lady of Cythera, however, pondered
 New interventions, a new strategy:
 That her young godling son, Desire, should take
 The face and figure of Ascanius,
 Then come and use his gifts to make the queen
 Infatuated, inflaming her with lust
 To the marrow of her bones. Venus no doubt
 Lacked faith in the ambiguous royal house
 And Tyrians' double dealing; then, the spite
 Of Juno vexed her. Her anxieties
 Recurred as night came on. So she addressed him,
 Amor, god of carressing wings:

“My son,
 My strength, my greatest power, my one and only,
 Making light of our High Father's bolt,
 His giant-killer! I must turn to you
 And beg the force of your divinity.
 You know how Brother Aeneas has been tossed
 From one coast to another on the high seas
 By bitter Juno's hatred; you know this
 And in my grieving for him grieve as well.
 Now the Phoenician woman, Dido, has him,
 Making him linger with her blandishments,

And what may come of this Junonian welcome
 Worries me seriously. Juno will act
 At such a crisis of affairs. Accordingly,
 What I propose is to ensnare the queen
 By guile beforehand, pin her down in passion,
 So she cannot be changed by any power
 But will be kept on my side by profound
 Love of Aeneas. Take heed of our thought
 How you may do this. The boy prince, my greatest
 Care in the world, must go now to the city,
 Summoned by his father, taking gifts
 Saved from the great sea and the fires of Troy.
 I'll drug him in his sleep, then hide him well
 High up in Cythera, or on Cyprus, over
 Idalium in my shrine. There is no way
 For him to learn this trick or interfere.
 You counterfeit his figure for one night,
 No more, and make the boy's known face your mask,
 So that when Dido takes you on her lap
 Amid the banquetting and wine, in joy,
 When she embraces you and kisses you,
 You'll breathe invisible fire into her
 And dupe her with your sorcery."

Amor

Agreed with his fond mother's plan of action,
 Put off his wings and gaily walked as Iulus.
 Venus in turn sent through Ascanius' body
 Rills of slumber, caught him to her breast,
 And bore him to Idalia's aerial groves
 Where beds of marjoram
 Embraced him in soft bloom and breathing shade.
 Soon then the godling, doing as she wished,
 Happily following where Achatës led,
 Carried the royal gifts to the Tyrians.
 He found the queen amid magnificence
 Of tapestries, where she had placed herself
 In the very center, on a golden couch.
 Then Father Aeneas and the Trojan company
 Came in to take their ease on crimson cloth.

Houseboys filled their finger bowls and brought them
 Bread in baskets, napkins nubbled smooth.
 In the great kitchen there were fifty maids
 To set the dishes out in a long line
 And tend the fires that shone for the hearth gods.
 A hundred others, and as many boys
 Of the same age, loaded the boards with meat
 And placed the wine cups. Tyrians as well
 Came crowding through the radiant doors, all bidden
 To take their ease on figured cushioning.
 There they admired Aeneas' gifts, admired
 Iulus with his godling's face aglow
 And simulated speech; then the great robe,
 The veil that yellow acanthus flowers edged.
 And more than anyone, the Phoenician queen,
 Luckless, already given over to ruin,
 Marveled and could not have enough: she burned
 With pleasure in the boy and in the gifts.
 After hugging Aeneas round the neck
 And clinging to him, answering the love
 Of the deluded father, he sought the queen;
 And she with all her eyes and heart embraced him,
 Fondling him at times upon her breast,
 Oblivious of how great a god sat there
 To her undoing. Mindful of his mother,
 He had begun to make Sychaeus fade
 From Dido's memory bit by bit, and tried
 To waken with new love, a living love,
 Her long settled mind and dormant heart.

After the first pause in the feast, and after
 Trenchers were taken off, they put out wine bowls,
 Grand and garlanded. A festive din
 Now rose and echoed through the palace halls.
 Lighted lamps hung from the coffered ceiling
 Rich with gold leaf, and torches with high flames
 Prevailed over the night. And now the queen
 Called for a vessel heavy with gems and gold
 That Belus and his line had always used.

She filled it, dipping wine, and her long hall
Fell silent.

“Jupiter,” she prayed,
“You make the laws for host and guest, they say.
Grant that this day be one of joy for Tyrians
And men of Troy; grant that it be remembered
By our descendants. Now be with us, Bacchus,
Giver of happiness, and kindly Juno,
And all you Tyrians attend
In friendliness this meeting that unites us.”

At this she tilted a libation out
And put the vessel lightly to her lips,
Then, with a jest, gave it to Bitias,
Who nearly immersed himself in brimming gold
As he drank down the foaming wine. The bowl
Passed then to other lords. And Lord Iopas,
With flowing hair, whom giant Atlas taught,
Made the room echo to his golden lyre.
He sang the straying moon and toiling sun,
The origin of mankind and the beasts,
Of rain and fire; the rainy Hyadēs,
Arcturus, the Great Bear and Little Bear;
The reason winter suns are in such haste
To dip in Ocean, or what holds the nights
Endless in winter. Tyrians at this
Redoubled their applause; the Trojans followed.
And Dido, fated queen, drew out the night
With talk of various matters, while she drank
Long draughts of love. Often she asked of Priam,
Often of Hector; now of the armor Memnon,
The son of Dawn, had worn; now of the team
Diomedes drove; now of the huge Achilles.

“Come, rather,” then she said, “dear guest, and tell us
From the beginning the Greek stratagems,
The ruin of your town and your sea-faring,
As now the seventh summer brings you here
From wandering all the lands and all the seas.”

BOOK



HOW THEY TOOK
THE CITY

The room fell silent, and all eyes were on him,
As Father Aeneas from his high couch began:

“Sorrow too deep to tell, your majesty,
You order me to feel and tell once more:
How the Danaans leveled in the dust
The splendor of our mourned-forever kingdom—
Heartbreaking things I saw with my own eyes
And was myself a part of. Who could tell them,
Even a Myrmidon or Dolopian
Or ruffian of Ulysses, without tears?
Now, too, the night is well along, with dewfall
Out of heaven, and setting stars weigh down
Our heads toward sleep. But if so great desire
Moves you to hear the tale of our disasters,
Briefly recalled, the final throes of Troy,
However I may shudder at the memory
And shrink again in grief, let me begin.

Knowing their strength broken in warfare, turned
Back by the fates, and years—so many years—
Already slipped away, the Danaan captains
By the divine handicraft of Pallas built
A horse of timber, tall as a hill,
And sheathed its ribs with planking of cut pine.
This they gave out to be an offering

For a safe return by sea, and the word went round.
 But on the sly they shut inside a company
 Chosen from their picked soldiery by lot,
 Crowding the vaulted caverns in the dark—
 The horse's belly—with men fully armed.

Offshore there's a long island, Tenedos,
 Famous and rich while Priam's kingdom lasted,
 A treacherous anchorage now, and nothing more.
 They crossed to this and hid their ships behind it
 On the bare shore beyond. We thought they'd gone,
 Sailing home to Mycenae before the wind,
 So Teucer's town is freed of her long anguish,
 Gates thrown wide! And out we go in joy
 To see the Dorian campsites, all deserted,
 The beach they left behind. Here the Dolopians
 Pitched their tents, here cruel Achilles lodged,
 There lay the ships, and there, formed up in ranks,
 They came inland to fight us. Of our men
 One group stood marveling, gaping up to see
 The dire gift of the cold unbedded goddess,
 The sheer mass of the horse.

Thymoetes shouts

It should be hauled inside the walls and moored
 High on the citadel—whether by treason
 Or just because Troy's fate went that way now.
 Capys opposed him; so did the wiser heads:
 'Into the sea with it,' they said, 'or burn it,
 Build up a bonfire under it,
 This trick of the Greeks, a gift no one can trust,
 Or cut it open, search the hollow belly!'

Contrary notions pulled the crowd apart.
 Next thing we knew, in front of everyone,
 Laocoön with a great company
 Came furiously running from the Height,
 And still far off cried out: 'O my poor people,
 Men of Troy, what madness has come over you?
 Can you believe the enemy truly gone?

A gift from the Danaans, and no ruse?
 Is that Ulysses' way, as you have known him?
 Achaeans must be hiding in this timber,
 Or it was built to butt against our walls,
 Peer over them into our houses, pelt
 The city from the sky. Some crookedness
 Is in this thing. Have no faith in the horse!
 Whatever it is, even when Greeks bring gifts
 I fear them, gifts and all.'

He broke off then
 And rifled his big spear with all his might
 Against the horse's flank, the curve of belly.
 It stuck there trembling, and the rounded hull
 Reverberated groaning at the blow.
 If the gods' will had not been sinister,
 If our own minds had not been crazed,
 He would have made us foul that Argive den
 With bloody steel, and Troy would stand today—
 O citadel of Priam, towering still!

But now look: hillmen, shepherds of Dardania,
 Raising a shout, dragged in before the king
 An unknown fellow with hands tied behind—
 This all as he himself had planned,
 Volunteering, letting them come across him,
 So he could open Troy to the Achaeans.
 Sure of himself this man was, braced for it
 Either way, to work his trick or die.
 From every quarter Trojans run to see him,
 Ring the prisoner round, and make a game
 Of jeering at him. Be instructed now
 In Greek deceptive arts: one barefaced deed
 Can tell you of them all.
 As the man stood there, shaken and defenceless,
 Looking around at ranks of Phrygians,
 'Oh god,' he said, 'what land on earth, what seas

Can take me in? What's left me in the end,
 Outcast that I am from the Danaans,
 Now the Dardanians will have my blood?'

The whimpering speech brought us up short; we felt
 A twinge for him. Let him speak up, we said,
 Tell us where he was born, what news he brought,
 What he could hope for as a prisoner.
 Taking his time, slow to discard his fright,
 He said:

'I'll tell you the whole truth, my lord,
 No matter what may come of it. Argive
 I am by birth, and will not say I'm not.
 That first of all: Fortune has made a derelict
 Of Sinon, but the bitch
 Won't make an empty liar of him, too.
 Report of Palamedes may have reached you,
 Scion of Belus' line, a famous man
 Who gave commands against the war. For this,
 On a trumped-up charge, on perjured testimony,
 The Greeks put him to death—but now they mourn him,
 Now he has lost the light. Being kin to him,
 In my first years I joined him as companion,
 Sent by my poor old father on this campaign,
 And while he held high rank and influence
 In royal councils, we did well, with honor.
 Then by the guile and envy of Ulysses—
 Nothing unheard of there!—he left this world,
 And I lived on, but under a cloud, in sorrow,
 Raging for my blameless friend's downfall.
 Demented, too, I could not hold my peace
 But said if I had luck, if I won through
 Again to Argos, I'd avenge him there.
 And I roused hatred with my talk; I fell
 Afoul now of that man. From that time on,
 Day in, day out, Ulysses
 Found new ways to bait and terrify me,
 Putting out shady rumors among the troops,
 Looking for weapons he could use against me.

He could not rest till Calchas served his turn—
 But why go on? The tale's unwelcome, useless,
 If Achaeans are all one,
 And it's enough I'm called Achacan, then
 Exact the punishment, long overdue;
 The Ithacan desires it; the Atridae
 Would pay well for it.'

Burning with curiosity,
 We questioned him, called on him to explain—
 Unable to conceive such a performance,
 The art of the Pelasgian. He went on,
 Atremble, as though he feared us:

'Many times
 The Danaans wished to organize retreat,
 To leave Troy and the long war, tired out.
 If only they had done it! Heavy weather
 At sea closed down on them, or a fresh gale
 From the Southwest would keep them from embarking,
 Most of all after this figure here,
 This horse they put together with maple beams,
 Reached its full height. Then wind and thunderstorms
 Rumbled in heaven. So in our quandary
 We sent Eurypylus to Phoebus' oracle,
 And he brought back this grim reply:

'Blood and a virgin slain
 You gave to appease the winds, for your first voyage
 Troyward, O Danaans. Blood again
 And Argive blood, one life, wins your return.'

When this got round among the soldiers, gloom
 Came over them, and a cold chill that ran
 To the very marrow. Who had death in store?
 Whom did Apollo call for? Now the man
 Of Ithaca haled Calchas out among us
 In tumult, calling on the seer to tell
 The true will of the gods. Ah, there were many
 Able to divine the crookedness
 And cruelty afoot for me, but they

Looked on in silence. For ten days the seer
 Kept still, kept under cover, would not speak
 Of anyone, or name a man for death,
 Till driven to it at last by Ulysses' cries—
 By prearrangement—he broke silence, barely
 Enough to designate me for the altar.
 Every last man agreed. The torments each
 Had feared for himself, now shifted to another,
 All could endure. And the infamous day came,
 The ritual, the salted meal, the fillets . . .
 I broke free, I confess it, broke my chains,
 Hid myself all night in a muddy marsh,
 Concealed by reeds, waiting for them to sail
 If they were going to.

Now no hope is left me
 Of seeing my home country ever again,
 My sweet children, my father, missed for years.
 Perhaps the army will demand they pay
 For my escape, my crime here, and their death,
 Poor things, will be my punishment. Ah, sir,
 I beg you by the gods above, the powers
 In whom truth lives, and by what faith remains
 Uncontaminated to men, take pity
 On pain so great and so unmerited!"

For tears we gave him life, and pity, too.
 Priam himself ordered the gyves removed
 And the tight chain between. In kindness then
 He said to him:

‘Whoever you may be,
 The Greeks are gone; forget them from now on;
 You shall be ours. And answer me these questions:
 Who put this huge thing up, this horse?
 Who designed it? What do they want with it?
 Is it religious or a means of war?’

These were his questions. Then the captive, trained
 In trickery, in the stagecraft of Achaea,
 Lifted his hands unfettered to the stars.

'Eternal fires of heaven,' he began,
 'Powers inviolable, I swear by thee,
 As by the altars and blaspheming swords
 I got away from, and the gods' white bands
 I wore as one chosen for sacrifice,
 This is justice, I am justified
 In dropping all allegiance to the Greeks—
 As I had cause to hate them; I may bring
 Into the open what they would keep dark.
 No laws of my own country bind me now.
 Only be sure you keep your promises
 And keep faith, Troy, as you are kept from harm
 If what I say proves true, if what I give
 Is great and valuable.

The whole hope
 Of the Danaans, and their confidence
 In the war they started, rested all along
 In help from Pallas. Then the night came
 When Diomedes and that criminal,
 Ulysses, dared to raid her holy shrine.
 They killed the guards on the high citadel
 And ripped away the statue, the Palladium,
 Desecrating with bloody hands the virginal
 Chaplets of the goddess. After that,
 Danaan hopes waned and were undermined,
 Ebbing away, their strength in battle broken,
 The goddess now against them. This she made
 Evident to them all with signs and portents.
 Just as they set her statue up in camp,
 The eyes, cast upward, glowed with crackling flames,
 And salty sweat ran down the body. Then—
 I say it in awe—three times, up from the ground,
 The apparition of the goddess rose
 In a lightning flash, with shield and spear atremble.
 Calchas divined at once that the sea crossing
 Must be attempted in retreat—that Pergamum
 Cannot be torn apart by Argive swords
 Unless at Argos first they beg new omens,
 Carrying homeward the divine power

Brought overseas in ships. Now they are gone
 Before the wind to the fatherland, Mycenae,
 Gone to enlist new troops and gods. They'll cross
 The water again and be here, unforeseen.
 So Calchas read the portents. Warned by him,
 They set this figure up in reparation
 For the Palladium stolen, to appease
 The offended power and expiate the crime.
 Enormous, though, he made them build the thing
 With timber braces, towering to the sky,
 Too big for the gates, not to be hauled inside
 And give the people back their ancient guardian.
 If any hand here violates this gift
 To great Minerva, then extinction waits,
 Not for one only—would god it were so—
 But for the realm of Priam and all Phrygians.
 If this proud offering, drawn by your hands,
 Should mount into your city, then so far
 As the walls of Pelops' town the tide of Asia
 Surges in war: that doom awaits our children.²

This fraud of Sinon, his accomplished lying,
 Won us over; a tall tale and fake tears
 Had captured us, whom neither Diomedes
 Nor Larisaeon Achilles overpowered,
 Nor ten long years, nor all their thousand ships.

And now another sign, more fearful still,
 Broke on our blind miserable people,
 Filling us all with dread. Laocoön,
 Acting as Neptune's priest that day by lot,
 Was on the point of putting to the knife
 A massive bull before the appointed altar,
 When ah—look there!
 From Tenedos, on the calm sea, twin snakes—
 I shiver to recall it—endlessly

Coiling, uncoiling, swam abreast for shore,
 Their underbellies showing as their crests
 Reared red as blood above the swell; behind
 They glided with great undulating backs.
 Now came the sound of thrashed seawater foaming;
 Now they were on dry land, and we could see
 Their burning eyes, fiery and suffused with blood,
 Their tongues a-flicker out of hissing maws.
 We scattered, pale with fright. But straight ahead
 They slid until they reached Laocoön.
 Each snake enveloped one of his two boys,
 Twining about and feeding on the body.
 Next they ensnared the man as he ran up
 With weapons: coils like cables looped and bound him
 Twice round the middle; twice about his throat
 They whipped their back-scales, and their heads towered,
 While with both hands he fought to break the knots,
 Drenched in slime, his head-bands black with venom,
 Sending to heaven his appalling cries
 Like a slashed bull escaping from an altar,
 The fumbled axe shrugged off. The pair of snakes
 Now flowed away and made for the highest shrines,
 The citadel of pitiless Minerva,
 Where coiling they took cover at her feet
 Under the rondure of her shield. New terrors
 Ran in the shaken crowd: the word went round
 Laocoön had paid, and rightfully,
 For profanation of the sacred hulk
 With his offending spear hurled at its flank.

'The offering must be hauled to its true home,'
 They clamored. 'Votive prayers to the goddess
 Must be said there!'

So we breached the walls
 And laid the city open. Everyone
 Pitched in to get the figure underpinned
 With rollers, hempen lines around the neck.
 Deadly, pregnant with enemies, the horse
 Crawled upward to the breach. And boys and girls

Sang hymns around the towrope as for joy
 They touched it. Rolling on, it cast a shadow
 Over the city's heart. O Fatherland,
 O Ilium, home of gods! Defensive wall
 Renowned in war for Dardanus's people!
 There on the very threshold of the breach
 It jarred to a halt four times, four times the arms
 In the belly thrown together made a sound—
 Yet on we strove unmindful, deaf and blind,
 To place the monster on our blessed height.
 Then, even then, Cassandra's lips unsealed
 The doom to come: lips by a god's command
 Never believed or heeded by the Trojans.
 So pitiably we, for whom that day
 Would be the last, made all our temples green
 With leafy festal boughs throughout the city.

As heaven turned, Night from the Ocean stream
 Came on, profound in gloom on earth and sky
 And Myrmidons in hiding. In their homes
 The Teucrians lay silent, wearied out,
 And sleep enfolded them. The Argive fleet,
 Drawn up in line abreast, left Tenedos
 Through the aloof moon's friendly stillnesses
 And made for the familiar shore. Flame signals
 Shone from the command ship. Sinon, favored
 By what the gods unjustly had decreed,
 Stole out to tap the pine walls and set free
 The Danaans in the belly. Opened wide,
 The horse emitted men; gladly they dropped
 Out of the cavern, captains first, Thessandrus,
 Sthenelus and the man of iron, Ulysses;
 Hand over hand upon the rope, Acamas, Thoas,
 Neoptolemus and Prince Machaon,
 Menelaus and then the master builder,
 Epeos, who designed the horse decoy.
 Into the darkened city, buried deep
 In sleep and wine, they made their way,
 Cut the few sentries down,

Let in their fellow soldiers at the gate,
And joined their combat companies as planned.

That time of night it was when the first sleep,
Gift of the gods, begins for ill mankind,
Arriving gradually, delicious rest.
In sleep, in dream, Hector appeared to me,
Gaunt with sorrow, streaming tears, all torn—
As by the violent car on his death day—
And black with bloody dust,
His puffed-out feet cut by the rawhide thongs.
Ah god, the look of him! How changed
From that proud Hector who returned to Troy
Wearing Achilles' armor, or that one
Who pitched the torches on Danaan ships;
His beard all filth, his hair matted with blood,
Showing the wounds, the many wounds, received
Outside his father's city walls. I seemed
Myself to weep and call upon the man
In grieving speech, brought from the depth of me:

'Light of Dardania, best hope of Troy,
What kept you from us for so long, and where?
From what far place, O Hector, have you come,
Long, long awaited? After so many deaths
Of friends and brothers, after a world of pain
For all our folk and all our town, at last,
Boneweary, we behold you! What has happened
To ravage your serene face? Why these wounds?'

He wasted no reply on my poor questions
But heaved a great sigh from his chest and said:
'Ai! Give up and go, child of the goddess,
Save yourself, out of these flames. The enemy
Holds the city walls, and from her height
Troy falls in ruin. Fatherland and Priam
Have their due; if by one hand our towers
Could be defended, by this hand, my own,
They would have been. Her holy things, her gods

Of hearth and household Troy commends to you.
 Accept them as companions of your days;
 Go find for them the great walls that one day
 You'll dedicate, when you have roamed the sea.'

As he said this, he brought out from the sanctuary
 Chaplets and Vesta, Lady of the Hearth,
 With her eternal fire.

While I dreamed,
 The turmoil rose, with anguish, in the city.
 More and more, although Anchises' house
 Lay in seclusion, muffled among trees,
 The din at the grim onset grew; and now
 I shook off sleep, I climbed to the roof top
 To cup my ears and listen. And the sound
 Was like the sound a grassfire makes in grain,
 Whipped by a Southwind, or a torrent foaming
 Out of a mountainside to strew in ruin
 Fields, happy crops, the yield of plowing teams,
 Or woodlands borne off in the flood; in wonder
 The shepherd listens on a rocky peak.
 I knew then what our trust had won for us,
 Knew the Danaan fraud: Deïphobus'
 Great house in flames, already caving in
 Under the overpowering god of fire;
 Ucalegon's already caught nearby;
 The glare lighting the straits beyond Sigeum;
 The cries of men, the wild calls of the trumpets.

To arm was my first maddened impulse—not
 That anyone had a fighting chance in arms;
 Only I burned to gather up some force
 For combat, and to man some high redoubt.
 So fury drove me, and it came to me
 That meeting death was beautiful in arms.
 Then here, eluding the Achaean spears,
 Came Panthus, Othrys' son, priest of Apollo,

Carrying holy things, our conquered gods,
 And pulling a small grandchild along: he ran
 Despairing to my doorway.

‘Where’s the crux,
 Panthus,’ I said. ‘What strongpoint shall we hold?’

Before I could say more, he groaned and answered:
 ‘The last day for Dardania has come,
 The hour not to be fought off any longer.
 Trojans we have been; Ilium has been;
 The glory of the Teucrians is no more;
 Black Jupiter has passed it on to Argos.
 Greeks are the masters in our burning city.
 Tall as a cliff, set in the heart of town,
 Their horse pours out armed men. The conqueror,
 Gloating Sinon, brews new conflagrations.
 Troops hold the gates—as many thousand men
 As ever came from great Mycenae; others
 Block the lanes with crossed spears; glittering
 In a combat line, swordblades are drawn for slaughter.
 Even the first guards at the gates can barely
 Offer battle, or blindly make a stand.’

Impelled by these words, by the powers of heaven,
 Into the flames I go, into the fight,
 Where the harsh Fury, and the din and shouting,
 Skyward rising, calls. Crossing my path
 In moonlight, five fell in with me, companions:
 Ripheus, and Epytus, a great soldier,
 Hypanis, Dymas, cleaving to my side
 With young Coroebus, Mygdon’s son. It happened
 That in those very days this man had come
 To Troy, aflame with passion for Cassandra,
 Bringing to Priam and the Phrygians
 A son-in-law’s right hand. Unlucky one,
 To have been deaf to what his bride foretold!
 Now when I saw them grouped, on edge for battle,
 I took it all in and said briefly,

‘Soldiers,
 Brave as you are to no end, if you crave
 To face the last fight with me, and no doubt of it,
 How matters stand for us each one can see.
 The gods by whom this kingdom stood are gone,
 Gone from the shrines and altars. You defend
 A city lost in flames. Come, let us die,
 We’ll make a rush into the thick of it.
 The conquered have one safety: hope for none.’

The desperate odds doubled their fighting spirit:
 From that time on, like predatory wolves
 In fog and darkness, when a savage hunger
 Drives them blindly on, and cubs in lairs
 Lie waiting with dry famished jaws—just so
 Through arrow flights and enemies we ran
 Toward our sure death, straight for the city’s heart,
 Cavernous black night over and around us.
 Who can describe the havoc of that night
 Or tell the deaths, or tally wounds with tears?
 The ancient city falls, after dominion
 Many long years. In windrows on the streets,
 In homes, on solemn porches of the gods,
 Dead bodies lie. And not alone the Trojans
 Pay the price with their heart’s blood; at times
 Manhood returns to fire even the conquered
 And Danaan conquerors fall. Grief everywhere,
 Everywhere terror, and all shapes of death.

Androgeos was the first to cross our path
 Leading a crowd of Greeks; he took for granted
 That we were friends, and hailed us cheerfully:

‘Men, get a move on! Are you made of lead
 To be so late and slow? The rest are busy
 Carrying plunder from the fires and towers.
 Are you just landed from the ships?’

His words
 Were barely out, and no reply forthcoming

Credible to him, when he knew himself
 Fallen among enemies. Thunderstruck,
 He halted, foot and voice, and then recoiled
 Like one who steps down on a lurking snake
 In a briar patch and jerks back, terrified,
 As the angry thing rears up, all puffed and blue.
 So backward went Androgeos in panic.
 We were all over them in a moment, cut
 And thrust, and as they fought on unknown ground,
 Startled, unnerved, we killed them everywhere.
 So Fortune filled our sails at first. Coroebus,
 Elated at our feat and his own courage,
 Said:

‘Friends, come follow Fortune. She has shown
 The way to safety, shown she’s on our side.
 We’ll take their shields and put on their insignia!
 Trickery, bravery: who asks, in war?
 The enemy will arm us.’

He put on
 The plumed helm of Androgeos, took the shield
 With blazon and the Greek sword to his side.
 Ripheus, Dymas—all were pleased to do it,
 Making the still fresh trophies our equipment.
 Then we went on, passing among the Greeks,
 Protected by our own gods now no longer;
 Many a combat, hand to hand, we fought
 In the black night, and many a Greek we sent
 To Orcus. There were some who turned and ran
 Back to the ships and shore; some shamefully
 Clambered again into the horse, to hide
 In the familiar paunch.

When gods are contrary
 They stand by no one. Here before us came
 Cassandra, Priam’s virgin daughter, dragged
 By her long hair out of Minerva’s shrine,
 Lifting her brilliant eyes in vain to heaven—
 Her eyes alone, as her white hands were bound.
 Coroebus, infuriated, could not bear it,
 But plunged into the midst to find his death.

We all went after him, our swords at play,
 But here, here first, from the temple gable's height,
 We met a hail of missiles from our friends,
 Pitiful execution, by their error,
 Who thought us Greek from our Greek plumes and shields.
 Then with a groan of anger, seeing the virgin
 Wrested from them, Danaans from all sides
 Rallied and attacked us: fiery Ajax,
 Atreus' sons, Dolopians in a mass—
 As, when a cyclone breaks, conflicting winds
 Will come together, Westwind, Southwind, Eastwind
 Riding high out of the Dawnland; forests
 Bend and roar, and raging all in spume
 Nereus with his trident churns the deep.
 Then some whom we had taken by surprise
 Under cover of night throughout the city
 And driven off, came back again: they knew
 Our shields and arms for liars now, our speech
 Alien to their own. They overwhelmed us.
 Coroebus fell at the warrior goddess' altar,
 Killed by Peneleus; and Ripheus fell,
 A man uniquely just among the Trojans,
 The soul of equity; but the gods would have it
 Differently. Hypanis, Dymas died,
 Shot down by friends; nor did your piety,
 Panthus, nor Apollo's fillets shield you
 As you went down.

Ashes of Ilium!

Flames that consumed my people! Here I swear
 That in your downfall I did not avoid
 One weapon, one exchange with the Danaans,
 And if it had been fated, my own hand
 Had earned my death. But we were torn away
 From that place—Iphitus and Pelias too,
 One slow with age, one wounded by Ulysses,
 Called by a clamor at the hall of Priam.
 Truly we found here a prodigious fight,
 As though there were none elsewhere, not a death
 In the whole city: Mars gone berserk, Danaans

In a rush to scale the roof; the gate besieged
 By a tortoise shell of overlapping shields.
 Ladders clung to the wall, and men strove upward
 Before the very doorposts, on the rungs,
 Left hand putting the shield up, and the right
 Reaching for the cornice. The defenders
 Wrenched out upperworks and rooftiles: these
 For missiles, as they saw the end, preparing
 To fight back even on the edge of death.
 And gilded beams, ancestral ornaments,
 They rolled down on the heads below. In hall
 Others with swords drawn held the entrance way,
 Packed there, waiting. Now we plucked up heart
 To help the royal house, to give our men
 A respite, and to add our strength to theirs,
 Though all were beaten. And we had for entrance
 A rear door, secret, giving on a passage
 Between the palace halls; in other days
 Andromachē, poor lady, often used it,
 Going alone to see her husband's parents
 Or taking Astyanax to his grandfather.
 I climbed high on the roof, where hopeless men
 Were picking up and throwing futile missiles.
 Here was a tower like a promontory
 Rising toward the stars above the roof:
 All Troy, the Danaan ships, the Achaean camp,
 Were visible from this. Now close beside it
 With crowbars, where the flooring made loose joints,
 We pried it from its bed and pushed it over.
 Down with a rending crash in sudden ruin
 Wide over the Danaan lines it fell;
 But fresh troops moved up, and the rain of stones
 With every kind of missile never ceased.

Just at the outer doors of the vestibule
 Sprang Pyrrhus, all in bronze and glittering,
 As a serpent, hidden swollen underground
 By a cold winter, writhes into the light,
 On vile grass fed, his old skin cast away,

Renewed and glossy, rolling slippery coils,
 With lifted underbelly rearing sunward
 And triple tongue a-flicker. Close beside him
 Giant Periphas and Automedon,
 His armor-bearer, once Achilles' driver,
 Besieged the place with all the young of Scyros,
 Hurling their torches at the palace roof.
 Pyrrhus shouldering forward with an axe
 Broke down the stony threshold, forced apart
 Hinges and brazen door-jambs, and chopped through
 One panel of the door, splitting the oak,
 To make a window, a great breach. And there
 Before their eyes the inner halls lay open,
 The courts of Priam and the ancient kings,
 With men-at-arms ranked in the vestibule.
 From the interior came sounds of weeping,
 Pitiful commotion, wails of women
 High-pitched, rising in the formal chambers
 To ring against the silent golden stars;
 And, through the palace, mothers wild with fright
 Ran to and fro or clung to doors and kissed them.
 Pyrrhus with his father's brawn stormed on,
 No bolts or bars or men availed to stop him:
 Under his battering the double doors
 Were torn out of their sockets and fell inward.
 Sheer force cleared the way: the Greeks broke through
 Into the vestibule, cut down the guards,
 And made the wide hall seethe with men-at-arms—
 A tumult greater than when dykes are burst
 And a foaming river, swirling out in flood,
 Whelms every parapet and races on
 Through fields and over all the lowland plains,
 Bearing off pens and cattle. I myself
 Saw Neoptolemus furious with blood
 In the entrance way, and saw the two Atridae;
 Hecuba I saw, and her hundred daughters,
 Priam before the altars, with his blood
 Drenching the fires that he himself had blessed.

Those fifty bridal chambers, hope of a line
 So flourishing; those doorways high and proud,
 Adorned with takings of barbaric gold,
 Were all brought low: fire had them, or the Greeks.

What was the fate of Priam, you may ask.
 Seeing his city captive, seeing his own
 Royal portals rent apart, his enemies
 In the inner rooms, the old man uselessly
 Put on his shoulders, shaking with old age,
 Armor unused for years, belted a sword on,
 And made for the massed enemy to die.
 Under the open sky in a central court
 Stood a big altar; near it, a laurel tree
 Of great age, leaning over, in deep shade
 Embowered the Penatēs. At this altar
 Hecuba and her daughters, like white doves
 Blown down in a black storm, clung together,
 Enfolding holy images in their arms.
 Now, seeing Priam in a young man's gear,
 She called out:

'My poor husband, what mad thought
 Drove you to buckle on these weapons?
 Where are you trying to go? The time is past
 For help like this, for this kind of defending,
 Even if my own Hector could be here.
 Come to me now: the altar will protect us,
 Or else you'll die with us.'

She drew him close,
 Heavy with years, and made a place for him
 To rest on the consecrated stone.

Now see
 Politēs, one of Priam's sons, escaped
 From Pyrrhus' butchery and on the run
 Through enemies and spears, down colonnades,
 Through empty courtyards, wounded. Close behind
 Comes Pyrrhus burning for the death-stroke: has him,
 Catches him now, and lunges with the spear.

The boy has reached his parents, and before them
 Goes down, pouring out his life with blood.
 Now Priam, in the very midst of death,
 Would neither hold his peace nor spare his anger.

‘For what you’ve done, for what you’ve dared,’ he said,
 ‘If there is care in heaven for atrocity,
 May the gods render fitting thanks, reward you
 As you deserve. You forced me to look on
 At the destruction of my son: defiled
 A father’s eyes with death. That great Achilles
 You claim to be the son of—and you lie—
 Was not like you to Priam, his enemy;
 To me who threw myself upon his mercy
 He showed compunction, gave me back for burial
 The bloodless corpse of Hector, and returned me
 To my own realm.’

The old man threw his spear
 With feeble impact; blocked by the ringing bronze,
 It hung there harmless from the jutting boss.
 Then Pyrrhus answered:

‘You’ll report the news
 To Pelidēs, my father; don’t forget
 My sad behavior, the degeneracy
 Of Neoptolemus. Now die.’

With this,
 To the altar step itself he dragged him trembling,
 Slipping in the pooled blood of his son,
 And took him by the hair with his left hand.
 The sword flashed in his right; up to the hilt
 He thrust it in his body.

That was the end
 Of Priam’s age, the doom that took him off,
 With Troy in flames before his eyes, his towers
 Headlong fallen—he that in other days
 Had ruled in pride so many lands and peoples,
 The power of Asia.

On the distant shore
 The vast trunk headless lies without a name.

For the first time that night, inhuman shuddering
 Took me, head to foot. I stood unmanned,
 And my dear father's image came to mind
 As our king, just his age, mortally wounded,
 Gasp'd his life away before my eyes.
 Creusa came to mind, too, left alone;
 The house plundered; danger to little Iulus.
 I looked around to take stock of my men,
 But all had left me, utterly played out,
 Giving their beaten bodies to the fire
 Or plunging from the roof.

It came to this,
 That I stood there alone. And then I saw
 Lurking beyond the doorsill of the Vesta,
 In hiding, silent, in that place reserved,
 The daughter of Tyndareus. Glare of fires
 Lighted my steps this way and that, my eyes
 Glancing over the whole scene, everywhere.
 That woman, terrified of the Trojans' hate
 For the city overthrown, terrified too
 Of Danaan vengeance, her abandoned husband's
 Anger after years—Helen, that Fury
 Both to her own homeland and Troy, had gone
 To earth, a hated thing, before the altars.
 Now fires blazed up in my own spirit—
 A passion to avenge my fallen town
 And punish Helen's whorishness.

'Shall this one
 Look untouched on Sparta and Mycenae
 After her triumph, going like a queen,
 And see her home and husband, kin and children,
 With Trojan girls for escort, Phrygian slaves?
 Must Priam perish by the sword for this?
 Troy burn, for this? Dardania's littoral
 Be soaked in blood, so many times, for this?

Not by my leave. I know
 No glory comes of punishing a woman,
 The feat can bring no honor. Still, I'll be
 Approved for snuffing out a monstrous life,
 For a just sentence carried out. My heart
 Will teem with joy in this avenging fire,
 And the ashes of my kin will be appeased.'

So ran my thoughts. I turned wildly upon her,
 But at that moment, clear, before my eyes—
 Never before so clear—in a pure light
 Stepping before me, radiant through the night,
 My loving mother came: immortal, tall,
 And lovely as the lords of heaven know her.
 Catching me by the hand, she held me back,
 Then with her rose-red mouth reproved me:

'Son,

Why let such suffering goad you on to fury
 Past control? Where is your thoughtfulness
 For me, for us? Will you not first revisit
 The place you left your father, worn and old,
 Or find out if your wife, Creusa, lives,
 And the young boy, Ascanius—all these
 Cut off by Greck troops foraging everywhere?
 Had I not cared for them, fire would by now
 Have taken them, their blood glutted the sword.
 You must not hold the woman of Laconia,
 That hated face, the cause of this, nor Paris.
 The harsh will of the gods it is, the gods,
 That overthrows the splendor of this place
 And brings Troy from her height into the dust.
 Look over there: I'll tear away the cloud
 That curtains you, and films your mortal sight,
 The fog around you.—Have no fear of doing
 Your mother's will, or balk at obeying her.—
 Look: where you see high masonry thrown down,
 Stone torn from stone, with billowing smoke and dust,
 Neptune is shaking from their beds the walls

That his great trident pried up, undermining,
 Toppling the whole city down. And look:
 Juno in all her savagery holds
 The Scaean Gates, and raging in steel armor
 Calls her allied army from the ships.
 Up on the citadel—turn, look—Pallas Tritonia
 Couched in a stormcloud, lightening, with her Gorgon!
 The Father himself empowers the Danaans,
 Urges assaulting gods on the defenders.
 Away, child; put an end to toiling so.
 I shall be near, to see you safely home.’

She hid herself in the deep gloom of night,
 And now the dire forms appeared to me
 Of great immortals, enemies of Troy.
 I knew the end then: Ilium was going down
 In fire, the Troy of Neptune going down,
 As in high mountains when the countrymen
 Have notched an ancient ash, then make their axes
 Ring with might and main, chopping away
 To fell the tree—ever on the point of falling,
 Shaken through all its foliage, and the treetop
 Nodding; bit by bit the strokes prevail
 Until it gives a final groan at last
 And crashes down in ruin from the height.

Now I descended where the goddess guided,
 Clear of the flames, and clear of enemies,
 For both retired; so gained my father’s door,
 My ancient home. I looked for him at once,
 My first wish being to help him to the mountains;
 But with Troy gone he set his face against it,
 Not to prolong his life, or suffer exile.

‘The rest of you, all in your prime,’ he said,
 ‘Make your escape; you are still hale and strong.
 If heaven’s lords had wished me a longer span
 They would have saved this home for me. I call it

More than enough that once before I saw
 My city taken and wrecked, and went on living.
 Here is my death bed, here. Take leave of me.
 Depart now. I'll find death with my sword arm.
 The enemy will oblige; they'll come for spoils.
 Burial can be dispensed with. All these years
 I've lingered in my impotence, at odds
 With heaven, since the Father of gods and men
 Breathed high winds of thunderbolt upon me
 And touched me with his fire.'

He spoke on

In the same vein, inflexible. The rest of us,
 Creusa and Ascanius and the servants,
 Begged him in tears not to pull down with him
 Our lives as well, adding his own dead weight
 To the fates' pressure. But he would not budge,
 He held to his resolve and to his chair.
 I felt swept off again to fight, in misery
 Longing for death. What choices now were open,
 What chance had I?

'Did you suppose, my father,
 That I could tear myself away and leave you?
 Unthinkable; how could a father say it?
 Now if it please the powers above that nothing
 Stand of this great city; if your heart
 Is set on adding your own death and ours
 To that of Troy, the door's wide open for it:
 Pyrrhus will be here, splashed with Priam's blood;
 He kills the son before his father's eyes,
 The father at the altars.

My dear mother,

Was it for this, through spears and fire, you brought me,
 To see the enemy deep in my house,
 To see my son, Ascanius, my father,
 And near them both, Creusa,
 Butchered in one another's blood? My gear,
 Men, bring my gear. The last light calls the conquered.
 Give me back to the Greeks. Let me take up

The combat once again. We shall not all
Die this day unavenged.'

I buckled on
Swordbelt and blade and slid my left forearm
Into the shield-strap, turning to go out,
But at the door Creusa hugged my knees,
Then held up little Iulus to his father.

'If you are going out to die, take us
To face the whole thing with you. If experience
Leads you to put some hope in weaponry
Such as you now take, guard your own house here.
When you have gone, to whom is Iulus left?
Your father? Wife?—one called that long ago.'

She went on, and her wailing filled the house,
But then a sudden portent came, a marvel:
Amid his parents' hands and their sad faces
A point on Iulus' head seemed to cast light,
A tongue of flame that touched but did not burn him,
Licking his fine hair, playing round his temples.
We, in panic, beat at the flaming hair
And put the sacred fire out with water;
Father Anchises lifted his eyes to heaven
And lifted up his hands, his voice, in joy:

'Omnipotent Jupiter, if prayers affect you,
Look down upon us, that is all I ask,
If by devotion to the gods we earn it,
Grant us a new sign, and confirm this portent!
The old man barely finished when it thundered
A loud crack on the left. Out of the sky
Through depths of night a star fell trailing flame
And glided on, turning the night to day.
We watched it pass above the roof and go
To hide its glare, its trace, in Ida's wood;
But still, behind, the luminous furrow shone
And wide zones fumed with sulphur.

Now indeed

My father, overcome, addressed the gods,
And rose in worship of the blessed star.

'Now, now, no more delay. I'll follow you.
Where you conduct me, there I'll be.

Gods of my fathers,

Preserve this house, preserve my grandson. Yours
This portent was. Troy's life is in your power.
I yield. I go as your companion, son.'
Then he was still. We heard the blazing town
Crackle more loudly, felt the scorching heat.

'Then come, dear father. Arms around my neck:
I'll take you on my shoulders, no great weight.
Whatever happens, both will face one danger,
Find one safety. Iulus will come with me,
My wife at a good interval behind.
Servants, give your attention to what I say.
At the gate inland there's a funeral mound
And an old shrine of Ceres the Bereft;
Near it an ancient cypress, kept alive
For many years by our fathers' piety.
By various routes we'll come to that one place.
Father, carry our hearthgods, our Penatēs.
It would be wrong for me to handle them—
Just come from such hard fighting, bloody work—
Until I wash myself in running water.'

When I had said this, over my breadth of shoulder
And bent neck, I spread out a lion skin
For tawny cloak and stooped to take his weight.
Then little Iulus put his hand in mine
And came with shorter steps beside his father.
My wife fell in behind. Through shadowed places
On we went, and I, lately unmoved
By any spears thrown, any squads of Greeks,
Felt terror now at every eddy of wind,
Alarm at every sound, alert and worried

Alike for my companion and my burden.
 I had got near the gate, and now I thought
 We had made it all the way, when suddenly
 A noise of running feet came near at hand,
 And peering through the gloom ahead, my father
 Cried out:

‘Run, boy; here they come; I see
 Flame light on shields, bronze shining.’

I took fright,
 And some unfriendly power, I know not what,
 Stole all my addled wits—for as I turned
 Aside from the known way, entering a maze
 Of pathless places on the run—

Alas,
 Creusa, taken from us by grim fate, did she
 Linger, or stray, or sink in weariness?
 There is no telling. Never would she be
 Restored to us. Never did I look back
 Or think to look for her, lost as she was,
 Until we reached the funeral mound and shrine
 Of venerable Ceres. Here at last
 All came together, but she was not there;
 She alone failed her friends, her child, her husband.
 Out of my mind, whom did I not accuse,
 What man or god? What crueller loss had I
 Beheld, that night the city fell? Ascanius,
 My father, and the Teucrian Penatès,
 I left in my friends’ charge, and hid them well
 In a hollow valley.

I turned back alone
 Into the city, cinching my bright harness.
 Nothing for it but to run the risks
 Again, go back again, comb all of Troy,
 And put my life in danger as before:
 First by the town wall, then the gate, all gloom,
 Through which I had come out—and so on backward,
 Tracing my own footsteps through the night;
 And everywhere my heart misgave me: even
 Stillness had its terror. Then to our house,

Thinking she might, just might, have wandered there.
 Danaans had got in and filled the place,
 And at that instant fire they had set,
 Consuming it, went roofward in a blast;
 Flames leaped and seethed in heat to the night sky.
 I pressed on, to see Priam's hall and tower.
 In the bare colonnades of Juno's shrine
 Two chosen guards, Phoenix and hard Ulysses,
 Kept watch over the plunder. Piled up here
 Were treasures of old Troy from every quarter,
 Torn out of burning temples: altar tables,
 Robes, and golden bowls. Drawn up around them,
 Boys and frightened mothers stood in line.
 I even dared to call out in the night;
 I filled the streets with calling; in my grief
 Time after time I groaned and called Creusa,
 Frantic, in endless quest from door to door.
 Then to my vision her sad wraith appeared—
 Creusa's ghost, larger than life, before me.
 Chilled to the marrow, I could feel the hair
 On my head rise, the voice clot in my throat;
 But she spoke out to ease me of my fear:

'What's to be gained by giving way to grief
 So madly, my sweet husband? Nothing here
 Has come to pass except as heaven willed.
 You may not take Creusa with you now;
 It was not so ordained, nor does the lord
 Of high Olympus give you leave. For you
 Long exile waits, and long sea miles to plough.
 You shall make landfall on Hesperia
 Where Lydian Tiber flows, with gentle pace,
 Between rich farmlands, and the years will bear
 Glad peace, a kingdom, and a queen for you.
 Dismiss these tears for your beloved Creusa.
 I shall not see the proud homelands of Myrmidons
 Or of Dolopians, or go to serve
 Greek ladies, Dardan lady that I am
 And daughter-in-law of Venus the divine.

No: the great mother of the gods detains me
 Here on these shores. Farewell now; cherish still
 Your son and mine.'

With this she left me weeping,
 Wishing that I could say so many things,
 And faded on the tenuous air. Three times
 I tried to put my arms around her neck,
 Three times enfolded nothing, as the wraith
 Slipped through my fingers, bodiless as wind,
 Or like a flitting dream.

So in the end
 As night waned I rejoined my company.
 And there to my astonishment I found
 New refugees in a great crowd: men and women
 Gathered for exile, young—pitiful people
 Coming from every quarter, minds made up,
 With their belongings, for whatever lands
 I'd lead them to by sea.

The morning star
 Now rose on Ida's ridges, bringing day.
 Greeks had secured the city gates. No help
 Or hope of help existed.
 So I resigned myself, picked up my father,
 And turned my face toward the mountain range.

Lines 788-804

BOOK



SEA WANDERINGS
AND STRANGE
MEETINGS

Now our high masters had seen fit to visit
Upon the Asian power of Priam's house
Unmerited ruin, and the seagod's town,
Proud Ilium, lay smoking on the earth,
Our minds were turned by auguries of heaven
To exile in far quarters of the world.
By Antander, below Ida's hills, we toiled
To build a fleet, though none could say where fate
Would take or settle us. Then we held muster
Of all our able-bodied men.

When summer
Had just begun, Anchises gave the word
To hoist sail to the winds of destiny.
Weeping, I drew away from our old country,
Our quiet harbors, and the coastal plain
Where Troy had been: I took to the open sea,
Borne outward into exile with my people,
My son, my hearth gods, and the greater gods.

Beyond that water lies the land of Mars—
Great plains plowed by the men of Thrace, and ruled
In ancient days by cruel Lycurgus. Guesthood
And common household gods had bound this realm
To Troy while Fortune held. Now making landfall
Under the southwind there, I plotted out
On that curved shore the walls of a colony—

Though fate opposed it—and I devised the name
Acneadae for the people, from my own.

As I made offering to Dione's daughter,
My divine mother, and to other gods
Who give protection to a work begun,
I readied for the knife, there by the sea,
A sleek bull to the overlord of heaven.
Now as it happened the ground rose nearby
In a low hummock, overgrown with cornel
And myrtle saplings flickering in a thicket.
I stepped over, trying to tear away
Green stuff out of the mound to make a roof
Of boughs and leaves over the altar. There
I had sight of a gruesome prodigy
Beyond description: when the first stalk came torn
Out of the earth, and the root network burst,
Dark blood dripped down to soak and foul the soil.
Shuddering took me, my heart's blood ran slow
And chill with fear. But once more I went forward
And fought to pull another stubborn shoot,
To find what cause lay hid there—and again
Dark crimson blood ran out of the ripped bark.
My spirit strove hard; I paid reverence
To nymphs of the wild woods and Father Mars,
Guardian of Thrace, that they might make this vision
Turn to good, and lift away the omen.
Then I doubled my effort, a third time
Wrenched at a green shoot, grappling on my knees
Against the sandy ground. Should I tell this
Or hold my peace? A groan came from the mound,
A sobbing muffled in the depth of earth,
And words were carried upward:
 'Must you rend me,
Derelict that I am, Aeneas? Spare me,
Now I am in the grave; spare your clean hands
Defilement. I am no foreigner; old Troy
Gave birth to me; this blood drips from no tree.
Ah, put the savage land behind you! Leave

This shore of greed! For I am Polydorus.
 An iron hedge of spears covered my body,
 Pinned down here, and the pointed shafts took root.'

At this be sure that in a maze of dread
 I stopped appalled, my hair stood up, my voice
 Choked in my throat. This man, this Polydorus,
 Ill-starred Priam had sent some years before
 In secret, with great weight of gold, to be
 Maintained by the Thracian king. That was a time
 When Priam's trust in Dardan arms had faltered
 As he saw Ilium ringed in siege. The Thracian—
 After the shattering of Trojan power,
 After Fortune had left us—threw in his lot
 With Agamemnon's cause and winning arms,
 Broke every pact and oath, killed Polydorus,
 And took the gold by force. To what extremes
 Will you not drive the hearts of men, accurst
 Hunger for gold!

When faintness of dread left me,
 I brought before the leaders of the people,
 My father first, these portents of the gods
 And asked their judgment. All were of one mind,
 We should withdraw from that earth stained with blood,
 With guesthood so profaned, and give our ships
 The winds and sea again. For Polydorus
 Therefore we held a funeral: on his grave
 We heaped up earth, and altars to the Dead
 Were decked with night-blue bands and cypress gloom,
 Round which our women mourned with hair unbound.
 We brought up foaming bowls of milk, with shallow
 Cups of consecrated blood to pour,
 And put to rest the spirit in the tomb,
 Giving the last loud cry.

When seas offshore
 Looked promising and smiled back at the wind,
 A halyard-snapping land breeze calling seaward,
 Our men crowded the beaches, launched the ships,
 And out we sailed as shorelines fell behind.

Midsea a holy island lies, most dear
 To Aegean Neptune and the Nercids' mother.
 Once in its course afloat from coast to coast
 The filial Archer God had tied it up
 To Myconus, the seamark, and to Gyarus,
 Enabling it at rest to scorn the winds.
 Here we put in, and the serene island haven
 Welcomed our tired men. We went ashore
 In pilgrimage to Apollo's town. King Anius,
 Both king of Delians and priest of Phoebus,
 Garlanded in snowy wool and laurel,
 Came to meet us, greeting his old friend,
 Anchises. We joined hands, then at his side
 Entered the temple of the god. I paid
 My homage to that shrine of ancient stone,
 Praying: 'O God of Thymbra, grant a home
 And walls to weary men, grant us posterity
 And an abiding city; guard our second
 Tower of Troy, this remnant left alive
 By Danaan swords and pitiless Achilles.
 Whom should we follow? Or by what sea way
 Dost thou direct us? Where may we settle now?
 Father, grant us a sign, enter our hearts!'

These words were barely uttered, when it seemed
 Of a sudden everything shook: doorsills and laurel,
 The whole ridge round us quaking; and the caldron
 Sang low from the sanctum, now thrown open.
 We pitched down prone, and a voice rang in our ears:

'Tough sons of Dardanus, the self-same land
 That bore you from your primal parent stock
 Will take you to her fertile breast again.
 Look for your mother of old. Aeneas' house
 In her will rule the world's shores down the years,
 Through generations of his children's children.'

So rang the god's voice. Then our voices rose
 In tumult, jubilant; but everyone
 Inquired what and where that place could be
 To which the god summoned us wanderers
 And called it a return. Soon then my father,
 Calling up memories of ancient men,
 Spoke out:

‘Sirs, listen to me and be clear
 As to your hopes. Midsea great Jove's great island,
 Crete, lies southward. There's Mount Ida, there
 The cradle of our people. Cretans hold
 One hundred cities, fertile and wide domains.
 From there, if I recall it well, our first
 Forefather, Teucus, sailed to the coast around
 Point Rhoeteum and chose it for his kingdom.
 As yet no Ilium stood, no citadel;
 The settlers lived in lowlands, river valleys.
 There was the origin of Mount Cybelus'
 Mother goddess, with her Corybantës'
 Brazen ringing cups, her grove on Ida;
 There were her mysteries, devoutly kept,
 And the yoked lions of Our Lady's car.
 Come then, we'll follow where the gods command,
 Court favor of the winds, and lay our course
 For Cnossus country—no long sail: let Jupiter
 Fill our canvas and we beach on Crete
 At sunrise the third day.’

His counsel given,
 He slaughtered ritual beasts upon the altars—
 A bull to Neptune and a bull to thee,
 Comely Apollo; to the god of Storm
 A black ram, and a white one to the Zephyrs.
 Rumor now flew about that Crete's great captain,
 Idomeneus, had left his father's kingdom,
 Driven away, so there were lands abandoned,
 Free of our enemies, and homes on Crete
 Awaiting settlers. Out from Ortygia's cove
 We spread our wings to fly over the sea,
 Past Naxos and the Maenad heights, then past

Donyssa's greenery, Olëaros, and snow-white
 Rifts of Paros—all the Cycladës
 That stud that reach of sea. We sailed along
 Through channels between shore on foaming shore,
 As men vied at ship-handling, shouting out
 And cheering one another: 'On to Crete!
 On to our ancestors!' And from astern
 The wind blew, freshening, to chase us on.

At last we ran in to the ancient land
 Of the Curetës. I could barely wait
 To build our hoped-for city walls, to be
 Called Pergamum, I said. I urged the people,
 Who loved the name, to love their new-found hearths
 And raise a citadel above the town.
 Our ships were not long cradled on dry land,
 Our men not long engaged in marriages
 Or sowing the new fields, while I gave out
 Homesteads and laws, when, without warning, plague,
 Out of infected air to sap our bodies
 Came on us pitiable to see, and came
 To blight our trees and crops—a year of death.
 People relinquished their sweet lives or dragged
 Their wasted bodies on; the Dog Star burned
 Our green plantations barren, and our grassland
 Withered; sickly stalks denied us food.
 Again to Delos' oracle and Phoebus
 Father pressed me—back on our sea-track,
 To beg again the favor of the god:
 What end would he afford our weariness?
 Where might we turn for help, where set our course?

Night deepened; sleep on earth held living things;
 But now the sacred images of the gods,
 The Phrygian hearth-gods I had brought with me
 From Troy, out of the fire, seemed to stand
 Before me where I lay in sleep. I saw them
 Plain in the pure light cast by the full moon
 Edging its way into unshuttered windows.

Then it seemed they spoke to comfort me
With these words:

‘All Apollo would have told you,
Delos regained, he will deliver here.
See how he sends us here of his own will
Into your room. We are the gods who came
Along with you, and joined your cause, when Troy
Went down in flames; we are the gods who crossed
The deepsea swell in ships at your command,
And we are those who will exalt your sons
To starry heaven and give your town dominion.
You must prepare great walls for a great race.
Keep up the long toil of your flight. Your settlement
Must be changed. This coast is not the one
Apollo of Delos urged you toward, nor did he
Bid you stay on Crete. There is a country,
Hesperia, as the Greeks have named it—ancient,
Full of man-power in war and fruitful earth;
Oenotrians lived there once; then by report
New generations called it Italy
After their leader. Our true home is there,
Dardanus came from there, and Iasius,
Forefathers of our people. Up with you,
Be glad, and tell your father full of years
What has been said here, with no room for doubt.
Look for Corythus and Ausonian country;
Lands under Dictæ Jupiter denies you.’

Breathless with awe at these appearances,
At the divine voice—and all this no dream;
No—for I saw them, large as life, before me,
The veiled heads and the faces near at hand,
So cold sweat soaked me head to foot—
I tore myself from bed; I lifted up
My hands and voice to heaven; then I poured
Pure offerings at the fire. These rites performed
To my satisfaction, I recounted all
That strange event in sequence to Anchises.
He saw the ambiguity of the two

Ancestral lines, the double parentage,
His late-born error about ancient places.
Then he said:

‘Son (pitted as you are
Against the fates of Ilium) Cassandra
Alone made such a prophecy to me.
I call it back now: how she would foretell
This future for our people, saying often
Hesperia, and the realm of Italy.
But who could think the Trojans would migrate
To evening lands? Or whom then could Cassandra
Move by foresight? We should yield to Phoebus,
Taking a better course, as we are shown.’

With this we were all happy to comply.
We soon abandoned the new colony,
Leaving few souls behind, and making sail
In the decked ships we took to the waste sea.

When we had gained the offing to the west,
No land in sight now, but sky everywhere
And everywhere the sea, a thunderhead
Rose high above us, bringing gloom and storm
With crisping dark grey water. Soon the winds
Made the sea rise and big waves came against us.
This way and that we tossed in the great welter;
Low scud muffled daylight; night and rain
Wiped out the sky; flash after flash of lightning
Ripped from the burst clouds.

We were blown off course
And veered in darkness over the waves. My pilot,
Palinurus himself, could barely tell
Day from night, he said, and sighting nothing
But sea about us, could not keep direction.

Three days on the deep sea muffled in fog,
 Three starless nights we wandered blind. At dawn
 On the fourth day we raised land far away
 In clearing weather, hilltops and then smoke
 A-spiral in calm air. Our sails came down,
 We took to the oars. No dallying: the seamen
 Heaved up whorls of foam on the dark blue sea,
 Pulling across it.

Safe now from the stormwave,
 I took shelter first on the Strophadēs—
 For so the Greek name goes—islands that lie
 In the broad Ionian sea. There nest the vile
 Celacno and her Harpy sisterhood,
 Shut out, now, from the house of Phineus,
 As they were frightened from old banquets there.
 No gloomier monster, no more savage pest
 And scourge sent by the gods' wrath ever mounted
 From the black Stygian water—flying things
 With young girls' faces, but foul ooze below,
 Talons for hands, pale famished nightmare mouths.

When we pulled in to port, what met our eyes
 But sleek herds in the meadows everywhere
 And flocks of goats, no one attending them.
 Setting upon them with our swords, we sent up
 Shouts to the gods, to Jove himself, to share
 The windfall with us; then on the curving beach
 We set out couches for a savory feast.
 But instantly, grotesquely whirring down,
 The Harpies were upon us from the hills
 With deafening beat of wings. They trounced our meat,
 Defiling everything they touched with filth,
 And gave an obscene squawk amid the stench.
 We tried again. In a secluded gorge
 Under a cliffside, in thick shade of trees,
 We set our tables up, relit our altars.
 But the loud horde again, from another quarter,
 Came out of hiding, swooped down on the prey

With hooked feet, hunched to feed, and spoiled our feast.
 I then gave orders to resort to arms
 And make war on the vicious flock. My men
 Did as commanded, laid their swords nearby,
 Hidden in grass, and kept shields out of sight.
 Now when the birds flew down along the cove
 Once more with their infernal din, Miscnus
 From a high lookout sounded the alarm
 On his brass horn. Into their midst my men
 Attacked and tried a strange new form of battle,
 To cut the indecent seabirds down in blood.
 But they received no impact on their feathers,
 Took on their backs no wounding cut: too quick,
 They soared away into the upper air,
 Leaving the prey half eaten and befouled.
 Only Cclaeno, perched on a high crag,
 A ghastly witch, brought words out, croaking down:

'So war is all you give in recompense
 For slaughter of bulls and bullocks, can it be,
 Heirs of Laomedon? You'd arm for war
 To drive the innocent Harpies from their country?
 Then put your mind on what I prophesy: a thing
 Foretold to Phoebus by the almighty father
 And by Apollo then to me; now I,
 First of the Furies, will disclose it to you.
 Italy is the land you look for; well,
 The winds will blow, you'll find your Italy,
 You'll be allowed to enter port;
 But you may never wall your destined city
 Till deathly famine, for the bloodshed here,
 Has made you grind your tables with your teeth!'

On this she took wing back into the forest.
 But our men of a sudden felt their blood
 Run cold, and lost all heart. Not with arms now
 But prayers and vows they begged me to make peace,
 Whether these foes were goddesses or birds,
 Obscene and dire. My father, facing seaward,

Hands held out, invoked the heavenly powers
 And pledged the rituals due them. 'Gods,' he said,
 'Turn back this thing foreboded! Gods, avert
 Disaster of that kind! Cherish your faithful!'

Hawsers were cast off at his word, and sheets
 Paid out to tugging canvas, as the Southwind
 Filled the sails. Over the whitecapped waves
 We fled while wind and pilot called our course.
 And soon out of the sea we raised Zacynthos'
 Leafy bulk, Dulichium and Samē,
 Craggy Neritos; past the rocks of Ithaca,
 Laërtes' realm, we ran, and cursed that island
 Nurse of cruel Ulysses. Before long
 The cloudy peaks of the Leucatan mountain
 Came in view—Apollo's promontory,
 Seamen are wary of. Here we put in
 And hauled up, tired, near the little town,
 Our anchors out, our sterns high on the shingle.

Then, having gained this land beyond our reckoning,
 We purified ourselves in the sight of Jove
 And lit with offerings our altar fires,
 Then on the Actian shore held games of Ilium.
 The men, all naked, slippery with oil,
 Fought bouts in our traditional wrestling style,
 Glad to have run past all those Argive towns
 And carried out our flight amid our foes.
 The sun went slanting round the mighty year,
 And freezing winter came, roughing the sea
 With northern gales. Against the temple columns
 I nailed a shield great Abas carried once,
 All rounded bronze, and cut this legend on it:
Aeneas from victorious Greeks these arms.

Then I ordered the rowing benches manned,
 The harbor left behind. They made a race of it,
 My men, digging their oars into the swell
 And surging on. Phaeacia's airy towers
 Hove in sight and dropped away behind.
 We passed along the coastline of Epirus
 To Port Chaonia, where we put in,
 Below Buthrotum on the height.

And here

An unbelievable story reached our ears:
 That Helcnus, the son of Priam, now
 Ruled over cities of the Greeks, as heir
 To Pyrrhus' wife and power; Andromachē
 Had found again a husband of her nation.
 It made me stare, and in my heart I burned
 With measureless desire to speak to him,
 To learn of that strange turn of life. So upward
 Inland I went, leaving the port and ships.
 And, as it happened, at that hour she,
 Andromachē, in a grove outside the city
 Beside a brook, thin replica of Simois,
 Was making from a ceremonial meal
 Her offerings and libation to the dust,
 Calling the great shade at a tomb called Hector's
 Made by her—an empty mound of turf
 Where she had blessed twin altars for her tears.
 But when she saw me coming, saw the men
 Around me in Trojan arms, her mind misgave,
 And, gazing at this ghostliness in terror,
 She stood there pale and rigid, till the warmth
 Ebbled from her and she swooned. And it was long
 Before she spoke, or barely spoke:

Your face,

Can it be real? And you real, messenger,
 Coming before me? Goddess-born? Alive?
 Or if sweet daylight left your eyes forever,
 Where is my Hector?

Then she wept and filled
 The grove with wailing. I had difficulty

Forcing a few words out amid her passion,
So overcome I felt, but murmured to her:

'Alive, oh yes; through every mortal danger
This world holds, I carry on my life.
Be sure that what you see is real.

Ah, tell me,
Since you were so bereft of such a husband,
What change has come to your relief?
What fortune worthy of the wife of Hector,
Andromachë? Then Pyrrhus' wife and slave?'

She bent her head, with eyes downcast, and whispered:

'Happiest of us all was Priam's daughter,
The virgin picked to die at the great tomb,
Below Troy wall, of our dead enemy.
She never had to bear the slave's allotment,
Never laid hands on a lord and master's bed.
But when our native city burned, we others
Were shipped out through far seas. I bore the pride
And insolence of Achilles' warrior son,
Being brought to bed, in slavery, of his child.
He turned then to a bride in Lacedaemon,
Leda's daughter, Hermionë. He made me
Over to Helenus, to another slave.
But now Pyrrhus is dead. Orestes, hot
With lust for her whom he thought stolen from him,
And maddened by the Furies for spilt blood,
Caught Pyrrhus unprepared and cut him down
Before his father's altar.

By that death
Part of the kingdom passed to Helenus.
He called the plains Chaonian, the realm
Itself Chaonia—from the Trojan Chaon—
And built a Pergamum, a citadel,
Called Ilium's, on this ridge. As to yourself,
What winds of destiny gave you this voyage?
Which of the gods impelled you, all unknowing,

Here to our coast? What of your child, Ascanius?
 Alive still, nourished still by the world's air?
 Even at Troy, one thought . . .

But does the boy
 Remember her, the mother who was lost?
 And do his father and his uncle Hector
 Stir him to old-time valor and manliness?

So she poured out her questions, all in tears,
 Her long and vain lament, when the great soldier
 And son of Priam, Helenus, approached
 From the townside, with many in his train.
 In his great joy at knowing us for kindred
 He led us then to the city gate, by turns
 Weeping and speaking. Walking along with him
 I saw before me Troy in miniature,
 A slender copy of our massive tower,
 A dry brooklet named Xanthus . . . and I pressed
 My body against a Scaean Gate. Those with me
 Feasted their eyes on this, our kinsmen's town.
 In spacious colonnades the king received them,
 And offering mid-court their cups of wine
 They made libation, while on plates of gold
 A feast was brought before them.

That day passed,
 And other days. Then sailing weather came
 When canvas bellied out, filled by a southwind.
 Now I put questions to the seer. I said:

'Trojan interpreter of the gods' will,
 You know the mind of Phoebus, know his tripod,
 Know the Apolline laurel; know the stars,
 The tongues of birds, and all the signs of birdflight.
 Prophecy for me! As you know, the powers
 Favored me with directions for my sailing:
 All the divine speech from the shrines agreed
 I must find Italy, must pioneer
 In those far lands. The Harpy called Celaeno

Riddled the only strange and evil sign:
 Of pallid famine, and the wrath of heaven.
 What dangers must I steer away from first?
 How set my course to conquer that distress?'

Helenus cut down bullocks at his altar
 With ceremony, begged the gods for peace,
 Unbound the sacred ribbons from his head,
 And took me by the hand, leading me in
 A-tingle at the overshadowing power—
 O Phoebus! in thy shrine;
 Then with oracular voice the priest addressed me:

'Born of the goddess, highest auspices
 Are clearly to be seen for your sea faring,
 The Lord God deals out destiny so
 And turns the wheel of change; so turns the world.
 A few things, out of many, shall I tell you,
 So you may cross the welcoming seas
 More safely, to find harbor in Ausonia;
 Other details of time to come the Parcae
 Keep from Helenus, and Saturn's daughter,
 Juno, will not allow him speech of these.

That Italy you think so near, with ports
 You think to enter, ignorant as you are,
 Lies far, past far lands, by untraveled ways.
 You are to make the oar bend off Trinacria,
 To pass Ausonian water, lakes of the underworld,
 The island home of Circe the Aeaeon,
 Before your walls can rise in a safe country.
 Here are signs for you to keep in mind:
 When in anxiety by a stream apart
 Beneath shore oaks you find a giant sow,
 Snow-white, reclining there, suckling a litter
 Of thirty snow-white young: that place will be
 Your haven after toil, site of your town.
 And have no fear of table-biting times;

The fates will find a way for you; Apollo
Will be at hand when called.

But now avoid

The shoreline to the west, a part of Italy
Lapped by the tide of our own sea: the towns
Are all inhabited by evil Greeks.

Here the Locrians founded a colony
And Lycian Idomeneus with soldiers
Took the Sallentine Plain; here is that town
Of Philoctetes, captain of Meliboea,
Little Petelia, buttressed by her wall.

Another thing: when you have crossed and moored
Your ships ashore, there to put up your altars
For offerings, veil your head in a red robe
Against intrusions on your holy fires,
Omen-unsettling sights amid your prayers.
You and your company retain this ritual
Veiling in the future, let your progeny
Hold to religious purity thereby.

Now then: at sea again, as the wind takes you
Toward the Sicilian shore, and headlands northward
Dwindle up the Narrows of Pelorus,
Steer for the coast to port, the seas to port,
A long sail round, away from shores to starboard.
These land-masses in the past, they say,
Though one unbroken mainland long ago,
In cataclysm leaped apart: a change
That the long ages of the past could bring—
The sea rushed in between, to cut away
Hesperia's flank from Sicily, and washed
With narrow tide the Sundered shores and towns.
Now Scylla haunts the starboard side, Charybdis,
Never appeased, the side to port—and deep
In her whirlpool gulps down the great sea waves
Three times a day and spews them up again,
Sending the whiplash of her spray to heaven.
Scylla lies immured in a rocky cave
In clefts of inky darkness, darting out

Her faces, pulling ships on to the reef.
 First she looks human—a fair-breasted girl
 Down to the groin; but then, below, a monster
 Creature of the sea, a wolvisb belly
 Merging in dolphins' tails. Better to round
 The seamark of Pachynus, and stand out
 To sea, taking the long route west, than sight
 Weird Scylla in her overhanging gloom
 And froth of rocks where sea-green hounds give tongue.
 Further, if Helenus can look ahead,
 If you can trust a seer, and if Apollo
 Fills his mind with truth, I have one thing
 To tell you, over and over again, one thing
 To warn you of, son of the goddess: make
 Your prayer first of all to Juno's godhead,
 Chant with a will your vows to her: secure
 With humble gifts the power of that lady,
 So in the end in triumph, with Trinacria
 Left behind, you will be sent to Italy.
 Ashore there, when you reach the town of Cumae,
 Avernus' murmuring forests, haunted lakes,
 You'll see a spellbound prophetess, who sings
 In her deep cave of destinies, confiding
 Symbols and words to leaves. Whatever verse
 She writes, the virgin puts each leaf in order
 Back in the cave; unshuffled they remain;
 But when a faint breeze through a door ajar
 Comes in to stir and scatter the light leaves,
 She never cares to catch them as they flutter
 Or to restore them, or to join the verses;
 Visitors, unenlightened, turn away
 And hate the Sibyl's shrine.

But here no thought
 Of time spent in delay should count with you—
 Though crews reproach you, though the course you set
 Call seaward now, and you can fill your sails
 With wind in the right quarter, even so
 Pray to the prophetess that she herself

Consent to utter and chant her oracles.
 She will inform you of the Italian tribes,
 The wars to come, the way you should avoid
 Each difficulty, or face it. Do her reverence
 And she will bring you through, by sea and land.
 These are the matters I may warn you of.
 Go, and exalt the might of Troy in action.'

When he had said all this in friendliness,
 The seer commanded gifts of heavy gold
 And carven ivory brought to the ships.
 He stowed masses of silver between decks
 With cauldrons of Dodona, then a cuirass
 Woven of chain mail triply laced with gold,
 And a magnificent helm plumed at the peak,
 The arms of Neoptolemus. Special gifts
 Went to my father. Then he added horses,
 Pilots, too, and oarsmen as required,
 And fitted out my fighting men with arms.
 Meanwhile Anchises ordered sails unhoused
 To catch a favoring wind without delay.
 Now the diviner of Apollo, bowing
 In august deference, said to him:

'Anchises,
 Chosen by Venus for the pride of marriage,
 Cared for by heaven, brought to safety twice
 From ruined Pergamum: look toward your land,
 Ausonia; make sail for it and take it.
 And yet this shoreline you must skirt by sea;
 The sector of Ausonia meant by Apollo
 Lies far away. Embark now, fortunate
 In the devotion of your son. Should I
 Detain you by more talk while the winds rise?'

Andromachē, too, sad at this last farewell,
 Brought out embroidered robes, and cloth of gold,
 And for Ascanius a Phrygian mantle.
 Not to be outdone in courtesy,
 She gave armfuls of woven gifts, and said:

'Take these things, too, and may they be remembrances
 Of my hands, child, and token of my love,
 The long love of Andromachē, Hector's dearest.
 Final gifts of your own people: take them,
 You that alone remind me of Astyanax.
 His eyes, his hands, his look—all were like yours.
 He would be your age, growing up like you.'

I said farewell, and tears came as I spoke:

'Be happy, friends; your fortune is achieved,
 While one fate beckons us and then another.
 Here is your quiet rest: no sea to plow,
 No quest for dim lands of Ausonia
 Receding ever. Here before your eyes
 Are replicas of Xanthus and of Troy
 Your own hands built—with better auspices,
 I pray, and less a challenge to the Greeks.
 If one day I shall enter Tiber stream
 And Tiber fields and see the walls my people
 Have in store for them, then of these kindred
 Cities, neighboring nations, in Epirus
 And in Hesperia, both looking back
 To Dardanus as founder, both to one
 Sad history, we shall make a single Troy
 In spirit: may this task await our heirs.'

W

e set sail for Ceraunia nearby
 To cross from there, the short sea-route to Italy.
 The sun went west, the hills grew dark. Then down
 We threw ourselves upon the welcome land,
 Assigned the oars for next day, scattered all
 Along the dry beach to take food and rest,
 And sleep came soft as dew on tired men.

Now Night drawn by the Hours had not yet reached
 The midpoint of her course when Palinurus
 Turned out briskly. Studying the winds,
 He cupped his ears to catch movements of air;
 Observed the slowly wheeling constellations
 In the still heaven: bright Arcturus, rainy
 Hyades, Great Bear and Little Bear,
 Orion in his belt of gold. All clear
 In cloudless air he made them out to be,
 Then gave a trumpet signal from the stern.
 So we broke camp, put out to sea, unfurled
 Our wings of sails. The stars had vanished, Dawn
 Was reddening the sky, when far ahead
 We saw the blue hills and low-lying plain
 Of Italy. Anchises shouted 'Italy!'
 And all the men cried 'Italy!' in joy.
 My father garlanded a great wine bowl,
 Filled it with wine, stood on the stern aloft,
 And called to the gods:

'Lords of the land and sea,
 Storm powers, ease our way with a stern wind,
 Steadily blow for us!'

Then as desired
 The light airs freshened, and an opening bay
 Appeared as we drew in, backed by a temple
 Upon an acropolis of Minerva.
 The sailors took in sail and rowed for shore.
 The harbor there, bent like a bow, recoils
 From seas out of the East: long rocky spits
 Make foaming surf; the port lies hid behind.
 Two crags like towers put out arms like walls;
 The temple stands back inland.

Here I saw
 Our first portent: in grassland, horses, four,
 As white as snow, at graze in an open field.

'You bring us war, host land,' murmured my father,
 'It is for war that horses are caparisoned.
 These herds mean war for us. Yet the same beasts

Are sometimes trained to take the chariot pole
 In harmony, to bear the yoke and bit.
 There is, then, hope of peace.'

And there we prayed

To the tall Pallas, goddess of clanging arms,
 First to receive us on that festal beach;
 Then veiled our heads in Phrygian drapery
 Before the altars, where by Helenus'
 Particular command we made burnt offerings
 In proper form to Juno of the Argives.
 That ritual once complete, we would not stay,
 But swung our yardarms and our sails to take us
 Out to sea again, leaving behind
 Greek territory, treacherous in our eyes.
 Soon then we saw Tarentum's gulf, or Hercules'
 If the old tale be true. There, dead ahead,
 Rose the Lacinian goddess on her height.
 Then Caulon's towers and Scylaceum,
 The coast of shipwreck. On the distant sky
 Trinacrian Aetna could be seen, and soon
 We heard big seas groaning on beaten rocks
 And voices of the breakers. Shoals leaped up
 Before our eyes, with sand in the sea-swell,
 At which my father Anchises cried:

'No doubt of it!

Here is Charybdis, that abyss, and those
 Perilous points of rock that Helenus
 Foretold, with deadly ledges undersea.
 Sheer off, men, put your backs into the stroke!

They bent hard to the rowing as commanded,
 And Palinurus in the leading ship
 Swung his creaking prow over to port.
 The whole flotilla followed him in turn
 With oars and wind. On every rolling sea
 We rose to heaven, and in the abysmal trough
 Sank down into the world of shades. Three times
 The rock cliffs between caverns boomed; three times
 We saw the wave shock and the flung spume

Drenching the very stars. The wind at last
 And sun went down together, leaving us spent,
 And in the dark as to our course, we glided
 Quietly onward to the Cyclops' shore.

Here was a mighty harbor, in itself
 Landlocked and calm, out of the wind's way,
 But Aetna, just beyond, rumbled and flashed,
 Formidable in eruption. Up the sky
 She sent a somber cloud of billowing smoke,
 A pitch-black turbine full of glowing ash
 And balls of fire to lick the stars. Below,
 She vomited rocks and brought up lava streams,
 Entrails of Aetna, boiling in the deep.
 The tale goes that the body of Enceladus,
 Half consumed by thunderbolt, lies prone
 Under that weight, prodigious Aetna piled
 Above him, jetting flame from broken furnaces,
 And when the worn-out giant turns, all Sicily
 Rumbles and quakes and weaves a pall of smoke
 Against the sky. Under the forest roof
 That night we suffered monstrous fears: we could not
 See what made the din; there were no stars
 Or starlight overhead, only the cloud
 Obscuring heaven, and the depth of night
 Withheld the moon, enwrapt in stormy mist.
 At long last rose the morning star; we felt
 Day's onset as Aurora thinned away
 The vapor of the night. Then suddenly
 Out of the forest, at the last extremity
 Of hunger, came the strange shape of a man,
 In pitiful condition, his arms wide
 To beg for mercy. We took in the sight:
 His filth, his uncut beard, his ragged shirt
 Pinned up by thorns—but even so, a Greek,

And one sent on an earlier day to Troy
 With Greek equipment. Seeing at a distance
 Dardan clothing, Trojan arms, he cringed
 And stopped a while in fear of what he saw,
 Then stumbled onward to the shore headlong
 With tears and prayers.

‘In heaven’s name,’ he said,
 ‘By all the powers, I beg you—
 Oh, by the light and air we breathe! Take me
 With you, Trojans! Anywhere at all
 Will be good enough for me. I am, I know it,
 One of the Danaans, one from the fleet;
 I won’t deny I fought to take Troy’s gods.
 For that, if so much harm came of our devilry,
 Cut me to bits, scatter me on the water,
 Drop me in the sea. If I must die,
 Death at the hands of men will be a favor!’

With this he took our knees and groveled, kneeling,
 Clinging there. We told him to speak out,
 Say who he was, born of what blood, what fortune
 Put him in such a panic; and my father
 After a moment gave the man his hand
 To calm him by that touch and sign of mercy.
 In the end he put aside his fear and said:

‘I am an Ithacan, of Ulysses’ company—
 That man beset by trouble. Achaemenidēs
 I’m called. My father, Adamastus, lived
 In poverty, so I shipped out for Troy.
 Would god our life of poverty had lasted!
 My shipmates left me here, they all forgot me,
 Scrambling to get away from the cave mouth
 And frightfulness in the cavern of the Cyclops.
 That is a blood-soaked hall of brutal feasts,
 All gloom inside, and huge. The giant rears
 His head against the stars. Oh heaven, spare earth
 A scourge like this—unbearable to see,
 Unreachable by anything you say.

The innards and the dark blood of poor fellows
 Are what he feeds on: I myself looked on
 When he scooped up two crewmen in his hand
 Mid-cave, and as he lay back smashed them down
 Against the rockface, making the whole floor
 Swim with spattered blood; I saw him crunch
 Those dead men running blood and excrement,
 The warm flesh still a-quiver in his teeth.
 Not that he did not suffer for the act!
 Not that Ulysses put up with that outrage
 Or lost his self-possession in the pinch.
 Gorged with feasting and dead-drunk with wine,
 The giant put down his lolling head, lay down
 Enormous on the cave floor. In his sleep
 He dribbled bile and bits of flesh, mixed up
 With blood and wine. We prayed to the great gods,
 Drew lots for duties, and surrounded him,
 Then with a pointed beam bored his great eye,
 His single eye, under his shaggy brow,
 Big as a Greek shield or the lamp o' Phoebus.
 So we got back at him—some cause for pride,
 Avenging our friends' shades.

As for yourselves,
 Put out to sea, put out to sea, poor fellows;
 Break your hawsers! Tall and dangerous
 As Polyphemus, penning and milking sheep
 In his rock cave, there are a hundred more
 Unspeakable huge Cyclops everywhere
 At large along these bays and mountain-sides.
 And now three times the long-horned moon has filled
 With a new glow since I've dragged out my days
 In woods, among the wild things' lonely dens,
 And from a peak spied on the Cyclops there,
 My heart a-tremble at their great footfalls,
 Their shouts. Thin fare I've had, such as the boughs
 Would yield me: berries, cornel fruit, all stones,
 With roots and grasses. As I looked out seaward
 These were the first ships that I saw put in.

Whatever ships they might turn out to be,
 I handed myself over. Boon enough
 Just to escape these unholy savages.
 Better you take this life, by any form
 Of death you choose.²

He had no sooner spoken
 Than we all saw, high on the mountainside,
 The shepherd Polyphemus' giant mass
 In motion with his flocks, advancing shoreward.
 Vast, mind-sickening, lumpish, heaven's light
 Blacked out for him, he held a pine tree staff
 To feel his way with, and the woolly sheep
 Were all his company and all the ease
 Or comfort that he had.
 On reaching the seashore and the deep water
 He washed the fluid from his gouged eye-pit
 And gnashed his teeth and groaned, then waded out
 To the middle depth where still the swell came short
 Of dampening his haunches. We made haste
 To get away, and far, taking aboard
 The suppliant for his pains: in dead silence
 We cut our hawsers, launched, and put our backs
 Into a racing stroke. He heard the splash
 And turned back toward it—but he never got
 The range of us to reach us, could not breast
 The full Ionian sea, wading behind.
 At this he sent up an unearthly roar
 At which the waves on the deep sea were shaken,
 Italy was affrighted far inland,
 And Aetna's caverns rumbled. Out of the forest,
 Out of the mountains, poured the Cyclops tribe
 To crowd the bay and shoreline: we could see them
 Standing there, each with his awful eye
 In impotent rage, the brotherhood of Aetna,
 Towering heavenward, terrifying peers,
 Erect with heads as high as oaks in air
 Or evergreen cypresses—great trees of Jove
 Or those in sacred parklands of Diana.

S tung to impetuous action by our fear,
 We hoisted sail to a fair wind, paid out sheets
 To get searoom, no matter on what course.
 But Helenus' commands, his warning stood:
 No steering between Scylla and Charybdis,
 That channel so near death on either side.
 Resolved to go about, to take in sail,
 We felt—lo and behold—the wind veer northward
 Blowing down from the Narrows of Pelorus.
 We sailed then past Pantagia's river mouth,
 Megara Bay, and Thapsus, that low islet—
 Coastal places Achaemenidēs,
 Hard-pressed Ulysses' shipmate, pointed out
 As he retraced his wanderings.

There's an island

Lying this side of a Sicilian bay,
 Facing Plemyrion Point where the waves beat.
 Early people called this isle Ortygia.
 The tale runs that the Elean stream, Alpheus,
 Took hidden channels there, under the sea,
 And through your fountain, Arethusa, now
 Infuses the salt waves. There, as directed,
 We worshipped the pure powers of the place,
 Then sailed on past Helorus' rich plowlands
 And ponds. We coasted high crags of Pachynus
 With rocky tongues of land, and far away
 Shone Camerina, never to be disturbed,
 Then the Geloan Plain, Gela itself,
 Named for a torrent; then beetling Acragas,
 Breeder of mettlesome horses in the past,
 Displayed her distant massive walls, and helped
 By winds I put Selinus of the Palms
 Behind us, to sail close to the shoal water
 Of Lilybaeum with her hidden reefs.
 And in the end the port of Drepanum
 Took me in, a landing without joy.

For after storms at sea had buffered me
So often, here, alas, I lost my father,
Solace in all affliction and mischance;
O best of fathers, in my weariness—
Though you had been delivered from so many
Perils in vain—alas, here you forsook me.
Never had Helenus the seer, who warned
Of many things to make me quail, foretold
This grief to me—nor had the vile Celaeno.
Here was my final sorrow, here the goal
Of all my seafaring. When after this
I put to sea, god drove me to your shores.”
So in his tale before the attentive crowd
Aeneas’ single voice recalled the fates
Decreed by heaven, and his wanderings.
He fell silent at last and made an end.

Lines 708–718

BOOK

IV

THE PASSION OF
THE QUEEN

The queen, for her part, all that evening ached
With longing that her heart's blood fed, a wound
Or inward fire eating her away.
The manhood of the man, his pride of birth,
Came home to her time and again; his looks,
His words remained with her to haunt her mind,
And desire for him gave her no rest.

When Dawn

Swept earth with Phoebus' torch and burned away
Night-gloom and damp, this queen, far gone and ill,
Confided to the sister of her heart:
"My sister Anna, quandaries and dreams
Have come to frighten me—such dreams!

Think what a stranger

Yesterday found lodging in our house:
How princely, how courageous, what a soldier.
I can believe him in the line of gods,
And this is no delusion. Tell-tale fear
Betrays inferior souls. What scenes of war
Fought to the bitter end he pictured for us!
What buffetings awaited him at sea!
Had I not set my face against remarriage
After my first love died and failed me, left me
Barren and bereaved—and sick to death
At the mere thought of torch and bridal bed—

I could perhaps give way in this one case
 To frailty. I shall say it: since that time
 Sychaeus, my poor husband, met his fate,
 And blood my brother shed stained our hearth gods,
 This man alone has wrought upon me so
 And moved my soul to yield. I recognize
 The signs of the old flame, of old desire.
 But O chaste life, before I break your laws,
 I pray that Earth may open, gape for me
 Down to its depth, or the omnipotent
 With one stroke blast me to the shades, pale shades
 Of Erebus and the deep world of night!
 That man who took me to himself in youth
 Has taken all my love; may that man keep it,
 Hold it forever with him in the tomb.”

At this she wept and wet her breast with tears.
 But Anna answered:

“Dearer to your sister
 Than daylight is, will you wear out your life,
 Young as you are, in solitary mourning,
 Never to know sweet children, or the crown
 Of joy that Venus brings? Do you believe
 This matters to the dust, to ghosts in tombs?
 Granted no suitors up to now have moved you,
 Neither in Libya nor before, in Tyre—
 Iarbas you rejected, and the others,
 Chieftains bred by the land of Africa
 Their triumphs have enriched—will you contend
 Even against a welcome love? Have you
 Considered in whose lands you settled here?
 On one frontier the Gaetulans, their cities,
 People invincible in war—with wild
 Numidian horsemen, and the offshore banks,
 The Syrtēs; on the other, desert sands,
 Bone-dry, where fierce Barcaean nomads range.
 Or need I speak of future wars brought on
 From Tyre, and the menace of your brother?
 Surely by dispensation of the gods

And backed by Juno's will, the ships from Ilium
Held their course this way on the wind.

Sister,

What a great city you'll see rising here,
And what a kingdom, from this royal match!
With Trojan soldiers as companions in arms
By what exploits will Punic glory grow!
Only ask the indulgence of the gods,
Win them with offerings, give your guests ease,
And contrive reasons for delay, while winter
Gales rage, drenched Orion storms at sea,
And their ships, damaged still, face iron skies."

This counsel fanned the flame, already kindled,
Giving her hesitant sister hope, and set her
Free of scruple. Visiting the shrines
They begged for grace at every altar first,
Then put choice rams and ewes to ritual death
For Ceres Giver of Laws, Father Lyaeus,
Phoebus, and for Juno most of all
Who has the bonds of marriage in her keeping.
Dido herself, splendidly beautiful,
Holding a shallow cup, tips out the wine
On a white shining heifer, between the horns,
Or gravely in the shadow of the gods
Approaches opulent altars. Through the day
She brings new gifts, and when the breasts are opened
Pores over organs, living still, for signs.
Alas, what darkened minds have soothsayers!
What good are shrines and vows to maddened lovers?
The inward fire eats the soft marrow away,
And the internal wound bleeds on in silence.

Unlucky Dido, burning, in her madness
Roamed through all the city, like a doe

Hit by an arrow shot from far away
 By a shepherd hunting in the Cretan woods—
 Hit by surprise, nor could the hunter see
 His flying steel had fixed itself in her;
 But though she runs for life through copse and glade
 The fatal shaft clings to her side.

Now Dido

Took Aeneas with her among her buildings,
 Showed her Sidonian wealth, her walls prepared,
 And tried to speak, but in mid-speech grew still.
 When the day waned she wanted to repeat
 The banquet as before, to hear once more
 In her wild need the throes of Ilium,
 And once more hung on the narrator's words.
 Afterward, when all the guests were gone,
 And the dim moon in turn had quenched her light,
 And setting stars weighed weariness to sleep,
 Alone she mourned in the great empty hall
 And pressed her body on the couch he left:
 She heard him still, though absent—heard and saw him.
 Or she would hold Ascanius in her lap,
 Enthralled by him, the image of his father,
 As though by this ruse to appease a love
 Beyond all telling.

Towers, half-built, rose
 No farther; men no longer trained in arms
 Or toiled to make harbors and battlements
 Impregnable. Projects were broken off,
 Laid over, and the menacing huge walls
 With cranes unmoving stood against the sky.


 s soon as Jove's dear consort saw the lady
 Prey to such illness, and her reputation
 Standing no longer in the way of passion,
 Saturn's daughter said to Venus:

“Wondrous!

Covered yourself with glory, have you not,
You and your boy, and won such prizes, too.
Divine power is something to remember
If by collusion of two gods one mortal
Woman is brought low.

I am not blind.

Your fear of our new walls has not escaped me,
Fear and mistrust of Carthage at her height.
But how far will it go? What do you hope for,
Being so contentious? Why do we not
Arrange eternal peace and formal marriage?
You have your heart’s desire: Dido in love,
Dido consumed with passion to her core.
Why not, then, rule this people side by side
With equal authority? And let the queen
Wait on her Phrygian lord, let her consign
Into your hand her Tyrians as a dowry.”

Now Venus knew this talk was all pretence,
All to divert the future power from Italy
To Libya; and she answered:

“Who would be
So mad, so foolish as to shun that prospect
Or prefer war with you? That is, provided
Fortune is on the side of your proposal.
The fates here are perplexing: would one city
Satisfy Jupiter’s will for Tyrians
And Trojan exiles? Does he approve
A union and a mingling of these races?
You are his consort: you have every right
To sound him out. Go on, and I’ll come, too.”

But regal Juno pointedly replied:
“That task will rest with me. Just now, as to
The need of the moment and the way to meet it,
Listen, and I’ll explain in a few words.
Aeneas and Dido in her misery
Plan hunting in the forest, when the Titan

Sun comes up with rays to light the world.
 While beaters in excitement ring the glens
 My gift will be a black raincloud, and hail,
 A downpour, and I'll shake heaven with thunder.
 The company will scatter, lost in gloom,
 As Dido and the Trojan captain come
 To one same cavern. I shall be on hand,
 And if I can be certain you are willing,
 There I shall marry them and call her his.
 A wedding, this will be."

Then Cytherëa,
 Not disinclined, nodded to Juno's plea,
 And smiled at the stratagem now given away.

Dawn came up meanwhile from the Ocean stream,
 And in the early sunshine from the gates
 Picked huntsmen issued: wide-meshed nets and snares,
 Broad spearheads for big game, Massylian horsemen
 Trooping with hounds in packs keen on the scent.
 But Dido lingered in her hall, as Punic
 Nobles waited, and her mettlesome hunter
 Stood nearby, cavorting in gold and scarlet,
 Champing his foam-flecked bridle. At long last
 The queen appeared with courtiers in a crowd,
 A short Sidonian cloak edged in embroidery
 Caught about her, at her back a quiver
 Sheathed in gold, her hair tied up in gold,
 And a brooch of gold pinning her scarlet dress.
 Phrygians came in her company as well,
 And Iulus, joyous at the scene. Resplendent
 Above the rest, Aeneas walked to meet her,
 To join his retinue with hers. He seemed—
 Think of the lord Apollo in the spring
 When he leaves wintering in Lycia
 By Xanthus torrent, for his mother's isle
 Of Delos, to renew the festival;
 Around his altars Cretans, Dryopës,
 And painted Agathyrsans raise a shout,

But the god walks the Cynthian ridge alone
 And smooths his hair, binds it in fringed laurel,
 Braids it in gold; and shafts ring on his shoulders.
 So elated and swift, Aeneas walked
 With sunlit grace upon him.

 Soon the hunters,
 Riding in company to high pathless hills,
 Saw mountain goats shoot down from a rocky peak
 And scamper on the ridges; toward the plain
 Deer left the slopes, herding in clouds of dust
 In flight across the open lands. Alone,
 The boy Ascanius, delightedly riding
 His eager horse amid the lowland vales,
 Outran both goats and deer. Could he only meet
 Amid the harmless game some foaming boar,
 Or a tawny lion down from the mountainside!

Meanwhile in heaven began a rolling thunder,
 And soon the storm broke, pouring rain and hail.
 Then Tyrians and Trojans in alarm—
 With Venus' Dardan grandson—ran for cover
 Here and there in the wilderness, as freshets
 Coursed from the high hills.

 Now to the self-same cave
 Came Dido and the captain of the Trojans.
 Primal Earth herself and Nuptial Juno
 Opened the ritual, torches of lightning blazed,
 High Heaven became witness to the marriage,
 And nymphs cried out wild hymns from a mountain top.

 That day was the first cause of death, and first
 Of sorrow. Dido had no further qualms
 As to impressions given and set abroad;
 She thought no longer of a secret love
 But called it marriage. Thus, under that name,
 She hid her fault.

 Now in no time at all
 Through all the African cities Rumor goes—
 Nimble as quicksilver among evils. Rumor

Thrives on motion, stronger for the running,
 Lowly at first through fear, then rearing high,
 She treads the land and hides her head in cloud.
 As people fable it, the Earth, her mother,
 Furious against the gods, bore a late sister
 To the giants Coeus and Enceladus,
 Giving her speed on foot and on the wing:
 Monstrous, deformed, titanic. Pinioned, with
 An eye beneath for every body feather,
 And, strange to say, as many tongues and buzzing
 Mouths as eyes, as many pricked-up ears,
 By night she flies between the earth and heaven
 Shrieking through darkness, and she never turns
 Her eye-lids down to sleep. By day she broods,
 On the alert, on rooftops or on towers,
 Bringing great cities fear, harping on lies
 And slander evenhandedly with truth.
 In those days Rumor took an evil joy
 At filling countrysides with whispers, whispers,
 Gossip of what was done, and never done:
 How this Aeneas landed, Trojan born,
 How Dido in her beauty graced his company,
 Then how they reveled all the winter long
 Unmindful of the realm, prisoners of lust.

These tales the scabrous goddess put about
 On men's lips everywhere. Her twisting course
 Took her to King Iarbas, whom she set
 Ablaze with anger piled on top of anger.
 Son of Jupiter Hammon by a nymph,
 A ravished Garamantean, this prince
 Had built the god a hundred giant shrines,
 A hundred altars, each with holy fires
 Alight by night and day, sentries on watch,
 The ground enriched by victims' blood, the doors
 Festooned with flowering wreaths. Before his altars
 King Iarbas, crazed by the raw story,
 Stood, they say, amid the Presences,
 With supplicating hands, pouring out prayer:

"All powerful Jove, to whom the feasting Moors
 At ease on colored couches tip their wine,
 Do you see this? Are we then fools to fear you
 Throwing down your bolts? Those dazzling fires
 Of lightning, are they aimless in the clouds
 And rumbling thunder meaningless? This woman
 Who turned up in our country and laid down
 A tiny city at a price, to whom
 I gave a beach to plow—and on my terms—
 After refusing to marry me has taken
 Aeneas to be master in her realm.
 And now Sir Paris with his men, half-men,
 His chin and perfumed hair tied up
 In a Maeonian bonnet, takes possession.
 As for ourselves, here we are bringing gifts
 Into these shrines—supposedly your shrines—
 Hugging that empty fable."

Pleas like this

From the man clinging to his altars reached
 The ears of the Almighty. Now he turned
 His eyes upon the queen's town and the lovers
 Careless of their good name; then spoke to Mercury,
 Assigning him a mission:

"Son, bestir yourself,
 Call up the Zephyrs, take to your wings and glide.
 Approach the Dardan captain where he tarries
 Rapt in Tyrian Carthage, losing sight
 Of future towns the fates ordain. Correct him,
 Carry my speech to him on the running winds:
 No son like this did his enchanting mother
 Promise to us, nor such did she deliver
 Twice from peril at the hands of Greeks.
 He was to be the ruler of Italy,
 Potential empire, armorer of war;
 To father men from Teucer's noble blood
 And bring the whole world under law's dominion.
 If glories to be won by deeds like these
 Cannot arouse him, if he will not strive
 For his own honor, does he begrudge his son,

Ascanius, the high strongholds of Rome?
 What has he in mind? What hope, to make him stay
 Amid a hostile race, and lose from view
 Ausonian progeny, Lavinian lands?
 The man should sail: that is the whole point.
 Let this be what you tell him, as from me.”

He finished and fell silent. Mercury
 Made ready to obey the great command
 Of his great father, and he first tied on
 The golden sandals, winged, that high in air
 Transport him over seas or over land
 Abreast of gale winds; then he took the wand
 With which he summons pale souls out of Orcus
 And ushers others to the undergloom,
 Lulls men to slumber or awakens them,
 And opens dead men's eyes. This wand in hand,
 He can drive winds before him, swimming down
 Along the stormcloud. Now aloft, he saw
 The craggy flanks and crown of patient Atlas,
 Giant Atlas, balancing the sky
 Upon his peak—his pine-forested head
 In vapor cowed, beaten by wind and rain.
 Snow lay upon his shoulders, rills cascaded
 Down his ancient chin and beard a-bristle,
 Caked with ice. Here Mercury of Cyllenë
 Hovered first on even wings, then down
 He plummeted to sea-level and flew on
 Like a low-flying gull that skims the shallows
 And rocky coasts where fish ply close inshore.
 So, like a gull between the earth and sky,
 The progeny of Cyllenë, on the wing
 From his maternal grandsire, split the winds
 To the sand bars of Libya.

Alighting tiptoe

On the first hutments, there he found Aeneas
 Laying foundations for new towers and homes.
 He noted well the swordhilt the man wore,
 Adorned with yellow jasper; and the cloak

Aglow with Tyrian dye upon his shoulders—
 Gifts of the wealthy queen, who had inwoven
 Gold thread in the fabric. Mercury
 Took him to task at once:

“Is it for you
 To lay the stones for Carthage’s high walls,
 Tame husband that you are, and build their city?
 Oblivious of your own world, your own kingdom!
 From bright Olympus he that rules the gods
 And turns the earth and heaven by his power—
 He and no other sent me to you, told me
 To bring this message on the running winds:
 What have you in mind? What hope, wasting your days
 In Libya? If future history’s glories
 Do not affect you, if you will not strive
 For your own honor, think of Ascanius,
 Think of the expectations of your heir,
 Iulus, to whom the Italian realm, the land
 Of Rome, are due.”

And Mercury, as he spoke,
 Departed from the visual field of mortals
 To a great distance, ebbd in subtle air.
 Amazed, and shocked to the bottom of his soul
 By what his eyes had seen, Aeneas felt
 His hackles rise, his voice choke in his throat.
 As the sharp admonition and command
 From heaven had shaken him awake, he now
 Burned only to be gone, to leave that land
 Of the sweet life behind. What can he do? How tell
 The impassioned queen and hope to win her over?
 What opening shall he choose? This way and that
 He let his mind dart, testing alternatives,
 Running through every one. And as he pondered
 This seemed the better tactic: he called in
 Mnestheus, Sergestus and stalwart Serestus,
 Telling them:

“Get the fleet ready for sea,
 But quietly, and collect the men on shore.
 Lay in ship stores and gear.”

As to the cause

For a change of plan, they were to keep it secret,
 Seeing the excellent Dido had no notion,
 No warning that such love could be cut short;
 He would himself look for the right occasion,
 The easiest time to speak, the way to do it.
 The Trojans to a man gladly obeyed.

The queen, for her part, felt some plot afoot
 Quite soon—for who deceives a woman in love?
 She caught wind of a change, being in fear
 Of what had seemed her safety. Evil Rumor,
 Shameless as before, brought word to her
 In her distracted state of ships being rigged
 In trim for sailing. Furious, at her wits' end,
 She traversed the whole city, all aflame
 With rage, like a Bacchantē driven wild
 By emblems shaken, when the mountain revels
 Of the odd year possess her, when the cry
 Of Bacchus rises and Cithaeron calls
 All through the shouting night. Thus it turned out
 She was the first to speak and charge Aeneas:

“You even hoped to keep me in the dark
 As to this outrage, did you, two-faced man,
 And slip away in silence? Can our love
 Not hold you, can the pledge we gave not hold you,
 Can Dido not, now sure to die in pain?
 Even in winter weather must you toil
 With ships, and fret to launch against high winds
 For the open sea? Oh, heartless!

Tell me now,
 If you were not in search of alien lands
 And new strange homes, if ancient Troy remained,
 Would ships put out for Troy on these big seas?
 Do you go to get away from me? I beg you,
 By these tears, by your own right hand, since I
 Have left my wretched self nothing but that—
 Yes, by the marriage that we entered on,

If ever I did well and you were grateful
 Or found some sweetness in a gift from me,
 Have pity now on a declining house!
 Put this plan by, I beg you, if a prayer
 Is not yet out of place.

Because of you, Libyans and nomad kings
 Detest me, my own Tyrians are hostile;
 Because of you, I lost my integrity
 And that admired name by which alone
 I made my way once toward the stars.

To whom

Do you abandon me, a dying woman,
 Guest that you are—the only name now left
 From that of husband? Why do I live on?
 Shall I, until my brother Pygmalion comes
 To pull my walls down? Or the Gaetulan
 Iarbas leads me captive? If at least
 There were a child by you for me to care for,
 A little one to play in my courtyard
 And give me back Aeneas, in spite of all,
 I should not feel so utterly defeated,
 Utterly bereft.”

She ended there.

The man by Jove's command held fast his eyes
 And fought down the emotion in his heart.
 At length he answered:

“As for myself, be sure

I never shall deny all you can say,
 Your majesty, of what you meant to me.
 Never will the memory of Elissa
 Stale for me, while I can still remember
 My own life, and the spirit rules my body.
 As to the event, a few words. Do not think
 I meant to be deceitful and slip away.
 I never held the torches of a bridegroom,
 Never entered upon the pact of marriage.
 If Fate permitted me to spend my days
 By my own lights, and make the best of things
 According to my wishes, first of all

I should look after Troy and the loved relics
 Left me of my people. Priam's great hall
 Should stand again; I should have restored the tower
 Of Pergamum for Trojans in defeat.
 But now it is the rich Italian land
 Apollo tells me I must make for: Italy,
 Named by his oracles. There is my love;
 There is my country. If, as a Phoenician,
 You are so given to the charms of Carthage,
 Libyan city that it is, then tell me,
 Why begrudge the Teucrians new lands
 For homesteads in Ausonia? Are we not
 Entitled, too, to look for realms abroad?
 Night never veils the earth in damp and darkness,
 Fiery stars never ascend the east,
 But in my dreams my father's troubled ghost
 Admonishes and frightens me. Then, too,
 Each night thoughts come of young Ascanius,
 My dear boy wronged, defrauded of his kingdom,
 Hesperian lands of destiny. And now
 The gods' interpreter, sent by Jove himself—
 I swear it by your head and mine—has brought
 Commands down through the racing winds! I say
 With my own eyes in full daylight I saw him
 Entering the building! With my very ears
 I drank his message in! So please, no more
 Of these appeals that set us both afire.
 I sail for Italy not of my own free will."

During all this she had been watching him
 With face averted, looking him up and down
 In silence, and she burst out raging now:

"No goddess was your mother. Dardanus
 Was not the founder of your family.

Liar and cheat! Some rough Caucasian cliff
 Begot you on flint. Hyrcanian tigresses
 Tendered their teats to you. Why should I palter?
 Why still hold back for more indignity?
 Sigh, did he, while I wept? Or look at me?
 Or yield a tear, or pity her who loved him?
 What shall I say first, with so much to say?
 The time is past when either supreme Juno
 Or the Saturnian father viewed these things
 With justice. Faith can never be secure.
 I took the man in, thrown up on this coast
 In dire need, and in my madness then
 Contrived a place for him in my domain,
 Rescued his lost fleet, saved his shipmates' lives.
 Oh, I am swept away burning by furies!
 Now the prophet Apollo, now his oracles,
 Now the gods' interpreter, if you please,
 Sent down by Jove himself, brings through the air
 His formidable commands! What fit employment
 For heaven's high powers! What anxieties
 To plague serene immortals! I shall not
 Detain you or dispute your story. Go,
 Go after Italy on the sailing winds,
 Look for your kingdom, cross the deepsea swell!
 If divine justice counts for anything,
 I hope and pray that on some grinding reef
 Midway at sea you'll drink your punishment
 And call and call on Dido's name!
 From far away I shall come after you
 With my black fires, and when cold death has parted
 Body from soul I shall be everywhere
 A shade to haunt you! You will pay for this,
 Unconscionable! I shall hear! The news will reach me
 Even among the lowest of the dead!"

At this abruptly she broke off and ran
 In sickness from his sight and the light of day,
 Leaving him at a loss, alarmed, and mute

With all he meant to say. The maids in waiting
 Caught her as she swooned and carried her
 To bed in her marble chamber.

Duty-bound,

Aeneas, though he struggled with desire
 To calm and comfort her in all her pain,
 To speak to her and turn her mind from grief,
 And though he sighed his heart out, shaken still
 With love of her, yet took the course heaven gave him
 And went back to the fleet. Then with a will
 The Teucrians fell to work and launched the ships
 Along the whole shore: slick with tar each hull
 Took to the water. Eager to get away,
 The sailors brought oar-boughs out of the woods
 With leaves still on, and oaken logs unhewn.
 Now you could see them issuing from the town
 To the water's edge in streams, as when, aware
 Of winter, ants will pillage a mound of spelt
 To store it in their granary; over fields
 The black battalion moves, and through the grass
 On a narrow trail they carry off the spoil;
 Some put their shoulders to the enormous weight
 Of a trundled grain, while some pull stragglers in
 And castigate delay; their to-and-fro
 Of labor makes the whole track come alive.
 At that sight, what were your emotions, Dido?
 Sighing how deeply, looking out and down
 From your high tower on the seething shore
 Where all the harbor filled before your eyes
 With bustle and shouts! Unconscionable Love,
 To what extremes will you not drive our hearts!
 She now felt driven to weep again, again
 To move him, if she could, by supplication,
 Humbling her pride before her love—to leave
 Nothing untried, not to die needlessly.

“Anna, you see the arc of waterfront
 All in commotion: they come crowding in

From everywhere. Spread canvas calls for wind,
 The happy crews have garlanded the sterns.
 If I could brace myself for this great sorrow,
 Sister, I can endure it, too. One favor,
 Even so, you may perform for me.
 Since that deserter chose you for his friend
 And trusted you, even with private thoughts,
 Since you alone know when he may be reached,
 Go, intercede with our proud enemy.
 Remind him that I took no oath at Aulis
 With Danaans to destroy the Trojan race;
 I sent no ship to Pergamum. Never did I
 Profane his father Anchisēs' dust and shade.
 Why will he not allow my prayers to fall
 On his unpitied ears? Where is he racing?
 Let him bestow one last gift on his mistress:
 This, to await fair winds and easier flight.
 Now I no longer plead the bond he broke
 Of our old marriage, nor do I ask that he
 Should live without his dear love, Latium,
 Or yield his kingdom. Time is all I beg,
 Mere time, a respite and a breathing space
 For madness to subside in, while my fortune
 Teaches me how to take defeat and grieve.
 Pity your sister. This is the end, this favor—
 To be repaid with interest when I die."

She pleaded in such terms, and such, in tears,
 Her sorrowing sister brought him, time and again.
 But no tears moved him, no one's voice would he
 Attend to tractably. The fates opposed it;
 God's will blocked the man's once kindly ears.
 And just as when the north winds from the Alps
 This way and that contend among themselves
 To tear away an oaktree hale with age,
 The wind and tree cry, and the buffeted trunk
 Showers high foliage to earth, but holds
 On bedrock, for the roots go down as far

Into the underworld as cresting boughs
 Go up in heaven's air: just so this captain,
 Buffeted by a gale of pleas
 This way and that way, dinned all the day long,
 Felt their moving power in his great heart,
 And yet his will stood fast; tears fell in vain.



On Dido in her desolation now
 Terror grew at her fate. She prayed for death,
 Being heartsick at the mere sight of heaven.
 That she more surely would perform the act
 And leave the daylight, now she saw before her
 A thing one shudders to recall: on altars
 Fuming with incense where she placed her gifts,
 The holy water blackened, the spilt wine
 Turned into blood and mire. Of this she spoke
 To no one, not to her sister even. Then, too,
 Within the palace was a marble shrine
 Devoted to her onetime lord, a place
 She held in wondrous honor, all festooned
 With snowy fleeces and green festive boughs.
 From this she now thought voices could be heard
 And words could be made out, her husband's words,
 Calling her, when midnight hushed the earth;
 And lonely on the rooftops the night owl
 Seemed to lament, in melancholy notes,
 Prolonged to a doleful cry. And then, besides,
 The riddling words of seers in ancient days,
 Foreboding sayings, made her thrill with fear.
 In nightmare, fevered, she was hunted down
 By pitiless Aeneas, and she seemed
 Deserted always, unaccompanied always,
 On a long journey, looking for her Tyrians
 In desolate landscapes—

as Pentheus gone mad

Sees the oncoming Eumenidēs and sees
 A double sun and double Thebes appear,
 Or as when, hounded on the stage, Orestēs
 Runs from a mother armed with burning brands,
 With serpents hellish black,
 And in the doorway squat the Avenging Ones.

So broken in mind by suffering, Dido caught
 Her fatal madness and resolved to die.
 She pondered time and means, then visiting
 Her mournful sister, covered up her plan
 With a calm look, a clear and hopeful brow.

“Sister, be glad for me! I’ve found a way
 To bring him back or free me of desire.
 Near to the Ocean boundary, near sundown,
 The Aethiops’ farthest territory lies,
 Where giant Atlas turns the sphere of heaven
 Studded with burning stars. From there
 A priestess of Massylian stock has come;
 She had been pointed out to me: custodian
 Of that shrine named for daughters of the west,
 Hesperidēs; and it is she who fed
 The dragon, guarding well the holy boughs
 With honey dripping slow and drowsy poppy.
 Chanting her spells she undertakes to free
 What hearts she wills, but to inflict on others
 Duress of sad desires; to arrest
 The flow of rivers, make the stars move backward,
 Call up the spirits of deep Night. You’ll see
 Earth shift and rumble underfoot and ash trees
 Walk down mountainsides. Dearest, I swear
 Before the gods and by your own sweet self,
 It is against my will that I resort
 For weaponry to magic powers. In secret
 Build up a pyre in the inner court
 Under the open sky, and place upon it
 The arms that faithless man left in my chamber,

All his clothing, and the marriage bed
 On which I came to grief—solace for me
 To annihilate all vestige of the man,
 Vile as he is: my priestess shows me this.”

While she was speaking, cheek and brow grew pale.
 But Anna could not think her sister cloaked
 A suicide in these unheard-of rites;
 She failed to see how great her madness was
 And feared no consequence more grave
 Than at Sychaeus' death. So, as commanded,
 She made the preparations. For her part,
 The queen, seeing the pyre in her inmost court
 Erected huge with pitch-pine and sawn ilex,
 Hung all the place under the sky with wreaths
 And crowned it with funereal cypress boughs.
 On the pyre's top she put a sword he left
 With clothing, and an effigy on a couch,
 Her mind fixed now ahead on what would come.
 Around the pyre stood altars, and the priestess,
 Hair unbound, called in a voice of thunder
 Upon three hundred gods, on Erebus,
 On Chaos, and on triple Hecatē,
 Three-faced Diana. Then she sprinkled drops
 Purportedly from the fountain of Avernus.
 Rare herbs were brought out, reaped at the new moon
 By scythes of bronze, and juicy with a milk
 Of dusky venom; then the rare love-charm
 Or caul torn from the brow of a birthing foal
 And snatched away before the mother found it.
 Dido herself with consecrated grain
 In her pure hands, as she went near the altars,
 Freed one foot from sandal straps, let fall
 Her dress ungirdled, and, now sworn to death,
 Called on the gods and stars that knew her fate.
 She prayed then to whatever power may care
 In comprehending justice for the grief
 Of lovers bound unequally by love.

The night had come, and weary in every land
 Men's bodies took the boon of peaceful sleep.
 The woods and the wild seas had quieted
 At that hour when the stars are in mid-course
 And every field is still; cattle and birds
 With vivid wings that haunt the limpid lakes
 Or nest in thickets in the country places
 All were asleep under the silent night.
 Not, though, the agonized Phoenician queen:
 She never slackened into sleep and never
 Allowed the tranquil night to rest
 Upon her eyelids or within her heart.
 Her pain redoubled; love came on again,
 Devouring her, and on her bed she tossed
 In a great surge of anger.

So awake,
 She pressed these questions, musing to herself:

"Look now, what can I do? Turn once again
 To the old suitors, only to be laughed at—
 Begging a marriage with Numidians
 Whom I disdained so often? Then what? Trail
 The Ilian ships and follow like a slave
 Commands of Trojans? Seeing them so agreeable,
 In view of past assistance and relief,
 So thoughtful their unshaken gratitude?
 Suppose I wished it, who permits or takes
 Aboard their proud ships one they so dislike?
 Poor lost soul, do you not yet grasp or feel
 The treachery of the line of Laomedon?
 What then? Am I to go alone, companion
 Of the exultant sailors in their flight?
 Or shall I set out in their wake, with Tyrians,
 With all my crew close at my side, and send
 The men I barely tore away from Tyre
 To sea again, making them hoist their sails

To more sea-winds? No: die as you deserve,
Give pain quietus with a steel blade.

Sister,

You are the one who gave way to my tears
In the beginning, burdened a mad queen
With sufferings, and thrust me on my enemy.
It was not given me to lead my life
Without new passion, innocently, the way
Wild creatures live, and not to touch these depths.
The vow I took to the ashes of Sychaeus
Was not kept.”

So she broke out afresh

In bitter mourning. On his high stern deck
Aeneas, now quite certain of departure,
Everything ready, took the boon of sleep.
In dream the figure of the god returned
With looks reproachful as before: he seemed
Again to warn him, being like Mercury
In every way, in voice, in golden hair,
And in the bloom of youth.

“Son of the goddess,

Sleep away this crisis, can you still?
Do you not see the dangers growing round you,
Madman, from now on? Can you not hear
The offshore westwind blow? The woman hatches
Plots and drastic actions in her heart,
Resolved on death now, whipping herself on
To heights of anger. Will you not be gone
In flight, while flight is still within your power?
Soon you will see the offing boil with ships
And glare with torches; soon again
The waterfront will be alive with fires,
If Dawn comes while you linger in this country.
Ha! Come, break the spell! Woman’s a thing
Forever fitful and forever changing.”

At this he merged into the darkness. Then
As the abrupt phantom filled him with fear,
Aeneas broke from sleep and roused his crewmen:

“Up, turn out now! Oarsmen, take your thwarts!
 Shake out sail! Look here, for the second time
 A god from heaven’s high air is goading me
 To hasten our break away, to cut the cables.
 Holy one, whatever god you are,
 We go with you, we act on your command
 Most happily! Be near, graciously help us,
 Make the stars in heaven propitious ones!”

He pulled his sword aflash out of its sheath
 And struck at the stern hawser. All the men
 Were gripped by his excitement to be gone,
 And hauled and hustled. Ships cast off their moorings,
 And an array of hulls hid inshore water
 As oarsmen churned up foam and swept to sea.

Soon early Dawn, quitting the saffron bed
 Of old Tithonus, cast new light on earth,
 And as air grew transparent, from her tower
 The queen caught sight of ships on the seaward reach
 With sails full and the wind astern. She knew
 The waterfront now empty, bare of oarsmen.
 Beating her lovely breast three times, four times,
 And tearing her golden hair,

“O Jupiter,”

She said, “will this man go, will he have mocked
 My kingdom, stranger that he was and is?
 Will they not snatch up arms and follow him
 From every quarter of the town? and dockhands
 Tear our ships from moorings? On! Be quick
 With torches! Give out arms! Unship the oars!
 What am I saying? Where am I? What madness
 Takes me out of myself? Dido, poor soul,
 Your evil doing has come home to you.
 Then was the right time, when you offered him
 A royal scepter. See the good faith and honor

Of one they say bears with him everywhere
 The hearthgods of his country! One who bore
 His father, spent with age, upon his shoulders!
 Could I not then have torn him limb from limb
 And flung the pieces on the sea? His company,
 Even Ascanius could I not have minced
 And served up to his father at a feast?
 The luck of battle might have been in doubt—
 So let it have been! Whom had I to fear,
 Being sure to die? I could have carried torches
 Into his camp, filled passage ways with flame,
 Annihilated father and son and followers
 And given my own life on top of all!
 O Sun, scanning with flame all works of earth,
 And thou, O Juno, witness and go-between
 Of my long miseries; and Hecatē,
 Screeched for at night at crossroads in the cities;
 And thou, avenging Furies, and all gods
 On whom Elissa dying may call: take notice,
 Overshadow this hell with your high power,
 As I deserve, and hear my prayer!
 If by necessity that impious wretch
 Must find his haven and come safe to land,
 If so Jove's destinies require, and this,
 His end in view, must stand, yet all the same
 When hard beset in war by a brave people,
 Forced to go outside his boundaries
 And torn from Iulus, let him beg assistance,
 Let him see the unmerited deaths of those
 Around and with him, and accepting peace
 On unjust terms, let him not, even so,
 Enjoy his kingdom or the life he longs for,
 But fall in battle before his time and lie
 Unburied on the sand! This I implore,
 This is my last cry, as my last blood flows.
 Then, O my Tyrians, besiege with hate
 His progeny and all his race to come:
 Make this your offering to my dust. No love,
 No pact must be between our peoples; No,

But rise up from my bones, avenging spirit!
 Harry with fire and sword the Dardan countrymen
 Now, or hereafter, at whatever time
 The strength will be afforded. Coast with coast
 In conflict, I implore, and sea with sea,
 And arms with arms: may they contend in war,
 Themselves and all the children of their children!"

Now she took thought of one way or another,
 At the first chance, to end her hated life,
 And briefly spoke to Barcë, who had been
 Sychaeus' nurse; her own an urn of ash
 Long held in her ancient fatherland.

"Dear nurse,
 Tell Sister Anna to come here, and have her
 Quickly bedew herself with running water
 Before she brings our victims for atonement.
 Let her come that way. And you, too, put on
 Pure wool around your brows. I have a mind
 To carry out that rite to Stygian Jove
 That I have readied here, and put an end
 To my distress, committing to the flames
 The pyre of that miserable Dardan."

At this with an old woman's eagerness
 Barcë hurried away. And Dido's heart
 Beat wildly at the enormous thing afoot.
 She rolled her bloodshot eyes, her quivering cheeks
 Were flecked with red as her sick pallor grew
 Before her coming death. Into the court
 She burst her way, then at her passion's height
 She climbed the pyre and bared the Dardan sword—
 A gift desired once, for no such need.
 Her eyes now on the Trojan clothing there
 And the familiar bed, she paused a little,
 Weeping a little, mindful, then lay down
 And spoke her last words:

"Remnants dear to me
 While god and fate allowed it, take this breath

And give me respite from these agonies.
 I lived my life out to the very end
 And passed the stages Fortune had appointed.
 Now my tall shade goes to the under world.
 I built a famous town, saw my great walls,
 Avenged my husband, made my hostile brother
 Pay for his crime. Happy, alas, too happy,
 If only the Dardanian keels had never
 Beached on our coast." And here she kissed the bed.
 "I die unavenged," she said, "but let me die.
 This way, this way, a blessed relief to go
 Into the undergloom. Let the cold Trojan,
 Far at sea, drink in this conflagration
 And take with him the omen of my death!"

Amid these words her household people saw her
 Crumpled over the steel blade, and the blade
 Aflush with red blood, drenched her hands. A scream
 Pierced the high chambers. Now through the shocked city
 Rumor went rioting, as wails and sobs
 With women's outcry echoed in the palace
 And heaven's high air gave back the beating din,
 As though all Carthage or old Tyre fell
 To storming enemies, and, out of hand,
 Flames billowed on the roofs of men and gods.
 Her sister heard and trembling, faint with terror,
 Lacerating her face, beating her breast,
 Ran through the crowd to call the dying queen:

"It came to this, then, sister? You deceived me?
 The pyre meant this, altars and fires meant this?
 What shall I mourn first, being abandoned? Did you
 Scorn your sister's company in death?
 You should have called me out to the same fate!
 The same blade's edge and hurt, at the same hour,
 Should have taken us off. With my own hands
 Had I to build this pyre, and had I to call
 Upon our country's gods, that in the end
 With you placed on it there, O heartless one,

I should be absent? You have put to death
 Yourself and me, the people and the fathers
 Bred in Sidon, and your own new city.
 Give me fresh water, let me bathe her wound
 And catch upon my lips any last breath
 Hovering over hers.”

Now she had climbed
 The topmost steps and took her dying sister
 Into her arms to cherish, with a sob,
 Using her dress to stanch the dark blood flow.
 But Dido trying to lift her heavy eyes
 Fainted again. Her chest-wound whistled air.
 Three times she struggled up on one elbow
 And each time fell back on the bed. Her gaze
 Went wavering as she looked for heaven's light
 And groaned at finding it. Almighty Juno,
 Filled with pity for this long ordeal
 And difficult passage, now sent Iris down
 Out of Olympus to set free
 The wrestling spirit from the body's hold.
 For since she died, not at her fated span
 Nor as she merited, but before her time
 Enflamed and driven mad, Proserpina
 Had not yet plucked from her the golden hair,
 Delivering her to Orcus of the Styx.
 So humid Iris through bright heaven flew
 On saffron-yellow wings, and in her train
 A thousand hues shimmered before the sun.
 At Dido's head she came to rest.

“This token
 Sacred to Dis I bear away as bidden
 And free you from your body.”

Saying this,
 She cut a lock of hair. Along with it
 Her body's warmth fell into dissolution,
 And out into the winds her life withdrew.

BOOK



GAMES AND A
CONFLAGRATION

Cutting through waves blown dark by a chill wind
Aeneas held his ships firmly on course
For a midsea crossing. But he kept his eyes
Upon the city far astern, now bright
With poor Elissa's pyre. What caused that blaze
Remained unknown to watchers out at sea,
But what they knew of a great love profaned
In anguish, and a desperate woman's nerve,
Led every Trojan heart into foreboding.

When they had gained the offing east and north,
No land in sight now, but sky everywhere
And everywhere the sea, a thunderhead
Towered above them, bringing gloom and storm
With shuddering dusky water. Aeneas' helmsman,
Palinurus, called from his high stern deck:

"Why have these clouds massed on the height of heaven?
Father Neptune, what are you brewing for us?"

On this he made the seamen shorten sail
And bend to the oars. He trimmed his fluttering canvas
More to catch the wind and said:

"Aeneas,
Lord commander, even if Jupiter

Should pledge his word for it, I could not hope
 To make landfall on Italy in this weather.
 It's thickening up, and now the wind blows hard
 Out of the murky west abeam of us.
 No bucking it. We cannot make our northing.
 Seeing that Fortune has the upper hand,
 I say give in, and follow where she calls.
 No long reach eastward there's a loyal coast,
 I think: the land named for your brother, Eryx,
 And the Sicilian ports—if I remember
 Rightly my star heights and my miles at sea.”

The good commander said:

“For some time now
 I've noticed what the veering wind demands
 And how you fought it uselessly. Change course,
 Haul yards and sails around. Could any soil
 Be more agreeable to me, or any
 Where I would rather moor these tired ships,
 Than Sicily, home of my Dardan friend,
 Acestës, and the ashes of my father?”

With this exchange they headed east for port,
 The westwind in their sails. On a following swell
 The fleet ran free, and happily at last
 They turned in toward the shoreline that they knew.
 Far off, now, on a high hill top, Acestës
 Wondered to see his guest's fleet coming in,
 Then hurried down, spiny with javelins,
 Wearing a Libyan she-bear's hide—Acestës,
 Born of a Trojan mother to the river
 God Criniscus. As he knew and prized
 His parentage, he welcomed their return,
 Treated them to the riches of the fields,
 And comforted with friendship weary men.
 When the next day at dawn the brightening sky
 Made the stars fade, Aeneas called his crews
 Together from all quarters of the shore
 And spoke out from a built-up rostrum:

"Sons

Of Dardanus, in the high line of gods,
 The months are spent, the rounding year fulfilled
 Since we interred my godlike father's bones
 And mourned and blessed his altars. And if I
 Am not mistaken, now that day has come
 Which I shall hold in bitterness and honor
 All my life (gods, you would have it so).
 Were I today exiled in Libyan sands
 Or caught at sea off Argos, or detained
 In walled Mycenae, still I should carry out
 My anniversary vows and ceremonies,
 Heaping the altars, as I should, with offerings.
 But now, beyond all expectation, here
 We stand beside his ashes and his bones—
 And surely not, I think, without the great gods'
 Will and contrivance—carried here off course
 To enter kindly havens. Come then, everyone,
 We'll celebrate this holiday in joy.
 Let us ask for propitious winds, and when
 Our city is laid out, our temples blessed
 In Father's honor, may he grant each year
 That I perform this ritual. Trojan-born
 Acestēs gives each ship two head of oxen.
 Welcome the hearthgods to the feast—our own
 And those our host Acestēs cherishes.
 Then, too, if as we trust nine days from now
 Dawn lifts for mortals her dear light and bares
 The world with sunrays, I shall plan and hold
 Contests for Trojans: first a ship-race, then
 We'll see who wins at running, who stands out
 In pride of strength at javelin and archery,
 Or dares to fight with rawhide on his hands.
 May all compete for prizes and the palm!
 Now silence, all. Garland your brows with leaves."

At this he shaded his own brows with myrtle,
 Loved by his mother. Helymus did the same,
 Acestēs ripe with age, the boy Ascanius,

And all the young men followed suit. Aeneas
 Left the assembly now and made his way
 With many thousands to the funeral mound,
 Walking amid the crowd. Once there, he poured
 The ritual libations: two of wine,
 Two of fresh milk, and two of victims' blood,
 Then cast down purple mourning flowers and said:

"I greet and bless you, sacred father, bless you,
 Ashes and shade and soul, paternal soul
 I vainly rescued once. It was not given me
 With you beside me to explore the coasts
 And plains of Italy, nor to discover,
 Whatever it may be, Ausonian Tiber . . ."

So far he had proceeded in his speech
 When from the depths of mound and shrine a snake
 Came huge and undulant with seven coils,
 Enveloping the barrow peaceably
 And gliding on amid the altars. Azure
 Flecks mottled his back; a dappled sheen
 Of gold set all his scales ablaze, as when
 A rainbow on the clouds facing the sun
 Throws out a thousand colors.

Aeneas paused,
 Amazed and silent, while deliberately
 The snake's long column wound among the bowls
 And polished cups, browsing the festal dishes,
 And, from the altars where he fed, again
 Slid harmlessly to earth below the tomb.
 Now all the more intent, the celebrant
 Took up again his father's ritual,
 Uncertain whether he should think the snake
 The local god, the genius of the place,
 Or the attendant spirit of his father.
 He sacrificed a pair of sheep, a pair
 Of swine, a pair of heifers with black hides,
 Then poured out shallow bowls of wine and called
 The ghost of great Anchises, the death-shade

Released from Acheron. Then his companions,
 Each to his capacity, brought in
 Their own glad offerings. They piled the altars,
 Knifed the beasts, placed caldrons on the fires,
 And at their ease upon the grass raked up
 Live coals under the spits to broil the flesh.

|| In due course came the awaited day: the shining
 Sun's team brought a ninth and cloudless Dawn.
 Acestës' influence roused the neighboring folk,
 And now in happy groups they thronged the shore
 To see Aeneas' men, or to compete.
 But first the prizes were set out on view
 Midfield—blest tripods, fresh green crowns, and palms,
 Rewards for winners; armor, too, and robes
 Infused with crimson dye; gold bars and silver.
 Next from a central eminence a trumpet
 Sang out for the opening of the games.
 The well matched entrants in the first event
 Were heavy-oared ships, four from the whole fleet:
 Mnestheus' eager oarsmen drove the Seabeast—
 Mnestheus of Italy he soon would be,
 From whose name came the clan of Memmius.
 Then Gyas captained the Chimaera, huge
 In length and weight, big as a town afloat,
 Which Dardan oarsmen in three tiers drove onward,
 Surging together at three banks of oars.
 Then he for whom the Sergian house was named,
 Sergestus, rode the great Centaur. Cloanthus,
 From whom your family came, Roman Cluentius,
 Rode in the sea-blue Scylla.

Out at sea,
 Well off the foaming beach, there is a rock
 Submerged and beaten by high seas at times
 When Northwest winds in winter hide the stars,

But in calm weather it stands quietly
 Above the unmoving water, a level perch
 And happy sunning place for gulls. Aeneas
 Made a green goal here with an ilex bough,
 Wishing well-marked for sailors in his charge
 The point where they should turn and double back
 On the long course. Now they drew lots for places,
 Captains erect upon the sterns, their gold
 And splendid crimson gleaming far around.
 The crews, for their part, garlanded with poplar,
 Bare to the waist, glistened with rubbing oil,
 Well settled on their planks, reaching ahead
 To oar hafts, listening hard for the starting call.
 Throbbing excitement seemed to void their hearts
 All beating high in appetite for glory.
 Then as the brilliant trumpet gave its note
 They all surged forward from the starting line,
 No lagging: heaven echoed shouts, and channels
 Under the crewmen's pulling turned to foam.
 Abreast they cleft their furrows, all the sea
 Torn up by oarstrokes and the biting prows.
 The racing cars in a two-horse chariot race
 Are not so headlong to consume the field
 Once they have left the barriers—not though
 The charioteers shake out the rippling reins
 To give head to the teams, and hang above them,
 Bent to the whip. Then with applause and cheers
 And partisan shouts the wooded landscape rang,
 The shores, embayed, rolled the sound back and forth,
 And the reverberant hills gave back the din.
 Amid the turbulence, the leader now,
 Racing ahead at the very start, was Gyas.
 Close on him came Cloanthus, better served
 By oarsmen, but his ship's weight slowed him up.
 Behind them at an equal interval
 The Seabeast and the Centaur vied for third,
 And now the Seabeast had it, now the mighty
 Centaur took the lead, now both together,
 Prows on a line, with their long keels ploughed up

The salt sea water. As they all came near
 The offshore rock, the halfway mark, the leader,
 Gyas, hailed Menoetes at the tiller:

“Why keep so far to starboard, man? This way!
 Hug shore, making the turn. What if the oarblades
 Graze the rock to port? Let others shear off
 Wide to seaward.”

Heedless, in his fear
 Of a hidden ledge, Menoetes swung the prow
 Toward the open sea. Gyas again cried out:

“Now why bear off? Stick to the rocks, Menoetes!”
 And at that instant looking back he saw
 Cloanthus just behind on the inner track.
 Between the ship of Gyas and the rocks
 He shaved his way to port, then suddenly
 Shot past him at the turn and got away
 Into safe water, leaving the mark behind.
 Young Gyas flared up now, ablaze
 To the bottom of his soul with indignation,
 And tears wetted his cheeks. Without a thought
 For dignity or the safety of his crew
 He tossed cautious Menoetes overboard
 Into the sea. Then he himself as steersman
 Took the tiller, and as captain cheered
 His oarsmen as he swung the rudder over,
 Heading for shore. When heavy old Menoetes
 Slowly at last emerged from the sea bottom
 Drenched and streaming, up he climbed and sat
 Atop the dry ledge. Trojans had laughed to see
 His plunge, his swimming, and now laughed again
 As he coughed up sea water from his chest.

To the two behind, to Mnestheus and Sergestus,
 The happy thought had come of passing Gyas,
 Now he had lost speed—and Sergestus led,
 Nearing the rock, though not by a full boat-length,
 For Seabeast by her prow came up alongside.

Mnestheus on his catwalk fore and aft
Between the oarsmen urged them on:

“Now pull,
Pull for it! Great Hector’s companions in arms,
Chosen in Troy’s last hour for my crew,
Now bring to bear the strength and nerve you showed
In Gaetulan Syrtēs, in the Ionian sea,
In the assaulting waves off Malea!
Not for the first place, not for the victory now
Am I, Mnestheus, contending; though I wish—
But let the winners be your choices, Neptune!—
Only, to come in last, that’s shameful. Fellows,
Win just this, keep us from that disgrace!”

They stretched ahead for strokes and pulled their hearts out,
Making the beaked hull shake at every stroke,
And sheets of sea were yanked, it seemed, from under them.
Panting racked them, dry-mouthed, and the sweat
Ran down in streams. But actually, chance
Brought them the wished-for glory. As Sergestus
In his wild zeal entered the danger zone
And turned his prow in toward the rock, his luck
Failed and he struck on an outlying reef:
A grinding blow, oars shivered, hitting rock,
And the hull hung tipped up where it went aground.
With a loud shout the sailors heaved together,
Backing water, then brought boathooks out
And pikes, retrieving cracked oars from the sea.
Mnestheus meanwhile, more ardent for his luck,
With his fast oars in line, the wind behind him,
Took the shoreward leg through open water.
As a wild dove when startled into flight
Beats her affrighted way over the fields—
A dove whose cote and tender nestlings lie
In a rock cranny—with fast clapping wings,
But soon in quiet air goes floating on
With wings extended motionless: just so
Mnestheus, just so the Seabeast cleft the sea,

Running for the home stretch, and just so
She glided, borne by her own impetus.

Sergestus was the first she left behind,
Pitted against the ledge in shallow water
With pointless cries for help—learning the trick
Of boat-racing with broken oars; ahead
Then Seabeast closed with Gyas' huge Chimaera
That soon, for lack of helmsman, fell away.
Now in the home stretch only one was left,
Cloanthus. In his track, with might and main,
Mnestheus pressed on. And now the shouts from shore
Grew twice as loud, as all the watching crowd
Cheered for Mnestheus, filling the air with din.
One crew fought off the shame of losing honor
Theirs already, glory won; they'd give
Their lives for fame; but luck empowered the others,
Who felt that they could do it, and so could.
The prows now even, they were close indeed
To winning, had Cloanthus not stretched out
His hands to seaward and in bursts of prayer
Called on the gods to hear his vows:

"O gods

Whose power is on the deep sea and whose waves
I'm racing over, I shall place with joy
A snow-white bull before your altars, here
Upon this shore, in payment of my vow,
And fling the parts into the sea and pour
A stream of wine!"

Under the depth of water
All the Nereids, Phorcus' company,
And virgin Panopëa heard his prayer,
And Father Portunus, the harbor god,
With his great hand impelled the Seabeast onward.
Swifter than a gust out of the east
Or arrow on the wing she ran for land
And took her place in the deep harbor. Then
When all were called together, Anchises' son

Proclaimed by the loud crier Cloanthus winner
 And veiled his temples with green bay. Moreover,
 To each contending ship he gave a choice
 Of bullocks, three to each, with wine and one
 Great bar of silver to be borne away.
 Additional rewards went to the captains:
 A cloak, woven with gold thread, for the winner,
 Bordered with a meander's double line
 Of Meliboean crimson; pictured there
 The royal boy amid the boughs of Ida
 Running with javelin, tiring out swift deer,
 So lifelike in the chase he seemed to pant.
 Then Jove's big bird, his weapon-carrier,
 Whisked him aloft from Ida in his talons,
 While aged guardians held out their hands
 To heaven in vain and wild hounds barked at air.
 To him whose valor won him second place
 A triple shirt of mail close-wrought with links
 Of polished gold, a trophy of Aeneas'
 Victory over Demoleos, near the river
 Simoïs under Troy's high wall. This shirt
 Aeneas gave to Mnestheus, as an honor,
 And as protection in the wars to come.
 Phegeus and Sagaris, his body servants,
 Could barely carry all its folds
 On shoulders braced for it, though in other days
 Demoleos in this shirt and on the run
 Had harried stragglers Trojans.

The third prize

Aeneas gave was a pair of brazen caldrons
 And silver cups embossed in high relief.

All now rewarded, proud of their rich things,
 Beribboned, garlanded, they were going off,
 When back from the rude rock, barely dislodged
 By every skill, limping, with missing oars
 On one oar-bank, Comedian Sergestus
 Brought his long craft ingloriously in.

Often you'll see a snake on a high road
 A felloed wheel has run obliquely over
 Or a pedestrian with a heavy stone
 Has torn and left half dead: to get away
 It sets in motion its long coils, in part
 Still dangerous with blazing eyes and rearing
 Hissing head, in part immobilized
 By the crippling wound, writhing upon itself.
 So sluggish under oars the ship moved on;
 But then she hoisted sail and entered harbor
 Under full sail. Glad for the rescued ship
 And crew, Aeneas gave the promised gift:
 A slave woman who knew Minerva's craft,
 The Cretan Pholoë, with nursing twins.

Now that the ship race had been run, Aeneas
 Walked to a grassy field that wooded hills
 Curved all around: a vale and an arena.
 There with a crowd of thousands the great captain
 Betook himself and took a central place,
 A seat on a platform. Now he called on those
 Whom hope for gain led to compete in running,
 And set out prizes for them. From all sides
 They came up, Teucrians with Sicilians mixed,
 Nisus and Euryalus in the lead—
 Euryalus exceptional for beauty
 And bloom of youth, whom Nisus dearly loved.
 Next came Diorës of the royal line
 Of Priam; then, together, Salius
 And Patron, this one an Acamanian,
 The other from Arcadia, a Tegean.
 Then two Sicilians, Helymus and Panopës,
 Men of the woods, henchmen of old Acestës;
 And many more whose names are in the dark.
 Aeneas spoke among them:

"Be aware

Of this, now: bear it happily in mind:
 Not one goes off without a gift from me.
 Two Cretan arrows shod in polished steel
 And a double-bladed axe, inlaid in silver,
 Await each one of you, the same reward.
 Then prizes go to the first three finishers
 With pale green olive garlands: he who wins
 Will get a horse, fully caparisoned;
 The runner-up, an Amazonian quiver
 Full of Thracian arrows, and a strap
 Of broad gold, buckled with a well-cut gem.
 As for the third place winner, let him go
 Contented with this Argive helm."

At this

They toed the line; and when they heard the signal,
 Suddenly given, broke from the starting post
 And made off on the track like an outriding
 Rack of storm cloud. As they marked the finish,
 Nisus flashed out, sprinting into the lead,
 Faster than gale wind or a bolt of thunder.
 After him, but far behind, came Salius,
 And after Salius by a space Euryalus,
 Helymus next. But close upon him, look,
 Diorēs in his flight matched stride with stride,
 Nearing his shoulder; if more track remained
 He would have passed him or come up abreast
 In a dead heat. But in the home stretch now
 The tired men were making for the finish
 When Nisus stumbled by bad luck, in gore—
 A slippery place where beasts had been cut down
 And blood gushed on the turf soaking the grass.
 Elated, with the race as good as won,
 He staggered there and could not hold his feet
 On the trodden ground, but pitched on it headlong
 In the mire and blood of offerings.

Though beaten,

This man did not forget Euryalus,

His beloved, but surging from the spot
 Of slipperiness he tripped up Salius,
 And he in turn went tumbling head over heels
 To lie flat, as Euryalus flashed past
 By his friend's help running to win first place
 Amid applause and cheers. Then Helymus
 Came in and then Diorës, third place now.

At this point the whole banked assemblage rang
 With Salius' clamor, facing the front-row elders,
 For the honor stolen from him by a foul.
 The crowd's support and his own quiet tears
 Were in Euryalus's favor: prowess
 Ever more winning for a handsome form.
 Diorës backed him with loud protestations,
 Having won third place all in vain
 If the first prize went back to Salius.
 Then fatherly Aeneas said:

"Your prizes
 Stand as they are, young fellows. There will be
 No change by anyone in the winning order.
 Let me console a blameless friend's bad luck."
 With this he gave a Gaetulan lion's hide
 With shaggy mane and gilded claws to Salius.
 Nisus now said:

"If losers get rewards
 As great as that; and you console a fall,
 What proper gift will you give Nisus, then?
 First prize, the crown, is what I earned by rights
 Had Fortune not opposed me, taken me out
 As it did Salius."

While he spoke he showed
 His face and body all befouled with mire.
 Smiling at Nisus, fatherly Aeneas
 Ordered a shield brought out, Didymaon's work,
 Removed once by Danaans from a portal
 Sacred to Neptune: this exceptional prize
 He gave to the conspicuous runner.

A
fter

The races had been held and prizes given,
 "Now," said Aeneas, "anyone who has
 A fighting heart and fortitude, step forward,
 Put up your hands for the encasing hide."
 He set a double prize then for the boxing:
 A bullock for the winner, dressed with gold
 And snowy wool; a sword and a choice helm
 As comfort for the beaten man. Straightway,
 Without an instant's pause, in his huge power,
 Darēs got up amid the murmurous crowd—
 The one man who had held his ground with Paris,
 The man, too, who knocked out the champion, Butēs,
 Beside the burial mound where Hector lies:
 Butēs, a giant boxer, bragged of coming
 From the Bebrycian tribe of Amycus,
 But Darēs stretched him half dead on the sand.
 So powerful, the man reared up his head
 For combat, showed his shoulders' breadth, his reach
 With left and right, threw punches at the air.
 Who would fight him? Among all those men
 Not one dared put the leather on his hands.
 Thinking all had withdrawn, yielding the prize,
 He took his stance before Aeneas' feet
 And made no bones of grasping the bull's horn
 In his left hand, and saying:

"Son of the goddess,
 If no one dares commit himself to boxing,
 How long must I stand here? How long may I
 Properly be kept waiting? Say the word,
 And I lead off the prize."

Then all the Dardans

Murmured:

"Let the man have what was promised."

Acestēs, though, had hard words for Entellus
 Sitting beside him on a couch of turf:

“Entellus, what price now that in the old days
 You were our strongest fighting man? Will you
 Sit here so meek and let a prize like that
 Be carried off without a fight? Where now
 Is our god, Eryx, whom you call your teacher
 But let down in the end? What of your fame
 Through all Trinacria, and the booty hung
 About your hall?”

Entellus softly answered:

“Not that love of honor or appetite
 For glory have given way, beaten by fear;
 I'm slowed by age, my blood runs feebly now
 Without heat, and my strength is spent, my body
 Musclebound. Had I that youth again
 That I had once, and that this arrogant fellow
 Counts on, I would need no setting-on,
 No prize, no pretty steer, to make me meet him;
 Gifts don't concern me.”

After saying this,
 He tossed into the ring a pair of gauntlets
 Monstrously heavy, which the fighter Eryx
 Used to bind on his forearms and hands,
 Hard rawhide. And the crowd looked on amazed,
 So huge they were, of seven oxhides, barred
 With lead and iron sewn to stiffen them.

Darēs himself stared more than anyone
 And moved away, reluctant for a bout.
 Meanwhile Anchises' great-souled son picked up
 And tried the gauntlets, turning their rolled-up weight
 This way and that. The veteran Entellus
 Now spoke up in his deep voice:

“What then

If anyone had seen Hercules' gloves
 And the grim fight, here on this very shore?
 These were the armor worn by your own brother
 Eryx; even now you see them stained
 With blood and spattered brains. In these at last
 He faced the great Alcides, and in these

I used to fight, while hotter blood sustained me
 And age had not won out as yet or scattered
 Snow on my brows. But if this Trojan, Darēs,
 Refuses our equipment, if Aeneas
 In fairness so decides, and my proponent,
 Acestēs, nods, we'll equalize the fight.
 Here, I give up the oxhide gloves of Eryx.
 Breathe easier, pull off your Trojan gloves.”

He threw the double mantle from his shoulders,
 Bared his great arms and legs, all thew and bone,
 And took his stand, gigantic, in the arena.
 Now with paternal care Anchises' son
 Brought gauntlets of the same weight out
 To tie on both men's hands. Then instantly
 Each in his stance moved on his toes and put
 His fists up high in air, holding his head
 Well back out of the range of blows. They sparred
 With rights and lefts, each trying to sting the other
 Into unguarded fighting. One had speed
 Of footwork and élan of youth; the other
 Giant mass and brawn—but his slow knees
 Quivered and buckled, painful gasping shook him,
 Huge as he was. Often they punched and missed,
 Often they hit, thudding on flanks and ribs
 Or making chests resound. Then flurrying punches
 Pummeled ears and temples, and their jaws
 Would crunch at every solid blow. Entellus
 Gravely stood in the same unshifting stance,
 Watchful to roll with punches or to slip them.
 Darēs, like one assaulting a tall city
 Or laying siege to a stronghold on a height,
 Tried this approach, then that, explored the ground
 On all sides cleverly, came on, came in
 From various angles, all to no avail.
 Then surging up, Entellus poised his right
 And threw it, but the other in his quickness
 Saw the blow descending and just in time

Slipped out from under. All Entellus' force
 Being spent on air, by his own impetus
 The mighty man fell mightily to earth,
 As ponderously as, from time to time,
 A hollow and uprooted pine will fall
 On Erymanthus or the range of Ida.
 Teucrians and Sicilians in their rivalry
 Rose together, as a shout went up,
 And, running out, Acestës was the first
 To help the old man, his contemporary,
 Up from the ground.

Now neither hurt and slowed
 Or shaken by the fall, the fighting man
 Returned to combat hotter than before,
 His power excited by his anger. Shame
 Aroused him, too, and his own sense of manhood,
 So that he went for Darës, driving him
 Headlong over the ring, redoubling cuffs
 With right and left alike, no pause, no rest.
 As thick and fast as hail, drumming on roofs
 In a big storm, were the old hero's blows
 With both hands battering and spinning Darës.
 Fatherly Aeneas would not sit by
 While this fury went further—so berserk
 Entellus was in the rancor of his soul.
 He stopped the fight, and saved bone-weary Darës,
 Saying to comfort him:

“Poor fellow, how
 Could rashness take you this way? Don't you feel
 A force now more than mortal is against you
 And heaven's will has changed? We'll bow to that!”
 So, speaking loudly, he broke off the battle,
 And loyal shipmates took Darës in hand,
 Weak-kneed, his head wobbling from side to side
 Spitting out teeth mixed in with gobs of blood.
 They led him to the ships, and then, recalled,
 Received the helm and sword, leaving the palm
 And bullock for Entellus. The old champion,

Glorying in his courage and his prize,
Spoke out:

“Son of the goddess, Teucrians all,
Now see what power was in me in my prime,
And see the death from which you rescued Darēs.”

He set himself to face the bull that stood there,
Prize of the battle, then drew back his right
And from his full height lashed his hard glove out
Between the horns. The impact smashed the skull
And fragmented the brains. Down went the ox
Aquiver to sprawl dying on the ground.
The man stood over it and in deep tones
Proclaimed:

“Here is a better life in place of Darēs,
Eryx; here I lay down my gauntlets and my art.”

|| Immediately after this, Aeneas
Invited all so minded to contend
With speeding arrows, and he set the prizes.
A mast out of Serestus' ship he raised
With his own giant hand, and at the top
Tethered a dove upon a cord as target
For them to shoot at. When they gathered round
A bronze helm took their lots. First shaken out,
And greeted by his partisans with cheers,
Was Hippocoön, son of Hyrtacus;
Then Mnestheus, second-place winner in the ship race,
Wearing his olive garland; and the third
Was Eurytion—brother to you, illustrious
Pandarus, who in another day,
When given command to break the truce, led off
With a bow-bent arrow shot amid the Achaeans.
The last one out, deep in the helm, Acestēs—

He, too, ventured to try the young men's feat.
 Now with stout arms they flexed their bows, each man
 Hefting his own before him; and then drew
 Their shafts from quivers. Right across the sky,
 As the bowstring twanged, the first winged arrow, shot
 By the son of Hyrtacus, whipped through the air
 To strike and then stay fixed in the mast's timber.
 The long pole trembled and the terrified bird
 Fluttered, as all the place rang with applause.
 Now Mnestheus took his eager stand, bow bent,
 And aimed his gaze and full-drawn arrow high,
 But by hard luck he missed the bird herself;
 His steel point cut the flaxen cord, by which,
 Tied to her foot, the bird hung from the mast.
 Away she soared, into the south wind, white
 Against dark clouds. In a flash, Eurytion,
 Long ready with his bow bent, arrow drawn,
 And whispering to his archer brother's shade
 As he tracked the dove delighting in open sky
 With clapping wings, now put his arrow through her
 Under a black cloud. Down she plummeted
 And left her life in the upper air of stars,
 But brought down with her the transfixing shaft.
 Only Acestēs now remained, although
 The prize escaped him; still he bent his bow
 And shot into the air, showing them all
 His old-time archer's power and bow that sang.
 But here before their startled eyes appeared
 An omen of great import: afterward
 Mighty events made it all clear, and poets
 Far in the future fabled it in awe.
 The arrow flying in thin cloud caught fire
 And left a track of flame until, burnt out,
 It vanished in the wind—as shooting stars
 Will often slip away across the sky
 Trailing their blown hair. Everyone stood still
 And thunderstruck, with prayer to heaven's powers,
 Trinacrians and Teucrians alike.

Aeneas' great soul soon embraced the sign,
Embraced joyous Acestës, loaded him
With handsome gifts, and said:

"Here, take them, father,

You are the one the great king of Olympus
Wished by these auspices to be distinguished
Apart from others. You shall have this gift
That in his age had been Anchises' own:
A mixing bowl, engraved, that Cisseus
Of Thrace once gave my father, a princely thing,
To keep as a reminder and pledge of love."

With this he bound Acestës' brows with laurel,
Proclaiming him the winner before all—
Preferment never grudged by that good fellow,
Eurytion, though he alone had brought
The dove down from the sky. The third-place winner,
He who had cut the cord, came forward next
For his reward, and last came he who fixed
His arrow in the timber of the mast.
But even before the finish of this contest
Aeneas called aside Epytidës,
Body guard and companion of young Iulus,
And spoke into his ear:

"Go out and tell

Ascanius—if he has the boys' troop ready
Here along with him, and has maneuvers
Planned for the horses—tell him to lead them on
For Grandfather, these squadrons, and to let himself
Be seen in arms."

Aeneas now commanded

The whole crowd to withdraw from the long track
And open up the playing field. Then came
The riders, boys in even ranks, all shining
Before their parents' eyes, all mounts in hand,
And, as they passed, admiring murmurs rose
From men of Sicily and men of Troy.
The troopers had their hair smartly pressed down
By well-trimmed wreaths; each had a pair of lances

Made of cornel, tipped with steel. Some shoulders
 Bore glossy quivers. All wore twisted gold
 In a pliant necklace on the upper chest.

There were three squadrons—three commanders, weaving
 Right and left; behind each one there came
 Two files of six boy-riders in open column
 Bright in the sun, and a trainer to each column.
 Number one squadron gloried in its leader,
 Little Priam, who bore his grandsire's name—
 Your noble son, Politēs, and a destined
 Sire of Italians—riding a Thracian mount
 With dappling of white, white pasterns and
 Upon his haughty brow a snow-white blaze.
 Atys had command of the second squadron,
 From whom the Latin Atii have their name:
 Small Atys, cherished boy-to-boy by Iulus.
 Third and last, and handsomest of all,
 Came Iulus, riding a Sidonian mount
 Given him by the glowing beauty, Dido,
 To be a keepsake and a pledge of love.
 The other troopers rode Sicilian horses
 Of old Acestēs.

Dardans with applause

Now greeted the shy boys and loved their show,
 Marking in each the features of his forebears.
 After the troop had circled the assembly
 Before their families' eyes, Epýtidēs
 From the wings shouted an order prearranged
 And cracked his whip. The column split apart
 As files in the three squadrons all in line
 Turned away, cantering left and right; recalled,
 They wheeled and dipped their lances for a charge.
 They entered then on parades and counter-parades,
 The two detachments, matched in the arena,
 Winding in and out of one another,
 And whipped into sham cavalry skirmishes
 By baring backs in flight, then whirling round
 With leveled points, then patching up a truce

And riding side by side. So intricate
 In ancient times on mountainous Crete they say
 The Labyrinth, between walls in the dark,
 Ran criss-cross a bewildering thousand ways
 Devised by guile, a maze insoluble,
 Breaking down every clue to the way out.
 So intricate the drill of Trojan boys
 Who wove the patterns of their pacing horses,
 Figured, in sport, retreats and skirmishes—
 Like dolphins in the drenching sea, Carpathian
 Or Libyan, that shear through waves in play.
 This mode of drill, this mimicry of war,
 Ascanius brought back in our first years
 When he walled Alba Longa; and he taught
 The ancient Latins to perform the drill
 As he had done with other Trojan boys.
 The Albans taught their children, and in turn
 Great Rome took up this glory of the founders.
 The boys are called Troy now, the whole troop Trojan.

Rites for Aeneas' father had reached this point,
 When Fortune now first altered and betrayed them.
 While they were honoring the tomb with games
 Saturnian Juno sent her Iris down
 From heaven, exhaling winds to waft her far
 To the Trojan fleet. Juno had plans afoot,
 Her ancient rancor not yet satisfied.
 So Iris glided on the colored rainbow,
 Seen by none, swift goddess, on her way.
 She sighted the great crowd, then scanned the shore,
 Saw ports deserted and ships unattended;
 But on a desolate beach apart, the women
 Wept for Anchises lost as they gazed out
 In tears at the unfathomable sea.

“How many waves remain for us to cross,
How broad a sea, though we are weary, weary?”

All had one thing to say: a town and home
Were what they dreamed of, sick of toil at sea.
Taking her cue, darting into their midst,
Adept at doing ill, Iris put off
Her aspect as a goddess, and her gown,
To take the form of aged Beroë,
Wife of the Tmarian, Doryclus, blest
With noble birth, a name at Troy, and children.
In this guise she advanced among the mothers.

“Miserable women that we are,” she said,
“Whom no Achaean hand dragged out to death
Under the walls of our old fatherland!
Unlucky nation, for what final blow
Is Fortune keeping you alive? We’ve seen
The seventh summer since the fall of Troy,
And all these years we have been driven on
By land and sea, by hostile rocks and stars,
To measure the great water in our quest
For Italy—an Italy that recedes
While we endure the roll of the sea-swell.
Here is the land of Eryx, our old brother,
Here is our host, Acestës. Who prevents
Our building here a town for town-dwellers?
Country of our fathers, dear hearth gods
Rescued from the enemy to no end,
Will never a wall be called the wall of Troy?
Shall I not see on earth Simoïs and Xanthus,
Hector’s rivers? Come now, all of you,
Set fire to those infernal ships with me!
I dreamed the clairvoyant Cassandra came
With burning torches, offering them, saying:

‘Here you may look for Troy! Your home is here!’
Why wait? High time we acted on such portents.

See there, Neptune's four altar flames; the god
Has fire for us, the god will give us courage!"

Urging them on, she picked a dangerous brand,
Lifted it high and swept it into flame
And threw it. Taken by surprise, the women
Stood bewildered. Then one from the crowd,
The eldest, Pyrgo, royal governess
To Priam's many sons, cried:

"Do not take her
For Beroë: this is not she, the Rhoetean,
Wife of Dorýclus, mothers. Just observe
What traits she has of more than mortal beauty,
Her blazing eyes, her audacity, her face,
Her voice, her stride. I tell you, I myself
Left Beroë just now, and she is ill;
Vexed, too, that she alone missed our observance
And paid no tribute to Anchises."

Thus

Pyrgo reported to them. Women of Troy,
They looked now toward the ships, uncertainly,
With animosity, half in unhappy love
Of landscapes there before them, half still bound
To fated realms calling them onward—and
The goddess on strong wings went up the sky
Traversing a great rainbow under clouds.
Now truly wrought upon by signs and wonders,
Wrought to a frenzy, all cried out together,
Snatching up fire from hearths, despoiling altars,
Taking dry foliage, brush, and brands to throw.
And Vulcan, god of fire, unbridled raged
Through rowing thwarts and oars and piney hulls.

Courier Eumelus brought to Anchises' tomb
And the banked theater news of ships on fire,
And looking round they saw the dark smoke cloud
With soaring embers. First to act, Ascanius,

As he had led his troop rejoicing, now
Whipped on his horse to reach the mutinous camp—
And winded trainers could not hold him back.

“What unheard-of madness!” the boy shouted.
“Where now, where do you intend to go?
Poor miserable women of our city,
Not the enemy, not the Argive camp,
But your own hopes are what you burn! Look here,
I am your own Ascanius.”

And he hurled
Before their feet his hollow helm, put on
For the sham battles. Meanwhile in all haste
Aeneas came, and the Trojan companies.
But the women scattered here and there in fear
Along the beaches, in the woods, wherever
They could take cover in rock caves, ashamed
To face the daylight, face what they had done—
For now they knew their own, and their shocked hearts
Were free of Juno. Not on that account
Did fires lit by them lose power or yield
To counter action: under wetted oak
The caulking smouldered and exuded smoke
As the great sluggish heat ate into hulls
And the contagion seeped all through the body:
Neither men’s force nor streams of water poured
Prevailed on it. Now godfearing Aeneas
Rent the shirt upon his shoulders. Throwing
Wide his hands, he begged high heaven for help:

“Almighty Jupiter, unless by now
You loathe all Trojans to the last man,
If divine kindness shown in ancient days
Can still pay heed to mortal suffering,
Grant that our fleet survive this fire, father,
Even now: at the last moment save
The frail affairs of Trojans from destruction.
Otherwise, do what now remains to do:

With your consuming bolt, with your right hand,
If I deserve it, blast me and overwhelm us.”

Scarce had he spoken when a black storm broke
In wild fury with spouting rain, while peals
Of thunder shook the low lands and high places.
Down from the whole sky the torrents came
In dense murk, black as pitch, out of the south.
And ships were filled up, half-burnt timbers drenched,
Till all the fires were out, and all the hulls,
Except for four, delivered from the burning.
Aeneas had been stunned by the mischance
And could not rest, turning this way and that
Within him, coping with momentous questions:
Should he forget the destiny foretold
And make his home in Sicily, or try
Again for Italy? Nautēs, an older man,
And one whom Pallas Tritonia had taught
His famous thoughtfulness (she gave him answers,
As to the meaning of the gods’ great wrath
Or what the pattern of the fates required)
Nautēs addressed Aeneas to give him heart:

“Sir, born of an immortal, let us follow
Where our fates may lead, or lead us back.
Whatever comes,
All Fortune can be mastered by endurance.
You have Acestēs, a Dardanian
Divine in lineage: make him your counsellor,
Congenial as he is, in all your plans.
And now these ships are burnt, hand over to him
The number of those they might have carried: those
Too weary of your great quest, your sea faring—
Men who have had long lives, women worn out
On shipboard, feeble men, afraid of danger:
Set them apart, and let them have their city
Here in this land, the tired ones, and they
May with permission call their town Acesta.”

His old friend's plan attracted him, but still
 Aeneas wondered, all the more torn between
 Anxieties of all kinds. As now black Night
 Borne upward in her car possessed the sky,
 Out of the dark, from heaven, his father's image
 Seemed to float suddenly and speak:

"My son,
 Dearer to me than life while life remained,
 And pitted now against the fates of Troy,
 I come by Jove's command who drove away
 The fire from your ships, being moved to pity
 In heaven's height at last. Obey the counsel,
 Beautiful as it is, now given by Nautēs:
 Embark for Italy chosen men, the bravest.
 In Latium you must battle down in war
 A hard race, hard by nurture and by training.
 First, however, visit the underworld
 The halls of Dis, and through profound Avernus
 Come to meet me, son. Black Tartarus
 With its grim realm of shades is not my home,
 But radiant gatherings of godly souls
 I have about me in Elysium.
 To that place the pure Sibyl, after blood
 Of many black sheep flows out, will conduct you.
 Then you will hear of your whole race to come
 And what walled town is given you. Farewell:
 Night passes midway on her wheeling course,
 And cruel Sunrise fanned me with a breath
 Her laboring team exhaled."

And after speaking
 He faded like thin smoke into the air.
 Aeneas cried: "So soon? Where to, then? Must you
 Vanish? Are you taking flight from someone?
 Who can forbid you to be held by me?"

So he called out, then turned to poke the embers,
 The drowsing fire on his hearth, and paid
 His humble duty to the Lar of Troy

And Vesta's shrine—the goddess of the hearth—
 With ground meal, as in ritual sacrifice,
 And a full incense casket. Then at once
 He called his captains, told Acestës first
 Of Jove's command as taught by his dear father,
 And what now stood decided in his mind.
 No long exchange, no dissent from Acestës.
 They listed, for the town, the older women
 And set aside men so inclined, who felt
 No need of winning honor. The remainder
 Built new thwarts, replaced burnt timbers, fitted
 Oars and rigging: a slim band of men
 But brave hearts, keen for war. Meanwhile Aeneas
 Marked with a plow the limits of the town
 And gave home sites by lot. One place should be
 Called Ilium, he decreed, one quarter Troy.
 Acestës, Trojan that he was, took pleasure
 In his new realm, proclaiming an assembly
 And giving laws to the senate now convoked.
 Then on Mount Eryx height a shrine was built,
 Hard by the stars, to Venus of Idalia,
 And round about Anchises' tomb they left
 A hallowed grove, with an attendant priest.

Nine days the people feasted, and the altars
 Rumed with offerings; light airs lulled the sea
 And blowing often from the south renewed
 Their call to cross the main. A sound of weeping
 Rose on the curving shore, as by a night,
 And then a day, embracing, they postponed it.
 Even those women, even those men, to whom
 The sea's face had seemed harsh, its very name
 Intolerable, now desired to go
 And bear all exile's toil. Aeneas spoke to them
 With kindness and commended them in tears
 To their blood-brother Acestës. He decreed
 Three calves be slain to Eryx and a lamb
 To the Stormwinds. Cables were then cast off,
 As he himself, wearing an olive garland,

Standing upon the prow apart, held out
 The shallow cup and flung the vitals down
 Into the salt surf, then poured out the wine.
 Wind coming up astern blew in their wake
 As crewmen struck their oars into the swell
 And swept a path over the sea.

But now,
 Beset with worries, Venus turned to Neptune,
 Unfolding from her heart complaints and pleas:
 "Juno's anger, and her implacable heart,
 Drive me to prayers beneath my dignity.
 No length of time, no piety affects her,
 Unbroken in will by Jove's commands or Fate,
 She never holds her peace. To have devoured
 A city from the heart of Phrygia's people
 In her vile hatred, this was not enough,
 Nor to have dragged the remnant left from Troy
 Through all harassment. Now she harries still
 Troy's bones and ashes. She alone may know
 The causes of such madness. You yourself
 Are witness to the giant storm she roused
 Not long ago in the sea off Libya,
 Mixing sea and sky, with hurricane winds
 Of Aeolus her standby—though in vain—
 And all this dared in your domain.
 But look at her new crime, how she egged on
 The Trojan women to their foul ship-burning,
 Making the Trojans, for that loss of ships,
 Forsake their own folk in a strange country.
 But as to what comes next, I beg you, let them
 Safely entrust their sailing ships to you
 Across the water; let them reach that stream,
 Laurentine Tiber—if one may concede
 These favors, if the Parcae grant their city."

The son of Saturn, tamer of the deep,
Replied:

“Cytherëa, you have every right
To trust my kingdom: you were born from it.
Then, too, I’ve merited your trust, so often
Have I repressed those mad fits and that fury
Of heavens and the sea. On land as well—
As Xanthus and Simois can testify—
I cared for your Aeneas. That day Achilles,
Hot in pursuit, pinned Trojan troops half dead
With fright against their walls and killed a myriad,
Making the rivers, choked with corpses, groan,
So Xanthus could not find his bed or send
His current seaward: then, as Aeneas fought—
Against the odds, against the frown of heaven—
The mighty son of Peleus, it was I
Who caught and saved him in a sack of cloud,
Lust though I did to cast down walls I built
With my own hands—walls of oath-breaking Troy.
To this day my regard for him is the same.
Dispel your fear. He shall, as you desire,
Enter Avernus port. One shall be lost,
But only one to look for, lost at sea:
One life given for many.”

He assured
And cheered the goddess in this way, then yoked
His team with gold, fitted the foaming bits
In their wild mouths, and let the reins run free,
Flying light on the crests in his blue car.
Waves calmed and quieted, the long sea-swell
Smoothed out under his thundering axle tree,
And storm clouds thinned away in heaven’s vast air.
Now came the diverse shapes of his companions,
Enormous whales and Glaucus’ hoary troop,
Palaemon, son of Ino, arrowy Tritons,
Phorcus’ whole host, Thetis and Mélitē
And virgin Panopëa on the left,
Nesacë, Spio, Thalia, Cymódocë.

The joys of the fair weather filled in turn
Aeneas' attentive heart.

"Up with the masts,"
He ordered. "Sails unfurled from the yard arms!"

The seamen as one man hauled on the sheets
Now port, now starboard, set the bellying canvas
Evenly to the wind, and took the braces,
Veering, this way and that, yard arms aloft
Until the freshening stern-wind filled the sails
And bore them onward. On the leading ship
Palinurus guided the close formation,
All under orders to set course by him.

Now dewy Night had touched her midway mark
Or nearly, and the crews, relaxed in peace
On their hard rowing benches, took their rest,
When Somnus, gliding softly from the stars
Put the night air aside, parted the darkness,
Palinurus, in quest of you. He brought
Bad dreams to you, in all your guiltlessness.
Upon the high poop deck the god sat down
In Phorbas' guise, and said:

"Son of Iasius,
Palinurus, the very sea itself
Moves the ships onward. There's a steady breeze.
The hour for rest has come. Put down your head
And steal a respite for your tired eyes.
I'll man your tiller for a while."

But Palinurus
Barely looked around. He said:

"Forget my good sense for this peaceful face
The sea puts on, the calm swell? Put my trust
In that capricious monster? Or hand over
Aeneas to the tricky winds, when I
Have been deceived so often by clear weather?"

With this response he held fast to the helm
And would not give it up, but kept his eyes

Upon the stars. Now see the god, his bough
 A-drip with Lethe's dew, and slumberous
 With Stygian power, giving it a shake
 Over the pilot's temples, to unfix,
 Although he fought it, both his swimming eyes.
 His unexpected drowse barely begun,
 Somnus leaned over him and flung him down
 In the clear water, breaking off with him
 A segment of the stern and steering oar.
 Headfirst he went down, calling in vain on friends.

The god himself took flight into thin air,
 But still the fleet ran safely on its course,
 Serene in Father Neptune's promises.
 Borne onward, now it neared the Sirens' reef,
 That oldtime peril, white with many bones,
 Now loud far off with trample of surf on rock.
 Here the commander felt a loss of way
 As his ship's head swung off, lacking a helmsman,
 And he himself took over, holding course
 In the night waves. Hard hit by his friend's fate
 And sighing bitterly, he said:

"For counting
 Overmuch on a calm world, Palinurus,
 You must lie naked on some unknown shore."

Lines 83-87

BOOK

VI

THE WORLD
BELOW

So grieving, and in tears, he gave the ship
Her head before the wind, drawing toward land
At the Euboian settlement of Cumae.
Ships came about, prows pointing seaward, anchors
Biting to hold them fast, and rounded sterns
Indented all the water's edge. The men
Debarked in groups, eager to go ashore
Upon Hesperia. Some struck seeds of fire
Out of the veins of flint, and some explored
The virgin woods, lairs of wild things, for fuel,
Pointing out, too, what streams they found.

Aeneas,

In duty bound, went inland to the heights
Where overshadowing Apollo dwells
And nearby, in a place apart—a dark
Enormous cave—the Sibyl feared by men.
In her the Delian god of prophecy
Inspires uncanny powers of mind and soul,
Disclosing things to come. Here Trojan captains
Walked to Diana of the Crossroads' wood
And entered under roofs of gold. They say
That Daedalus, when he fled the realm of Minos,
Dared to entrust himself to stroking wings
And to the air of heaven—unheard-of path—
On which he swam away to the cold North

At length to touch down on that very height
 Of the Chalcidians. Here, on earth again
 He dedicated to you, Phoebus Apollo,
 The twin sweeps of his wings; here he laid out
 A spacious temple. In the entrance way
 Androgeos' death appeared, then Cecrops' children
 Ordered to pay in recompense each year
 The living flesh of seven sons. The urn
 From which the lots were drawn stood modeled there.
 And facing it, upon the opposite door,
 The land of Crete, emergent from the sea;
 Here the brutish act appeared: Pasiphaë
 Being covered by the bull in the cow's place,
 Then her mixed breed, her child of double form,
 The Minotaur, get of unholy lust.
 Here, too, that puzzle of the house of Minos,
 The maze none could untangle, until, touched
 By a great love shown by a royal girl,
 He, Daedalus himself, unravelled all
 The baffling turns and dead ends in the dark,
 Guiding the blind way back by a skein unwound.
 In that high sculpture you, too, would have had
 Your great part, Icarus, had grief allowed.
 Twice your father had tried to shape your fall
 In gold, but twice his hands dropped.

Here the Trojans

Would have passed on and gazed and read it all,
 Had not Achatës, whom they had sent ahead,
 Returned now with the priestess of Apollo
 And of Diana, goddess of the Crossroads—
 Deiphobë, the Sibyl, Glaucus' daughter.
 Thus she addressed the king:

"The hour demands
 No lagging over sights like these. Instead,
 You should make offering of seven young bulls
 From an ungelded herd, and seven again
 Well-chosen ewes."

With these words for Aeneas—
 Orders his men were quick to act upon—

The priestess called them to her lofty shrine.
 The cliff's huge flank is honeycombed, cut out
 In a cavern perforated a hundred times,
 Having a hundred mouths, with rushing voices
 Carrying the responses of the Sibyl.
 Here, as the men approached the entrance way,
 The Sibyl cried out:

"Now is the time to ask
 Your destinies!"

And then:

"The god! Look there!

The god!"

And as she spoke neither her face
 Nor hue went untransformed, nor did her hair
 Stay neatly bound: her breast heaved, her wild heart
 Grew large with passion. Taller to their eyes
 And sounding now no longer like a mortal
 Since she had felt the god's power breathing near,
 She cried:

"Slow, are you, in your vows and prayers?
 Trojan Aeneas, are you slow? Be quick,
 The great mouths of the god's house, thunderstruck,
 Will never open till you pray."

Her lips

Closed tight on this. A chill ran through the bones
 Of the tough Teucrians, but their king poured out
 Entreaties from his deepest heart:

"O Phoebus,
 God who took pity on the pain of Troy,
 Who guided Paris' hand, his Dardan shaft,
 Against the body of Aiacidēs,
 As you led on I entered all those seas
 Washing great lands, and then the distant tribe
 Of the Massylians at the Syrtēs' edge.
 Now we take hold at last of Italy
 That slipped away so long. Grant that the fortune
 Of Troy shall have pursued us this far only!
 And all you gods and goddesses as well

Who took offence at Ilium and our pride,
 At last, and rightly, you may spare
 Pergamum's children. Most holy prophetess,
 Foreknowing things to come, I ask no kingdom
 Other than fate allows me; let our people
 Make their settlement in Latium
 With all Troy's wandering gods and shaken powers.
 Then I shall dedicate a temple here
 To Phoebus and Diana of the Crossroads,
 Ordering festal days in Phoebus' name.
 A holy place awaits you in my kingdom
 Where I shall store your prophecies, your dark
 Revelations to my people, and appoint
 A chosen priesthood for you, gracious one.
 But now commit no verses to the leaves
 Or they may be confused, shuffled and whirled
 By playing winds: chant them aloud, I pray."

Then he fell silent. But the prophetess
 Whom the bestriding god had not yet broken
 Stormed about the cavern, trying to shake
 His influence from her breast, while all the more
 He tired her mad jaws, quelled her savage heart,
 And tamed her by his pressure. In the end
 The cavern's hundred mouths all of themselves
 Unclosed to let the Sibyl's answers through:

"You, sir, now quit at last of the sea's dangers,
 For whom still greater are in store on land,
 The Dardan race will reach Lavinian country—
 Put that anxiety away—but there
 Will wish they had not come. Wars, vicious wars
 I see ahead, and Tiber foaming blood.
 Simois, Xanthus, Dorians encamped—
 You'll have them all again, with an Achilles,
 Child of Latium, he, too, goddess-born.
 And nowhere from pursuit of Teucrians
 Will Juno stray, while you go destitute,
 Begging so many tribes and towns for aid.

The cause of suffering here again will be
 A bride foreign to Teucrians, a marriage
 Made with a stranger.

Never shrink from blows.
 Boldly, more boldly where your luck allows,
 Go forward, face them. A first way to safety
 Will open where you reckon on it least,
 From a Greek city."

These were the sentences
 In which the Sibyl of Cumae from her shrine
 Sang out her riddles, echoing in the cave,
 Dark sayings muffling truths, the way Apollo
 Pulled her up raging, or else whipped her on,
 Digging the spurs beneath her breast. As soon
 As her fit ceased, her wild voice quieted,
 The great soldier, Aeneas, began to speak:

"No novel kinds of hardship, no surprises,
 Loom ahead, Sister. I foresaw them all,
 Went through them in my mind. One thing I pray for:
 Since it is here they say one finds the gate
 Of the king of under world, the shadowy marsh
 That wells from Acheron, may I have leave
 To go to my dear father's side and see him.
 Teach me the path, show me the entrance way.
 Through fires, and with a thousand spears behind,
 I brought him on these shoulders, rescued him
 Amid our enemies. He shared my voyage,
 Bore all the seas with me, hard nights and days
 Of menace from the sea and sky, beyond
 The strength and lot of age, frail though he was.
 Indeed, he prayed this very prayer; he told me
 That I should come to you and beg it humbly.
 Pity a son and father, gracious lady,
 All this is in your power. Hecatē
 Gave you authority to have and hold
 Avernus wood. If Orpheus could call
 His wife's shade up, relying on the strings
 That sang loud on his Thracian lyre; if Pollux

Redeemed his brother, taking his turn at death,
 So often passing back and forth; why name
 The heroes, Theseus and Hercules?
 By birth I too descend from Jove on high—”

While in these terms he prayed and pressed the altar,
 Breaking in, the Sibyl said:

“Offspring
 Of gods by blood, Trojan Anchises’ son,
 The way downward is easy from Avernus.
 Black Dis’s door stands open night and day.
 But to retrace your steps to heaven’s air,
 There is the trouble, there is the toil. A few
 Whom a benign Jupiter has loved or whom
 Fiery heroism has borne to heaven,
 Sons of gods, could do it. All midway
 Are forests, then Cocytus, thick and black,
 Winds through the gloom. But if you feel such love,
 And such desire to cross the Stygian water
 Twice, to view the night of Tartarus twice—
 If this mad effort’s to your liking, then
 Consider what you must accomplish first.
 A tree’s deep shade conceals a bough whose leaves
 And pliant twigs are all of gold, a thing
 Sacred to Juno of the lower world.
 The whole grove shelters it, and thickest shade
 In dusky valleys shuts it in. And yet
 No one may enter hidden depths
 Below the earth unless he picks this bough,
 The tree’s fruit, with its foliage of gold.
 Proserpina decreed this bough, as due her,
 Should be given into her own fair hands
 When torn away. In place of it a second
 Grows up without fail, all gold as well,
 Flowering with metallic leaves again.
 So lift your eyes and search, and once you find it
 Pull away the bough. It will come willingly,
 Easily, if you are called by fate.
 If not, with all your strength you cannot conquer it,

Cannot lop it off with a sword's edge.
 A further thing is this: your friend's dead body—
 Ah, but you *don't* know!—lies out there unburied,
 Polluting all your fleet with death
 While you are lingering, waiting on my counsel
 Here at my door. First give the man his rest,
 Entomb him; lead black beasts to sacrifice;
 Begin with these amends. Then in due course
 You'll see the Stygian forest rise before you,
 Regions not for the living.”

S

he fell silent,
 Closing her lips. With downcast face and eyes
 Aeneas turned from the cavern to the shore,
 Dark matters on his mind. Steadfast Achatës
 Walked beside him with deliberate pace
 And equal anxieties. The two exchanged
 In shifting conversation many guesses
 As to that friend, now dead, now to be buried,
 So the prophetess had said—then suddenly
 As they came down to the dry beach they saw
 Misenus, robbed of life by early death,
 Their own Misenus, a son of Aeolus,
 Never surpassed at rousing fighting men
 With brazen trumpet, setting Mars afire.
 Once he had been great Hector's adjutant,
 Going forward at Hector's side in battle,
 Brilliant with trumpet and with spear as well.
 After Achilles took the life of Hector,
 This gallant soldier joined Dardan Aeneas
 In allegiance to no lesser cause. That day
 By chance, as he blew notes on a hollow shell,
 Making the sea sing back, in his wild folly
 He dared the gods to rival him. Then Triton,

Envious, if this can be believed,
Caught him and put him under in the surf
Amid the rocks off shore.

All who were there
Clamored around the body in lament,
Aeneas, the good captain, most of all.
In haste then, even as they wept, they turned
To carry out the orders of the Sibyl,
Racing to pile up logs for the altar-pyre
And build it sky-high. Into the virgin forest,
Thicket of wild things, went the men, and down
The pitch pines came, the bitten ilex rang
With axe blows, ash and oak were split with wedges,
Mighty rowans were trundled down the slopes.

Aeneas himself went first in all this labor,
Cheering his fellows on, with implements
Like theirs in hand; but grimly in his heart
He wondered, studying the unmeasured forest,
And fell to prayer:

“If only the golden bough
Might shine for us in such a wilderness!
As all the prophetess foretold was true—
Misenus, in your case only too true.”

The words were barely uttered when two doves
In casual flight out of the upper air
Came down before the man's eyes to alight
On the green grass, and the great hero knew
These birds to be his mother's. Joyously
He prayed:

“O be my guides, if there's a way.
Wing on, into that woodland where the bough,
The priceless bough, shadows the fertile ground.
My divine mother, do not fail your son
In a baffling time.”

Then he stood still to see
What signs the doves might give, or where their flight
Might lead him. And they fed, and then flew on,

Each time as far as one who came behind
 Could keep in view. Then when they reached the gorge
 Of sulphurous Avernus, first borne upward
 Through the lucent air, they glided down
 To their desired rest, the two-hued tree
 Where glitter of gold filtered between green boughs.
 Like mistletoe that in the woods in winter
 Thrives with yellowish berries and new leaves—
 A parasite on the trunk it twines around—
 So bright amid the dark green ilex shone
 The golden leafage, rustling in light wind.
 Aeneas at once briskly took hold of it
 And, though it clung, greedily broke it off,
 Then carried it to the Sibyl's cave.

Meanwhile

The Teucrians on the shore wept for Misenus,
 Doing for thankless dust the final honors.
 First they built up a giant pyre, enriched
 With pitch pine and split oak, with somber boughs
 Alongside and dark cypresses in front.
 On top they made a blazon of bright arms.
 One group set water boiling over flames,
 Then washed the cold corpse and anointed it,
 Groaning loud, and laid it out when mourned
 On a low couch, with purple robes thrown over it,
 A hero's shrouding. Bearers then took up
 As their sad duty the great bier. With eyes
 Averted in their fathers' ancient way
 They held the torch below.

Heaped offerings

Blazed up and burned—food, incense, oil in bowls.
 And when the flame died and the coals fell in,
 They gave a bath of wine to the pyre's remnant,
 Thirsty ash; then picking out the bones
 Corynaeus enclosed them in an urn.
 The same priest with pure water went three times
 Around the company, asperging them
 With cleansing drops from a ripe olive sprig,
 And spoke the final words. Faithfully then

Aeneas heaped a great tomb over the dead,
 Placing his arms, his oar, his trumpet there
 Beneath a promontory, named for him,
 Misenum now and always, age to age.
 All this accomplished, with no more ado
 He carried out the orders of the Sibyl.

The cavern was profound, wide-mouthed, and huge,
 Rough underfoot, defended by dark pool
 And gloomy forest. Overhead, flying things
 Could never safely take their way, such deathly
 Exhalations rose from the black gorge
 Into the dome of heaven. The priestess here
 Placed four black bullocks, wet their brows with wine,
 Plucked bristles from between the horns and laid them
 As her first offerings on the holy fire,
 Calling aloud to Hecatē, supreme
 In heaven and Erebus. Others drew knives
 Across beneath and caught warm blood in bowls.
 Aeneas by the sword's edge offered up
 To Night, the mother of the Eumenidēs,
 And her great sister, Earth, a black-fleeced lamb,
 A sterile cow to thee, Proserpina.
 Then for the Stygian king he lit at night
 New altars where he placed over the flames
 Entire carcasses of bulls, and poured
 Rich oil on blazing viscera. Only see:
 Just at the light's edge, just before sunrise,
 Earth rumbled underfoot, forested ridges
 Broke into movement, and far howls of dogs
 Were heard across the twilight as the goddess
 Nearer and nearer came.

“Away, away,”

The Sibyl cried, “all those unblest, away!
 Depart from all the grove! But you, Aeneas,

Enter the path here, and unsheathe your sword.
There's need of gall and resolution now."

She flung herself wildly into the cave-mouth,
Leading, and he strode boldly at her heels.
Gods who rule the ghosts; all silent shades;
And Chaos and infernal Fiery Stream,
And regions of wide night without a sound,
May it be right to tell what I have heard,
May it be right, and fitting, by your will,
That I describe the deep world sunk in darkness
Under the earth.

Now dim to one another
In desolate night they walked on through the gloom,
Through Dis's homes all void, and empty realms,
As one goes through a wood by a faint moon's
Traucherous light, when Jupiter veils the sky
And black night blots the colors of the world.

Before the entrance, in the jaws of Orcus,
Grief and avenging Cares have made their beds,
And pale Diseases and sad Age are there,
And Dread, and Hunger that sways men to crime,
And sordid Want—in shapes to affright the eyes—
And Death and Toil and Death's own brother, Sleep,
And the mind's evil joys; on the door sill
Death-bringing War, and iron cubicles
Of the Eumenidēs, and raving Discord,
Viperish hair bound up in gory bands.
In the courtyard a shadowy giant elm
Spreads ancient boughs, her ancient arms where dreams,
False dreams, the old tale goes, beneath each leaf
Cling and are numberless. There, too,
About the doorway forms of monsters crowd—
Centaur, twiformed Scyllas, hundred-armed
Briareus, and the Lernaean hydra
Hissing horribly, and the Chimaera
Breathing dangerous flames, and Gorgons, Harpies,

Huge Geryon, triple-bodied ghost.
 Here, swept by sudden fear, drawing his sword,
 Aeneas stood on guard with naked edge
 Against them as they came. If his companion,
 Knowing the truth, had not admonished him
 How faint these lives were—empty images
 Hovering bodiless—he had attacked
 And cut his way through phantoms, empty air.

The path goes on from that place to the waves
 Of Tartarus's Acheron. Thick with mud,
 A whirlpool out of a vast abyss
 Boils up and belches all the silt it carries
 Into Cocytus. Here the ferryman,
 A figure of fright, keeper of waters and streams,
 Is Charon, foul and terrible, his beard
 Grown wild and hoar, his staring eyes all flame,
 His sordid cloak hung from a shoulder knot.
 Alone he poles his craft and trims the sails
 And in his rusty hull ferries the dead,
 Old now—but old age in the gods is green.

Here a whole crowd came streaming to the banks,
 Mothers and men, the forms with all life spent
 Of heroes great in valor, boys and girls
 Unmarried, and young sons laid on the pyre
 Before their parents' eyes—as many souls
 As leaves that yield their hold on boughs and fall
 Through forests in the early frost of autumn,
 Or as migrating birds from the open sea
 That darken heaven when the cold season comes
 And drives them overseas to sunlit lands.
 There all stood begging to be first across
 And reached out longing hands to the far shore.

But the grim boatman now took these aboard,
 Now those, waving the rest back from the strand.
 In wonder at this and touched by the commotion,
 Aeneas said:

“Tell me, Sister, what this means,
 The crowd at the stream. Where are the souls bound?
 How are they tested, so that these turn back,
 While those take oars to cross the dead-black water?”

Briefly the ancient priestess answered him:

“Cocytus is the deep pool that you see,
 The swamp of Styx beyond, infernal power
 By which the gods take oath and fear to break it.
 All in the nearby crowd you notice here
 Are pauper souls, the souls of the unburied.
 Charon’s the boatman. Those the water bears
 Are souls of buried men. He may not take them
 Shore to dread shore on the hoarse currents there
 Until their bones rest in the grave, or till
 They flutter and roam this side a hundred years;
 They may have passage then, and may return
 To cross the deeps they long for.”

Anchises’ son

Had halted, pondering on so much, and stood
 In pity for the souls’ hard lot. Among them
 He saw two sad ones of unhonored death,
 Leucaspis and the Lycian fleet’s commander,
 Orontès, who had sailed the windy sea
 From Troy together, till the Southern gale
 Had swamped and whirled them down, both ship and men.
 Of a sudden he saw his helmsman, Palinurus,
 Going by, who but a few nights before
 On course from Libya, as he watched the stars,
 Had been pitched overboard astern. As soon
 As he made sure of the disconsolate one
 In all the gloom, Aeneas called:

“Which god
 Took you away from us and put you under,
 Palinurus? Tell me. In this one prophecy
 Apollo, who had never played me false,
 Falsely foretold you’d be unharmed at sea
 And would arrive at the Ausonian coast.

Is the promise kept?"

But the shade said:

"Phoebus' caldron

Told you no lie, my captain, and no god
Drowned me at sea. The helm that I hung on to,
Duty bound to keep our ship on course,
By some great shock chanced to be torn away,
And I went with it overboard. I swear
By the rough sea, I feared less for myself
Than for your ship: with rudder gone and steersman
Knocked overboard, it might well come to grief
In big seas running. Three nights, heavy weather
Out of the South on the vast water tossed me.
On the fourth dawn, I sighted Italy
Dimly ahead, as a wave-crest lifted me.
By turns I swam and rested, swam again
And got my footing on the beach, but savages
Attacked me as I clutched at a cliff-top,
Weighted down by my wet clothes. Poor fools,
They took me for a prize and ran me through.
Surf has me now, and sea winds, washing me
Close inshore.

By heaven's happy light

And the sweet air, I beg you, by your father,
And by your hopes of Iulus' rising star,
Deliver me from this captivity,
Unconquered friend! Throw earth on me—you can—
Put in to Velia port! Or if there be
Some way to do it, if your goddess mother
Shows a way—and I feel sure you pass
These streams and Stygian marsh by heaven's will—
Give this poor soul your hand, take me across,
Let me at least in death find quiet haven."

When he had made his plea, the Sibyl said:
"From what source comes this craving, Palinurus?
Would you though still unburied see the Styx
And the grim river of the Eumenidēs,
Or even the river bank, without a summons?
Abandon hope by prayer to make the gods

Change their decrees. Hold fast to what I say
 To comfort your hard lot: neighboring folk
 In cities up and down the coast will be
 Induced by portents to appease your bones,
 Building a tomb and making offerings there
 On a cape forever named for Palinurus."

The Sibyl's words relieved him, and the pain
 Was for a while dispelled from his sad heart,
 Pleased at the place-name. So the two walked on
 Down to the stream. Now from the Stygian water
 The boatman, seeing them in the silent wood
 And headed for the bank, cried out to them
 A rough uncalled-for challenge:

"Who are you
 In armor, visiting our rivers? Speak
 From where you are, stop there, say why you come.
 This is the region of the Shades, and Sleep,
 And drowsy Night. It breaks eternal law
 For the Stygian craft to carry living bodies.
 Never did I rejoice, I tell you, letting
 Alcidēs cross, or Theseus and Pirithous,
 Demigods by paternity though they were,
 Invincible in power. One forced in chains
 From the king's own seat the watchdog of the dead
 And dragged him away trembling. The other two
 Were bent on carrying our lady off
 From Dis's chamber."

This the prophetess
 And servant of Amphrysian Apollo
 Briefly answered:

"Here are no such plots,
 So fret no more. These weapons threaten nothing.
 Let the great watchdog at the door howl on
 Forever terrifying the bloodless shades.
 Let chaste Proserpina remain at home
 In her uncle's house. The man of Troy, Aeneas,
 Remarkable for loyalty, great in arms,
 Goes through the deepest shades of Erebus

To see his father.

If the very image
Of so much goodness moves you not at all,
Here is a bough"—at this she showed the bough
That had been hidden, held beneath her dress—
"You'll recognize it."

Then his heart, puffed up
With rage, subsided. They had no more words.
His eyes fixed on the ancient gift, the bough,
The destined gift, so long unseen, now seen,
He turned his dusky craft and made for shore.
There from the long thwarts where they sat he cleared
The other souls and made the gangway wide,
Letting the massive man step in the bilge.
The leaky coracle groaned at the weight
And took a flood of swampy water in.
At length, on the other side, he put ashore
The prophetess and hero in the mire,
A formless ooze amid the grey-green sedge.
Great Cerberus barking with his triple throat
Makes all that shoreline ring, as he lies huge
In a facing cave. Seeing his neck begin
To come alive with snakes, the prophetess
Tossed him a lump of honey and drugged meal
To make him drowse. Three ravenous gullets gaped
And he snapped up the sop. Then his great bulk
Subsided and lay down through all the cave.
Now seeing the watchdog deep in sleep, Aeneas
Took the opening: swiftly he turned away
From the river over which no soul returns.

Now voices crying loud were heard at once—
The souls of infants wailing. At the door
Of the sweet life they were to have no part in,
Torn from the breast, a black day took them off
And drowned them all in bitter death. Near these

Were souls falsely accused, condemned to die.
 But not without a judge, or jurymen,
 Had these souls got their places: Minos reigned
 As the presiding judge, moving the urn,
 And called a jury of the silent ones
 To learn of lives and accusations. Next
 Were those sad souls, benighted, who contrived
 Their own destruction, and as they hated daylight,
 Cast their lives away. How they would wish
 In the upper air now to endure the pain
 Of poverty and toil! But iron law
 Stands in the way, since the drear hateful swamp
 Has pinned them down here, and the Styx that winds
 Nine times around exerts imprisoning power.
 Not far away, spreading on every side,
 The Fields of Mourning came in view, so called
 Since here are those whom pitiless love consumed
 With cruel wasting, hidden on paths apart
 By myrtle woodland growing overhead.
 In death itself, pain will not let them be.
 He saw here Phaedra, Procris, Eriphylë
 Sadly showing the wounds her hard son gave;
 Evadne and Pasiphaë, at whose side
 Laodamia walked, and Caeneus,
 A young man once, a woman now, and turned
 Again by fate into the older form.
 Among them, with her fatal wound still fresh,
 Phoenician Dido wandered the deep wood.
 The Trojan captain paused nearby and knew
 Her dim form in the dark, as one who sees,
 Early in the month, or thinks to have seen, the moon
 Rising through cloud, all dim. He wept and spoke
 Tenderly to her:

"Dido, so forlorn,

The story then that came to me was true,
 That you were out of life, had met your end
 By your own hand. Was I, was I the cause?
 I swear by heaven's stars, by the high gods,
 By any certainty below the earth,

I left your land against my will, my queen.
 The gods' commands drove me to do their will,
 As now they drive me through this world of shades,
 These mouldy waste lands and these depths of night.
 And I could not believe that I would hurt you
 So terribly by going. Wait a little.
 Do not leave my sight.
 Am I someone to flee from? The last word
 Destiny lets me say to you is this."

Aeneas with such pleas tried to placate
 The burning soul, savagely glaring back,
 And tears came to his eyes. But she had turned
 With gaze fixed on the ground as he spoke on,
 Her face no more affected than if she were
 Immobile granite or Marpesian stone.
 At length she flung away from him and fled,
 His enemy still, into the shadowy grove
 Where he whose bride she once had been, Sychaeus,
 Joined in her sorrows and returned her love.
 Aeneas still gazed after her in tears,
 Shaken by her ill fate and pitying her.

With effort then he took the given way,
 And they went on, reaching the farthest lands
 Where men famous in war gather apart.
 Here Tydeus came to meet him, and then came
 Parthenopaeus, glorious in arms,
 Adrastus then, a pallid shade. Here too
 Were Dardans long bewept in the upper air,
 Men who died in the great war. And he groaned
 To pick these figures out, in a long file,
 Glaucus, Medon, Thersilochus, besides
 Antenor's three sons, then the priest of Ceres
 Polyboetês, then Idaeus, holding
 Still to his warcar, holding his old gear.
 To right and left they crowd the path and stay
 And will not have enough of seeing him,

But love to hold him back, to walk beside him,
And hear the story of why he came.

Not so

Agamemnon's phalanx, chiefs of the Danaans:
Seeing the living man in bronze that glowed
Through the dark air, they shrank in fear. Some turned
And ran, as once, when routed, to the ships,
While others raised a battle shout, or tried to,
Mouths agape, mocked by the whispering cry.
Here next he saw Deïphobus, Priam's son,
Mutilated from head to foot, his face
And both hands cruelly torn, ears shorn away,
Nose to the noseholes lopped by a shameful stroke.
Barely knowing the shade who quailed before him
Covering up his tortured face, Aeneas
Spoke out to him in his known voice:

"Deïphobus,

Gallant officer in high Teucer's line,
Who chose this brutal punishment, who had
So much the upper hand of you? I heard
On that last night that you had fallen, spent
After a slaughter of Pelasgians—
Fallen on piled-up carnage. It was I
Who built on Rhoeteum Point an empty tomb
And sent a high call to your soul three times.
Your name, your armor, marks the place. I could not
Find you, friend, to put your bones in earth
In the old country as I came away."

And Priam's son replied:

"You left undone
Nothing, my friend, but gave all ritual due
Deïphobus, due a dead man's shade. My lot
And the Laconian woman's ghastly doing
Sank me in this hell. These are the marks
She left me as her memorial. You know
How between one false gladness and another
We spent that last night—no need to remind you.

When the tall deadly horse came at one bound,
 With troops crammed in its paunch, above our towers,
 She made a show of choral dance and led
 Our Phrygian women crying out on Bacchus
 Here and there—but held a torch amid them,
 Signalling to Danaans from the Height.
 Worn by the long day, heavily asleep,
 I lay in my unlucky bridal chamber,
 And rest, profound and sweet, most like the rest
 Of death, weighed on me as I lay. Meanwhile
 She, my distinguished wife, moved all my arms
 Out of the house—as she had slipped my sword,
 My faithful sword, out from beneath my pillow—
 Opened the door and called in Menelaus,
 Hoping no doubt by this great gift to him,
 Her lover, to blot old infamy out. Why hold back
 From telling it? The two burst in the bedroom,
 Joined by that ringleader of atrocity,
 Ulysses, of the windking's line. O gods,
 If with pure lips I pray, requite the Greeks
 With equal suffering! But you, now tell me
 What in the world has brought you here alive:
 Have you come from your sea wandering, and did heaven
 Direct you? How could harrying fortune send you
 To these sad sunless homes, disordered places?"

At this point in their talk Aurora, borne
 Through high air on her glowing rosy car
 Had crossed the meridian: should they linger now
 With stories they might spend the allotted time.
 But at Aeneas' side the Sibyl spoke,
 Warning him briefly:

"Night comes on, Aeneas,
 We use up hours grieving. Here is the place
 Where the road forks: on the right hand it goes
 Past mighty Dis's walls, Elysium way,
 Our way; but the leftward road will punish
 Malefactors, taking them to Tartarus."
 Deiphobus answered her:

“No need for anger,
 Reverend lady. I'll depart and make
 The tally in the darkness full again.
 Go on, sir, glory of us all! Go on,
 Enjoy a better destiny.”

He spoke,
 And even as he spoke he turned away.
 Now of a sudden Aeneas looked and saw
 To the left, under a cliff, wide buildings girt
 By a triple wall round which a torrent rushed
 With scorching flames and boulders tossed in thunder,
 The abyss's Fiery River. A massive gate
 With adamantine pillars faced the stream,
 So strong no force of men or gods in war
 May ever avail to crack and bring it down,
 And high in air an iron tower stands
 On which Tisiphonē, her bloody robe
 Pulled up about her, has her seat and keeps
 Unsleeping watch over the entrance way
 By day and night. From the interior, groans
 Are heard, and thud of lashes, clanking iron,
 Dragging chains. Arrested in his tracks,
 Appalled by what he heard, Aeneas stood.

“What are the forms of evil here? O Sister,
 Tell me. And the punishments dealt out:
 Why such a lamentation?”

Said the Sibyl:
 “Light of the Teucrians, it is decreed
 That no pure soul may cross the sill of evil.
 When, however, Hecatē appointed me
 Caretaker of Avernus wood, she led me
 Through heaven's punishments and taught me all.
 This realm is under Cretan Rhadamanthus'
 Iron rule. He sentences. He listens
 And makes the souls confess their crooked ways,
 How they put off atonements in the world
 With foolish satisfaction, thieves of time,
 Until too late, until the hour of death.

At once the avenger girdled with her whip,
 Tisiphonë, leaps down to lash the guilty,
 Vile writhing snakes held out on her left hand,
 And calls her savage sisterhood. The awaited
 Time has come, hell gates will shudder wide
 On shrieking hinges. Can you see her now,
 Her shape, as doorkeeper, upon the sill?
 More bestial, just inside, the giant Hydra
 Lurks with fifty black and yawning throats.
 Then Tartarus itself goes plunging down
 In darkness twice as deep as heaven is high
 For eyes fixed on etherial Olympus.
 Here is Earth's ancient race, the brood of Titans,
 Hurlled by the lightning down to roll forever
 In the abyss. Here, too, I saw those giant
 Twins of Aloëus who laid their hands
 Upon great heaven to rend it and to topple
 Jove from his high seat, and I saw, too,
 Salmonëus paying dearly for the jape
 Of mimicking Jove's fire, Olympus' thunder:
 Shaking a bright torch from a four-horse car
 He rode through Greece and his home town in Elis,
 Glorying, claiming honor as a god—
 Out of his mind, to feign with horses' hoofs
 On bronze the blast and inimitable bolt.
 The father almighty amid heavy cloud
 Let fly his missile—no firebrand for him
 Nor smoky pitchpine light—and spun the man
 Headlong in a huge whirlwind.

One had sight
 Of Tityos, too, child of all-mothering Earth,
 His body stretched out over nine whole acres
 While an enormous vulture with hooked beak
 Forages forever in his liver,
 His vitals rife with agonies. The bird,
 Lodged in the chest cavity, tears at his feast,
 And tissues growing again get no relief.
 As for the Lapiths, need I tell: Ixion,
 Pirithoüs, and the black crag overhead

So sure to fall it seems already falling.
 Golden legs gleam on the feasters' couches,
 Dishes in royal luxury prepared
 Are laid before them—but the oldest Fury
 Crouches near and springs out with her torch,
 Her outcry, if they try to touch the meal.
 Here come those who as long as life remained
 Held brothers hateful, beat their parents, cheated
 Poor men dependent on them; also those
 Who hugged their newfound riches to themselves
 And put nothing aside for relatives—
 A great crowd, this—then men killed for adultery,
 Men who took arms in war against the right,
 Not scrupling to betray their lords. All these
 Are hemmed in here, awaiting punishment.
 Best not inquire what punishment, what form
 Of suffering at their last end overwhelms them.
 Some heave at a great boulder, or revolve,
 Spreadeagled, hung on wheel-spokes. Theseus
 Cleaves to his chair and cleaves to it forever.
 Phlegyas in his misery teaches all souls
 His lesson, thundering out amid the gloom:
 'Be warned and study justice, not to scorn
 The immortal gods.' Here's one who sold his country,
 Foisted a tyrant on her, set up laws
 Or nullified them for a price; another
 Entered his daughter's room to take a bride
 Forbidden him. All these dared monstrous wrong
 And took what they dared try for. If I had
 A hundred tongues, a hundred mouths, a voice
 Of iron, I could not tell of all the shapes
 Their crimes had taken, or their punishments."

All this he heard from her who for long years
 Had served Apollo. Then she said:

"Come now,
 Be on your way, and carry out your mission.
 Let us go faster. I can see the walls
 The Cyclops' forges built and, facing us,

The portico and gate where they command us
To leave the gifts required.”

On this the two
In haste strode on abreast down the dark paths
Over the space between, and neared the doors.
Aeneas gained the entrance, halted there,
Asperged his body with fresh water drops,
And on the sill before him fixed the bough.

Now that at last this ritual was performed,
His duty to the goddess done, they came
To places of delight, to green park land,
Where souls take ease amid the Blessed Groves.
Wider expanses of high air endow
Each vista with a wealth of light. Souls here
Possess their own familiar sun and stars.
Some train on grassy rings, others compete
In field games, others grapple on the sand.
Feet moving to a rhythmic beat, the dancers
Group in a choral pattern as they sing.
Orpheus, the priest of Thrace, in his long robe
Accompanies, plucking his seven notes
Now with his fingers, now with his ivory quill.
Here is the ancient dynasty of Teucer,
Heroes high of heart, beautiful scions,
Born in greater days: Ilus, Assaracus,
And Dardanus, who founded Troy. Aeneas
Marvels to see their chariots and gear
Far off, all phantom: lances fixed in earth,
And teams unyoked, at graze on the wide plain.
All joy they took, alive, in cars and weapons,
As in the care and pasturing of horses,
Remained with them when they were laid in earth.
He saw, how vividly! along the grass
To right and left, others who feasted there

And chorused out a hymn praising Apollo,
 Within a fragrant laurel grove, where Po
 Sprang up and took his course to the world above,
 The broad stream flowing on amid the forest.
 This was the company of those who suffered
 Wounds in battle for their country; those
 Who in their lives were holy men and chaste
 Or worthy of Phoebus in prophetic song;
 Or those who bettered life, by finding out
 New truths and skills; or those who to some folk
 By benefactions made themselves remembered.
 They all wore snowy chaplets on their brows.
 To these souls, mingling on all sides, the Sibyl
 Spoke now, and especially to Musaeus,
 The central figure, toward whose towering shoulders
 All the crowd gazed:

"Tell us, happy souls,
 And you, great seer, what region holds Anchises,
 Where is his resting place? For him we came
 By ferry across the rivers of Erebus."
 And the great soul answered briefly:

"None of us
 Has one fixed home. We walk in shady groves
 And bed on riverbanks and occupy
 Green meadows fresh with streams. But if your hearts
 Are set on it, first cross this ridge; and soon
 I shall point out an easy path."

So saying,
 He walked ahead and showed them from the height
 The sweep of shining plain. Then down they went
 And left the hilltops.

Now Aeneas' father
 Anchises, deep in the lush green of a valley,
 Had given all his mind to a survey
 Of souls, till then confined there, who were bound
 For daylight in the upper world. By chance
 His own were those he scanned now, all his own
 Descendants, with their futures and their fates,
 Their characters and acts. But when he saw

Aeneas advancing toward him on the grass,
 He stretched out both his hands in eagerness
 As tears wetted his cheeks. He said in welcome:

"Have you at last come, has that loyalty
 Your father counted on conquered the journey?
 Am I to see your face, my son, and hear
 Our voices in communion as before?
 I thought so, surely; counting the months I thought
 The time would come. My longing has not tricked me.
 I greet you now, how many lands behind you,
 How many seas, what blows and dangers, son!
 How much I feared the land of Libya
 Might do you harm."

Aeneas said:

"Your ghost,
 Your sad ghost, father, often before my mind,
 Impelled me to the threshold of this place.
 My ships ride anchored in the Tuscan sea.
 But let me have your hand, let me embrace you,
 Do not draw back."

At this his tears brimmed over
 And down his cheeks. And there he tried three times
 To throw his arms around his father's neck,
 Three times the shade untouched slipped through his hands,
 Weightless as wind and fugitive as dream.
 Aeneas now saw at the valley's end
 A grove standing apart, with stems and boughs
 Of woodland rustling, and the stream of Lethe
 Running past those peaceful glades. Around it
 Souls of a thousand nations filled the air,
 As bees in meadows at the height of summer
 Hover and home on flowers and thickly swarm
 On snow-white lilies, and the countryside
 Is loud with humming. At the sudden vision
 Shivering, at a loss, Aeneas asked
 What river flowed there and what men were those
 In such a throng along the riverside.
 His father Anchises told him:

ALL (3)

Heaven
Purgatory
Hell (1-2-3-4-5)

"Souls for whom

A second body is in store: their drink
Is water of Lethe, and it frees from care
In long forgetfulness. For all this time
I have so much desired to show you these
And tell you of them face to face—to take
The roster of my children's children here,
So you may feel with me more happiness
At finding Italy."

"Must we imagine,
Father, there are souls that go from here
Aloft to upper heaven, and once more
Return to bodies' dead weight? The poor souls,
How can they crave our daylight so?"

"My son,
I'll tell you, not to leave you mystified,"
Anchises said, and took each point in order:

First, then, the sky and lands and sheets of water,
The bright moon's globe, the Titan sun and stars,
Are fed within by Spirit, and a Mind
Infused through all the members of the world
Makes one great living body of the mass.
From Spirit come the races of man and beast,
The life of birds, odd creatures the deep sea
Contains beneath her sparkling surfaces,
And fiery energy from a heavenly source
Belongs to the generative seeds of these,
So far as they are not poisoned or clogged
By mortal bodies, their free essence dimmed
By earthiness and deathliness of flesh.
This makes them fear and crave, rejoice and grieve.
Imprisoned in the darkness of the body
They cannot clearly see heaven's air; in fact
Even when life departs on the last day

Not all the scourges of the body pass
 From the poor souls, not all distress of life.
 Inevitably, many malformations,
 Growing together in mysterious ways,
 Become inveterate. Therefore they undergo
 The discipline of punishments and pay
 In penance for old sins: some hang full length
 To the empty winds, for some the stain of wrong
 Is washed by floods or burned away by fire.
 We suffer each his own shade. We are sent
 Through wide Elysium, where a few abide
 In happy lands, till the long day, the round
 Of Time fulfilled, has worn our stains away,
 Leaving the soul's heaven-sent perception clear,
 The fire from heaven pure. These other souls,
 When they have turned Time's wheel a thousand years,
 The god calls in a crowd to Lethe stream,
 That there unmemoried they may see again
 The heavens and wish re-entry into bodies."
 Anchises paused. He drew both son and Sibyl
 Into the middle of the murmuring throng,
 Then picked out a green mound from which to view
 The souls as they came forward, one by one,
 And to take note of faces.

"Come," he said,
 "What glories follow Dardan generations
 In after years, and from Italian blood
 What famous children in your line will come,
 Souls of the future, living in our name,
 I shall tell clearly now, and in the telling
 Teach you your destiny. That one you see,
 The young man leaning on a spear unarmed,
 Has his allotted place nearest the light.
 He will be first to take the upper air,
 Silvius, a child with half Italian blood
 And an Alban name, your last born, whom your wife,
 Lavinia, late in your great age will rear
 In forests to be king and father of kings.

Through him our race will rule in Alba Longa.
 Next him is Procas, pride of the Trojan line,
 And Capys, too, then Numitor, then one
 Whose name restores you: Silvius Aeneas,
 Both in arms and piety your peer,
 If ever he shall come to reign in Alba.
 What men they are! And see their rugged forms
 With oakleaf crowns shadowing their brows. I tell you,
 These are to found Nomentum, Gabii,
 Fidenae town, Collatia's hilltop towers,
 Pometii, Fort Inuus, Bola, Cora—
 Names to be heard for places nameless now.
 Then Romulus, fathered by Mars, will come
 To make himself his grandfather's companion,
 Romulus, reared by his mother, Ilia,
 In the blood-line of Assaracus. Do you see
 The double plume of Mars fixed on his crest,
 See how the father of the gods himself
 Now marks him out with his own sign of honor?
 Look now, my son: under his auspices
 Illustrious Rome will bound her power with earth,
 Her spirit with Olympus. She'll enclose
 Her seven hills with one great city wall,
 Fortunate in the men she breeds. Just so
 Cybelë Mother, honored on Berecynthus,
 Wearing her crown of towers, onward rides
 By chariot through the towns of Phrygia,
 In joy at having given birth to gods,
 And cherishing a hundred grandsons, heaven
 Dwellers with homes on high.

Turn your two eyes

This way and see this people, your own Romans.
 Here is Caesar, and all the line of Iulus,
 All who shall one day pass under the dome
 Of the great sky: this is the man, this one,
 Of whom so often you have heard the promise,
Caesar Augustus, son of the deified,
 Who shall bring once again an Age of Gold

Sanctioned
Ver 4/11

To Latium, to the land where Saturn reigned
 In early times. He will extend his power
 Beyond the Garamants and Indians,
 Over far territories north and south
 Of the zodiacal stars, the solar way,
 Where Atlas, heaven-bearing, on his shoulder
 Turns the night-sphere, studded with burning stars.
 At that man's coming even now the realms
 Of Caspia and Maeotia tremble, warned
 By oracles, and the seven mouths of Nile
 Go dark with fear. The truth is, even Alcides
 Never traversed so much of earth—I grant
 That he could shoot the hind with brazen hoofs
 Or bring peace to the groves of Erymanthus,
 Or leave Lerna affrighted by his bow.
 Neither did he who guides his triumphal car
 With reins of vine-shoots twisted, Bacchus, driving
 Down from Nysa's height his tiger team.
 Do we lag still at carrying our valor
 Into action? Can our fear prevent
 Our settling in Ausonia?

Who is he

So set apart there, olive-crowned, who holds
 The sacred vessels in his hands? I know
 That snowy mane and beard: Numa, the king,
 Who will build early Rome on a base of laws,
 A man sent from the small-town poverty
 Of Curēs to high sovereignty. After him
 Comes Tullus, breaker of his country's peace,
 Arousing men who have lost victorious ways,
 Malingering men, to war. Near him is Ancus,
 Given to boasting, even now too pleased
 With veering popularity's heady air.
 Do you care to see now, too, the Tarquin kings
 And the proud soul of the avenger, Brutus,
 By whom the bundled *fusces* are regained?
 Consular power will first be his, and his
 The pitiless axes. When his own two sons
 Plot war against the city, he will call

For the death penalty in freedom's name—
 Unhappy man, no matter how posterity
 May see these matters. Love of the fatherland
 Will sway him—and unmeasured lust for fame.
 Now see the Decii and the Drusi there,
 And stern Torquatus, with his axe, and see
 Camillus bringing the lost standards home.
 That pair, however, matched in brilliant armor,
 Matched in their hearts' desire now, while night
 Still holds them fast, once they attain life's light
 What war, what grief, will they provoke between them—
 Battle-lines and bloodshed—as the father
 Marches from the Alpine ramparts, down
 From Monaco's walled height, and the son-in-law,
 Drawn up with armies of the East, awaits him.
 Sons, refrain! You must not blind your hearts
 To that enormity of civil war,
 Turning against your country's very heart
 Her own vigor of manhood. You above all
 Who trace your line from the immortals, you
 Be first to spare us. Child of my own blood,
 Throw away your sword!

Mummius there,
 When Corinth is brought low, will drive his car
 As victor and as killer of Achaeans
 To our high Capitol. Paulus will conquer
 Argos and Agamemnon's old Mycenae,
 Defeating Perseus, the Aeacid,
 Heir to the master of war, Achilles—thus
 Avenging his own Trojan ancestors
 And the defilement of Minerva's shrine.
 Great Cato! Who would leave you unremarked,
 Or, Cossus, you, or the family of Gracchi,
 Or the twin Scipios, bright bolts of war,
 The bane of Libya, or you, Fabricius,
 In poverty yet powerful, or you,
 Serranus, at the furrow, casting seed?
 Where, though I weary, do you hurry me,
 You Fabii? Fabius Maximus,

You are the only soul who shall restore
 Our wounded state by waiting out the enemy.
 Others will cast more tenderly in bronze
 Their breathing figures, I can well believe,
 And bring more lifelike portraits out of marble;
 Argue more eloquently, use the pointer
 To trace the paths of heaven accurately
 And accurately foretell the rising stars.
 Roman, remember by your strength to rule
 Earth's peoples—for your arts are to be these:
 To pacify, to impose the rule of law,
 To spare the conquered, battle down the proud.”
 Anchises paused here as they gazed in awe,
 Then added:

“See there, how Marcellus comes
 With spoils of the commander that he killed:
 How the man towers over everyone.
 Cavalry leader, he'll sustain the realm
 Of Rome in hours of tumult, bringing to heel
 The Carthaginians and rebellious Gaul,
 And for the third time in our history
 He'll dedicate an enemy general's arms
 To Father Romulus.”

But here Aeneas
 Broke in, seeing at Marcellus' side
 A young man beautifully formed and tall
 In shining armor, but with clouded brow
 And downcast eyes:

“And who is that one, Father,
 Walking beside the captain as he comes:
 A son, or grandchild from the same great stock?
 The others murmur, all astir. How strong
 His presence is! But night like a black cloud
 About his head whirls down in awful gloom.”

His father Anchises answered, and the tears
 Welled up as he began:

"Oh, do not ask
 About this huge grief of your people, son.
 Fate will give earth only a glimpse of him,
 Not let the boy live on. Lords of the sky,
 You thought the majesty of Rome too great
 If it had kept these gifts. How many groans
 Will be sent up from that great Field of Mars
 To Mars' proud city, and what sad rites you'll see,
 Tiber, as you flow past the new-built tomb.
 Never will any boy of Ilian race
 Exalt his Latin forefathers with promise
 Equal to his; never will Romulus' land
 Take pride like this in any of her sons.
 Weep for his faithful heart, his old-world honor,
 His sword arm never beaten down! No enemy
 Could have come through a clash with him unhurt,
 Whether this soldier went on foot or rode,
 Digging his spurs into a lathered mount.
 Child of our mourning, if only in some way
 You could break through your bitter fate. For you
 Will be Marcellus. Let me scatter lilies,
 All I can hold, and scarlet flowers as well,
 To heap these for my grandson's shade at least,
 Frail gifts and ritual of no avail."

So raptly, everywhere, father and son
 Wandered the airy plain and viewed it all.
 After Anchises had conducted him
 To every region and had fired his love
 Of glory in the years to come, he spoke
 Of wars that he must fight, of Laurentines,
 And of Latinus' city, then of how
 He might avoid or bear each toil to come.

There are two gates of Sleep, one said to be
 Of horn, whereby the true shades pass with ease,
 The other all white ivory agleam
 Without a flaw, and yet false dreams are sent

Through this one by the ghosts to the upper world.
Anchises now, his last instructions given,
Took son and Sibyl there and let them go
By the Ivory Gate.

Aeneas made his way
Straight to the ships to see his crews again,
Then sailed directly to Caieta's port.
Bow anchors out, the sterns rest on the beach.

Lines 896-901

BOOK

VII

JUNO SERVED BY
A FURY

Nurse Caieta of Aeneas, in death you too
Conferred your fame through ages on our coast,
Still honored in your last bed, as you are,
And if this glory matters in the end
Your name tells of your grave in great Hesperia.

When he had seen Caieta's funeral
Performed, her mound of tomb heaped up, Aeneas
Waited until the sea went down, then cleared
Her harbor under sail.

Into the night

The soft south wind blew on, the white full moon
Left no sea-reach or path unbrightened for them,
Shimmering on the open sea. They passed
The isle of Circe close inshore: that isle
Where, in the grove men shun, the Sun's rich daughter
Sings the hours away. She lights her hall
By night with fires of fragrant cedar wood,
Making her shuttle hum across the warp.
Out of this island now they could hear lions
Growling low in anger at their chains,
Then roaring in the deep night; bristling boars
And fenced-in bears, foaming in rage, and shapes
Of huge wolves howling. Men they once had been,
But with her magic herbs the cruel goddess

Dressed them in the form and pelt of brutes.
 That night, to spare good Trojans foul enchantment—
 Should they put in, or near the dangerous beach—
 Neptune puffed out their sails with wind astern,
 Giving clear passage, carrying them onward
 Past the boiling surf. Then soon to eastward
 Sea began to redden with dawn rays,
 And saffron-robed Aurora in high heaven
 Shone on her rosy car. Now suddenly
 The wind dropped, every breath of wind sank down,
 And oar-blades dipped and toiled in the sparkling calm.
 Still far off-shore, Aeneas on the look-out
 Sighted a mighty forest, a fair river,
 Tiber, cutting through and at its mouth
 Expelling eddies of clay-yellow water
 Into the sea. Above it, all around,
 Birds of myriad colors, birds at home
 On river bank and channel, charmed the air
 With jargoning and flitting through the trees.
 Aeneas called "Right rudder!" to the steersmen,
 "Turn the prows to land,"
 And smiling pulled for shade on the great river.

Be with me, Muse of all Desire, Erato,
 While I call up the kings, the early times,
 How matters stood in the old land of Latium
 That day when the foreign soldiers beached
 Upon Ausonia's shore, and the events
 That led to the first fight. Immortal one,
 Bring all in memory to the singer's mind,
 For I must tell of wars to chill the blood,
 Ranked men in battle, kings by their own valor
 Driven to death, Etruria's cavalry,
 And all Hesperia mobilized in arms.
 A greater history opens before my eyes,
 A greater task awaits me.

King Latinus,
 Now grown old, had ruled his settled towns
 And countryside through years of peace. Tradition

Makes him a son of Faunus by a nymph,
 Marica of the Laurentines. The father
 Of Faunus had been Picus, who in turn
 Claimed you for sire, old Saturn, making you
 The founder of the dynasty. By fate
 Latinus had no son or male descendant,
 Death having taken one in early youth.
 A single daughter held that house's hopes,
 A girl now ripe for marriage, for a man.
 And many in broad Latium, in Ausonia,
 Courted her, but the handsomest by far
 Was Turnus, powerful heir of a great line.
 Latinus' queen pressed for their union,
 Desiring him with passion for a son,
 But heavenly portents, odd things full of dread
 Stood in the way. There was a laurel tree
 Deep in an inner courtyard of the palace,
 Venerated for leafage, prized for years,
 Having been found and dedicated there—
 So the tale went—to Phoebus by Latinus
 When he first built a strongpoint on the site;
 And from this laurel tree he gave his folk
 The name Laurentines. Here, for a wonder, bees
 In a thick swarm, borne through the limpid air
 With humming thunder, clustered high on top
 And, locking all their feet together, hung
 In a sudden mass that weighted leaves and bough.
 A soothsayer declared: "In this we see
 A stranger's advent, and a body of men
 Moving to the same spot from the same zone
 To take our fortress." Then came another sign:
 While the old king lit fires at the altars
 With a pure torch, the girl Lavinia with him,
 It seemed her long hair caught, her head-dress caught
 In crackling flame, her queenly tresses blazed,
 Her jewelled crown blazed. Mantled then in smoke
 And russet light, she scattered divine fire
 Through all the house. No one could hold that sight
 Anything but hair-raising, marvelous,

And it was read by seers to mean the girl
 Would have renown and glorious days to come,
 But that she brought a great war on her people.
 Troubled by these strange happenings, the king
 Sought out the oracle of his father, Faunus,
 Teller of destinies, to listen there
 In woodland by Albunea's high cascade
 And plashing holy spring—that noblest wood
 That in cool dusk exhaled a brimstone vapor.
 All Italians, all the Oenotrian land,
 Resorted to this place in baffling times,
 Asking direction; here a priest brought gifts,
 Here in the stillness of the night he lay
 On skins taken from sheep of sacrifice
 And courted slumber. Many visions came
 Before his eyes and strangely on the air;
 He heard their different voices, and took part
 In colloquies of gods, in undergloom
 Addressing the grim powers of Acheron.
 Now here in turn Father Latinus came
 For counsel. Ritually putting to the sword
 A hundred sheep, he lay on their piled fleeces.
 Then came a sudden voice from the inmost grove:

“Propose no Latin alliance for your daughter,
 Son of mine; distrust the bridal chamber
 Now prepared. Men from abroad will come
 And be your sons by marriage. Blood so mingled
 Lifts our name starward. Children of that stock
 Will see all earth turned Latin at their feet,
 Governed by them, as far as on his rounds
 The Sun looks down on Ocean, East or West.”

So ran the oracle of Father Faunus
 In the still night, a warning that Latinus
 Could not keep to himself, but far and wide
 Report of it had reached Ausonian towns

Before the sons of Laomedon moored ship
At the grassy riverside.

T

here with his officers

And princely son, Aeneas took repose
Beneath a tall tree's boughs. They made a feast,
Putting out on the grass hard wheaten cakes
As platters for their meal—moved to do this
By Jupiter himself. These banquet boards
Of Ceres they heaped up with country fruits.
Now, as it happened, when all else was eaten,
Their neediness drove them to try their teeth
On Ceres' platters. Boldly with hand and jaw
They broke the crusted disks of prophecy,
Making short work of all the quartered loaves.

"Look, how we've devoured our tables even!"
Iulus playfully said, and said no more,
For that remark as soon as heard had meant
The end of wandering: even as it fell
From the speaker's lips, his father caught it, stopped
The jesting there, struck by the work of heaven,
And said at once:

"A blessing on the land
The fates have held in store for me, a blessing
On our true gods of Troy! Here is our home,
Here is our fatherland. You know, my father
Anchises once foretold this secret token—
Now I remember—of our destiny.
He told me then: 'My son, when the time comes
That hunger on a strange coast urges you,
When food has failed, to eat your very tables,
Then you may look for home: be mindful of it,
Weary as you are, and turn your hand

To your first building there with moat and mound.³
 Here we have felt that hunger, here a last
 Adversity awaited us, a limit
 Set to our misfortunes. One and all,
 At sunrise with high hearts let us find out
 About this region and the people here,
 And where their homes are. We'll fan out in squads
 From our ship moorings. Tip your cups to Jove,
 Invoke my father Anchises in your prayers,
 Put out the winebowls of our feast again."

He twined a leafy sprig into a garland
 Round his head, then made his formal prayer
 To the Glade Spirit there and to the Earth,
 First of immortals, to the nymphs, the streams
 As yet unknown, to Night and the rising stars
 Of Night, to Jove of Ida, to the Mother
 Goddess of Phrygia, Cybelē, all
 Ceremoniously, and then invoked his parents,
 One in heaven and one in Erebus.
 At this the Father Almighty in high air
 Thundered three times out of a brilliant sky
 And shook before their eyes with his own hand
 A cloud ablaze with gold and rays of light.
 Now through the Trojan companies quick-silver
 Rumor went around: the day had come
 For laying down the walls owed them by fate;
 And each outdid the other as they fell
 To feasting and rejoicing in the omen,
 Setting the bowls and garlanding the wine.

Next morning when the light of risen day
 Shone on the earth, exploring parties sought
 The Latin city, boundaries, and coasts.
 Here was Numicius' fountain, and its pond,
 Here Tiber River, here brave Latins lived.

Aeneas ordered to the king's high city
 A hundred legates, chosen from all ranks,
 Their heads shaded by olive shoots of Pallas,
 To bear the king gifts and to entreat a state
 Of peace for Teucrians. No lingering:
 At the command they all moved smartly out
 In a quick march. Aeneas marked his line
 Of walls with a low trench, then toiled away
 To deepen it, to throw an earthwork up
 With palisades, camp style, around that post,
 Their first, on the riverside.

Now presently
 His emissaries reached their journey's end,
 Seeing steep roofs and Latin towers ahead
 As they approached the wall. In fields outside
 Were boys and striplings practising horsemanship,
 Breaking in chariot teams in clouds of dust,
 Pulling taut bows and throwing javelins,
 Challenging one another to race or box.
 Meanwhile a messenger, riding ahead,
 Reported to the old king the arrival
 Of tall men in strange costume, and the king
 Ordered them brought inside. He took his seat
 Amid the court, on his ancestral throne.
 The royal building, massive and majestic,
 Raised on a hundred columns, occupied
 The city's height. It had been Picus' palace,
 Shadowed by trees and history, held in awe.
 Here kings by happy omen took the scepter,
 Lifted the rods of office up; and here
 They had their senate house, a holy place,
 A hall for ritual feasts: for a slain ram
 The city fathers took accustomed seats
 On benches at long tables. Here as well
 Were sculptures of their old forefathers, ranked
 By generations, carved in ancient cedar:
 Italus, and Sabinus, planter of vines,
 Holding as such a pruning hook, and Saturn,
 Hoar with age, and the two-faced figure, Janus,

All in the entrance way; and other kings
 From earliest times, with men wounded in war
 While fighting for their country. There besides
 Were many arms, hung on the sacred doorposts,
 Captured warcars, battle-axes, plumes
 Of helmets, massive gate-bars, javelins
 And shields, and beaks torn from the prows of ships.
 The seated figure of Picus, tamer of horses,
 In a striped mantle, held a Quirinal staff
 And on his left forearm a Shield of Heaven.
 Circe his bride, taken with strong desire,
 Had struck him with her golden wand, then drugged him
 Into a woodpecker and pied his wings.
 In this interior hall of the holy place,
 At ease upon the ancestral throne, Latinus
 Called the Teucrians before him, saying
 Tranquilly as they entered:

“Sons of Dardanus—
 You see, we know your city and your nation,
 As all had heard you laid a westward course—
 Tell me your purpose. What design or need
 Has brought you through the dark blue sea so far
 To our Ausonian coast? Either astray
 Or driven by rough weather, such as sailors
 Often endure at sea, you’ve broached the river,
 Moored ship there. Now do not turn away
 From hospitality here. Know that our Latins
 Come of Saturn’s race, that we are just—
 Not by constraint or laws, but by our choice
 And habit of our ancient god. Indeed,
 Though years have dimmed the tale, I can remember
 Old Auruncans telling of Dardanus,
 How from this country of his birth he went
 On his long journey to the Idan towns
 Of Phrygia and to Thracian Samos, now
 Called Samothrace. From this land he set out,
 From his old Tuscan home at Corythus.
 And now great halls of starry sky enthrone him,
 To the gods’ altars adding one for him.”

Latinus then fell silent, and in turn
Ilioncus began:

“Your majesty,
Most noble son of Faunus, no rough seas
Or black gale swept us to your coast, no star
Or clouded seamark put us off our course.
We journey to your city by design
And general consent, driven as we are
From realms in other days greatest by far
The Sun looked down on, passing on his way
From heaven’s far eastern height. Our line’s from Jove,
In his paternity the sons of Dardanus
Exult, and highest progeny of Jove
Include our king himself—Trojan Aeneas,
Who sent us to your threshold. What a storm
From cruel Mycenae swept across the plain
Of Ida, and what destiny made the worlds
Of Europe and of Asia clash in war,
Has now been heard in the most distant lands
Beside the tidal Ocean, and by men
Divided from us by the inclement Zone
Of Sun that burns between the cooler four.
By that storm overwhelmed, and then at sea
So long on the vast waters, now we ask
A modest settlement of the gods of home,
A strip of coast that will bring harm to no one,
Air and water, open and free to all.
We will not shame your kingdom. You shall win
No light and passing fame, nor from ourselves
A passing gratitude for your kind act.
Ausonians who take Troy to their hearts
Will not regret it. By Aeneas’ destiny
I swear, and by his powerful right hand,
Whether tested in covenants or battle,
Many a people, many a race—and here
Do not disdain us for this overture
In offering pleas and garlands—many, I say,
Have come to us and wished alliance with us.
But by the will of heaven and heaven’s commands

Our quest was for your country. Dardanus
 Had birth here, and Apollo calls us back,
 Directing us by solemn oracles
 To Tuscan Tiber, to the sacred waters
 Of the Numician fountain. Here besides
 Aeneas gives you from his richer years
 These modest gifts, relics caught up and saved
 From burning Troy. This golden cup Anchises
 Used for libations at the altars; Priam
 Bore this accouterment when giving laws
 To peoples in due form called to assembly:
 Scepter, and holy diadem, and robes
 Woven by Trojan women."

Latinus heard

Ilioneus out, his countenance averted,
 Sitting immobile, all attention, eyes
 Downcast but turning here and there. The embroidered
 Purple and the scepter of King Priam
 Moved him less in his own kingliness
 Than long thoughts on the marriage of his daughter,
 As he turned over in his inmost mind
 Old Faunus' prophecy.

"This is the man,"

He thought, "foretold as coming from abroad
 To be my son-in-law, by fate appointed,
 Called to reign here with equal authority—
 The man whose heirs will be brilliant in valor
 And win the mastery of the world."

At length

He spoke in his elation:

"May the gods

Assist our enterprises as their own!
 What you desire will be granted, Trojan,
 And I accept your gifts. While I am king
 You shall not want for bounty of rich land
 Or miss the wealth of Troy. Aeneas himself
 Should come, though, if he has such need of us
 And bids for guesthood, for an ally's name.

He should not shrink from friendly faces here.
 For me a requisite of the peace will be
 To join hands with your captain.

Now return

To your ship moorings, bring the king my messages.
 I have a daughter, whom the oracles
 Of Father's shrine and warning signs from heaven
 Keep me from pledging to a native here.
 Sons from abroad will come, the prophets say—
 For this is Latium's destiny—new blood
 To immortalize our name. Your king's the man
 Called for by fate, so I conclude, and so
 I wish, if there is truth in what I presage.”

After this vigorous speech, Father Latinus
 Picked out horses for them from his string—
 Three hundred who stood glossy in high stalls—
 And ordered them led out for all the Trojans,
 One by one, fast horses, ornamented
 With purple saddle cloths, with golden chains
 Hung on their breasts, and golden snoods, and yellow
 Golden bits they champed between their teeth.
 Then for Aeneas, absent though he was,
 He picked a chariot and a team, a pair
 Grown from immortal stock and snorting fire.
 Their sire was that stallion crafty Circe
 Stole from the Sun, her father, and put to stud
 With a mortal mare, getting a bastard breed.
 Bearing these gifts and offers from Latinus,
 Aeneas' legates, mounted now, returned,
 And they brought peace.



Only look upward, though,
 At Jove's un pitying queen. She at that hour
 Made her way back from Inachus's Argos,

Holding her course in air. From her great height
 Over Pachynus in Sicily to the south,
 She could discern Aeneas taking heart,
 Ships' companies already building shelters,
 Leaving the ships, trusting the land they found.
 She stayed her flight as pain went through her, then
 She tossed her head and cried out from her heart:

"O hateful race, and fate of the Phrygians
 Pitted against my own. Could they be killed
 On the Sigean battlefield? When beaten,
 Could they be beaten? Troy on fire, did Troy
 Consume her men? Amid the spears, amid
 The flames, they found a way. I must, for my part,
 Think my powers by this time tired out,
 Supine, or sleeping, surfeited on hate?
 Well, when they were ejected from their country
 I had the temerity as their enemy
 To dog them, fight them, over the whole sea,
 These refugees. The strength of sea and sky
 Has been poured out against these Teucrians.
 What were the Syrtēs worth to me, or Scylla,
 What was huge Charybdis worth? By Tiber's
 Longed-for bed they now lay out their town,
 Unworried by deep water or by me.
 Mars had the power to kill the giant race
 Of Lapiths, and the Father of Gods himself
 Gave up old Cálydon to Diana's wrath:
 And what great sin brought Cálydon or Lapiths
 Justice so rough? How differently with me,
 The great consort of Jove, who nerved myself
 To leave no risk unventured, lent myself
 To every indignity. I am defeated
 And by Aeneas. Well, if my powers fall short,
 I need not falter over asking help
 Wherever help may lie. If I can sway
 No heavenly hearts I'll rouse the world below.
 It will not be permitted me—so be it—

To keep the man from rule in Italy;
 By changeless fate Lavinia waits, his bride.
 And yet to drag it out, to pile delay
 Upon delay in these great matters—that
 I can do: to destroy both countries' people,
 That I can do. Let father and son-in-law
 Unite at that cost to their own! In blood,
 Trojan and Latin, comes your dowry, girl;
 Bridesmaid Bellona waits now to attend you.
 Hecuba's not the only one who carried
 A burning brand within her and bore a son
 Whose marriage fired a city. So it is
 With Venus' child, a Paris once again,
 A funeral torch again for Troy reborn!"

When she had said all this, she dropped to earth
 In a shuddering wind. From the dark underworld
 Home of the Furies, she aroused Allecto,
 Grief's drear mistress, with her lust for war,
 For angers, ambushes, and crippling crimes.
 Even her father Pluto hates this figure,
 Even her hellish sisters, for her myriad
 Faces, for her savage looks, her head
 Alive and black with snakes. Now Juno spoke
 To excite her:

"Here is a service all your own
 That you can do for me, Daughter of Night,
 Here is a way to help me, to make sure
 My status and renown will not give way
 Or be impaired, and that Aeneas' people
 Cannot by marriage win Latinus over,
 Laying siege to Italy. You can arm
 For combat brothers of one soul between them,
 Twist homes with hatred, bring your whips inside,
 Or firebrands of death. A thousand names
 Belong to you, a thousand ways of wounding.
 Shake out the folded stratagems within you,
 Break up this peace-pact, scatter acts of war,

All in a flash let men desire, demand,
And take up arms."

Without delay Allecto,
Dripping venom deadly as the Gorgon's,
Passed into Latium first and the high hall
Of the Laurentine king. She took her place
On the still threshold of the queen, Amata.
Burning already at the Trojans' coming,
The plans for Turnus' marriage broken off,
Amata tossed and turned with womanly
Anxiety and anger. Now the goddess
Plucked one of the snakes, her gloomy tresses,
And tossed it at the woman, sent it down
Her bosom to her midriff and her heart,
So that by this black reptile driven wild
She might disrupt her whole house. And the serpent
Slipping between her gown and her smooth breasts
Went writhing on, though imperceptible
To the fevered woman's touch or sight, and breathed
Viper's breath into her. The sinuous mass
Became her collar of twisted gold, became
The riband of her head-dress. In her hair
It twined itself, and slid around her body.
While the infection first, like dew of poison
Fallen on her, pervaded all her senses,
Netting her bones in fire—though still her soul
Had not responded fully to the flame—
She spoke out softly, quite like any mother,
Shedding hot tears at the marriage of her child
To a Phrygian:

"These Trojan refugees,
Father, are they to take away Lavinia
In marriage? Have you no pity for your daughter,
None for yourself? No pity for her mother,
Who will be left alone by the faithless man,
The rover, going to sea at the first north wind
With a girl for booty? Was that not the way
The Phrygian shepherd entered Lacedaemon
And carried Helen off to Troy's far city?

What of your solemn word, your years of love
 For your own people, your right hand so often
 Given to Turnus, our blood-kin? Suppose
 A son of foreign stock is to be found
 For Latins, and this holds, and the command
 Your father, Faunus, gave weighs hard upon you,
 Then I maintain that every separate country
 Free from all rule of ours, is foreign land,
 And this is what the gods mean. Turnus, too,
 If we seek origins, had Inachus
 And Acrisius as forebears at Mycenae."

Finding Latinus proof against this plea
 And holding firm, while in her viscera
 The serpent's evil madness circulated,
 Suffusing her, the poor queen, now enflamed
 By prodigies of hell, went wild indeed
 And with insane abandon roamed the city.
 One sees at times a top that a wound-up thong
 Snapped into a spin, when, all eyes for the sport,
 Boys drive it round a court in a great circle,
 Sweeping curves on the ground, flicked by the whip,
 While the small boys in fascination bend
 Above the rounded boxwood as it whirls,
 Given new life at each stroke of the lash.
 So restless, wheeling like a spinning top,
 Amata sped on, driven through the town
 Amid her hardy townsmen. Worse, she feigned
 Bacchic possession, daring a greater sin
 And greater madness. Off to the woods she ran,
 Into the leafy hills, and hid her child
 To snatch a marriage from the Teucrians
 Or to postpone the wedding. "Evoë,
 Bacchus," she shrilled out, and then cried again
 That you alone, the god, deserved the girl,
 Who held an ivy thyrsus in your honor
 And danced for you, and let her hair grow long,
 Sacred to you . . . As word of this went round,
 Laurentine mothers fired by sudden madness

Felt the same passion to acquire new homes.
 They left the old ones, baring to the wind
 Their necks and hair, while some in fawnskin dress
 Filled heaven with long quavering cries and bore
 Vine-covered wand-spears. In their midst, the queen
 Held up a blazing firebrand of pine
 And in her fever sang a marriage hymn
 For Turnus and her daughter, glancing round
 With bloodshot eyes. She called out suddenly
 And savagely:

“Mothers of Latium, listen,
 Wherever you may be: if your good hearts
 Feel any kindness still for poor Amata,
 Any concern for justice to a mother,
 Shake your headbands loose, take up the revel
 Along with me!”

To this extreme she went
 In the wild wood, the wilderness of beasts,
 Driven by Allecto with a Bacchic goad.

W

hen to the Fury's mind the first mad fit
 Had been whipped up enough—seeing Latinus'
 Counsel subverted and his home undone—
 Allecto rose up on her somber wings
 And flew straight to the bold Rutulian's walls,
 The city which, they say, Danaë founded
 With her Acrisian colonists, blown there
 By gale winds from the south. Ardea once
 Our early fathers called the place, and still
 The great name stands, though Ardea's fortune waned.
 In his high dwelling there, in darkest night,
 Turnus peacefully slept. Allecto stripped
 Her savage mask off and her Fury's shape,
 To take on an old woman's face: she lined
 Her forehead with deep seams, put on white hair

Being so dismissed, Allecto blazed in wrath,
 And sudden trembling ran through the man's body
 Even as he spoke, his eyes in a rigid stare,
 For now the Fury hissed with all her serpents,
 All her hideous faces. Glancing round
 With eyes of flame, as the man's faltering tongue
 Tried to say more, she threw him back and raised
 A pair of snakes out of her writhing hair,
 Then cracked and cracked her whip and railed at him:

"Look at me now, sunk in decay, see how
 Old age in me is too far gone for truth,
 Deluding me with battles between kings
 And dreams of fear! Look at these dreams of mine!
 I come to you from the Black Sisters' home
 And bring war and extinction in my hand."

With this she hurled a torch and planted it
 Below the man's chest, smoking with hellish light.
 Enormous terror woke him, a cold sweat
 Broke out all over him and soaked his body.
 Then driven wild, shouting for arms, for arms
 He ransacked house and chamber. Lust of steel
 Raged in him, brute insanity of war,
 And wrath above all, as when fiery sticks
 Are piled with a loud crackling by the side
 Of a caldron boiling, and the water heaves
 And seethes inside the vessel, steaming up
 With foam, and bubbling higher, till the surface
 Holds no more, and vapor mounts to heaven.
 So, then, in violation of the peace,
 He told the captains of his troops to march
 On King Latinus, ordering arms prepared,
 The land defended, and the enemy
 Pushed back from the frontiers: he, too, would come,
 A match for Teucrians and Latins both.

His orders given, vows made to the gods,
 His countrymen cheered one another on,

And vied with one another, to make war,
 This one admiring Turnus' princeliness,
 His figure and his youth; this one the kings,
 His ancestors; this one his feats afield.

While Turnus filled these men with recklessness,
 Allecto beat her way on Stygian wings
 Coastward to Trojans, with a fresh design.
 Surveying that wild region on the shore
 Where shining Iulus trapped or hunted, here
 The virgin of the wailing underworld
 Brought sudden frenzy on the hounds. She touched
 Their nostrils with a long familiar scent
 So they would run a stag, hot on the track—
 This the first cause of turmoil, kindling hearts
 Of country folk to war. There was a stag,
 A beauty, with a giant spread of antlers,
 Taken before weaning from a doe
 And brought up tame by boys, as by their father,
 Tyrrhus, the chief herdsman to the king
 And warden of his wide estates. Their sister,
 Silvia, had trained the beast with love
 To do her bidding. She would wreath his horns
 With garlands, groom him, bathe him in a spring
 Of limpid water. Placid under her hand,
 Accustomed to the table of his mistress,
 The stag would roam the forest, then return,
 However late at night, to the gate he knew.
 Now as he wandered far from home, the hounds
 Of Iulus on the hunt, furiously barking,
 Started the stag. He had been floating down
 A river, keeping cool by the green bank.
 Ascanius himself, now on the chase
 And passionate for the honor of the kill,
 Let fly a shaft from his bent bow: Allecto's

Guidance did not fail his hand or let him
 Shoot amiss, and the arrow whizzing loud
 Whipped on to pierce the belly and the flank.
 Mortally hurt, the swift deer made for home
 In the farm buildings. Groaning, he found his stall,
 And coated with dark blood he filled the house
 With piteous cries, as though imploring mercy.
 Hugging her shoulders, beating with her hands,
 The sister, Silvia, raised a cry for help,
 Calling her tough countrymen, who came
 Soon, unexpectedly, for the pitiless fiend
 In the silent wood lay hidden. One was armed
 With a burnt-out brand, one with a knotted cudgel,
 Each with whatever weapon anger first
 Put in his groping hand. Herdsmen for war
 Were rounded up by Tyrrhus, breathing fury,
 Armed with an axe—for he had chanced to be
 Splitting an oak four ways with driven wedges.
 Now the fierce goddess from her look-out post
 Judging the time for further harm had come,
 Flapped to the stable roof and from the peak
 Sounded the herdsman's call: on her curved horn
 She sent into the air a blast from hell
 At which all groves were set at once a-tremble
 And the deep forest rang and rang again.
 The lake of Trivia heard it, far away,
 So did the River Nar, whose current pales
 With sulphur, and Velinus of the springs,
 And frightened mothers held their children close.
 Then truly at the sound, the signal given
 By that dire trumpet, weaponed and on the run
 From every quarter, farmers and foresters
 Came together. Trojan troops as well
 Poured from the camp through open gates to bring
 Ascanius aid, and both sides formed for battle.
 No longer now a shindy of country boys
 With fire-hardened stakes and oaken clubs,
 But darkening on a wide field they contended
 With two-edged steel, like standing crops in ranks

A-bristle with drawn swords and armor shining,
 Struck by the sun and flashing to the clouds,
 As when under a squall the waves begin
 To whiten and the sea, minute by minute,
 Heaves and increases, as the swells go higher,
 Till from its depths it surges to the sky.

Ahead of the front rank a whizzing arrow
 Brought down a young man, Almo, eldest son
 Of Tyrrhus—as the point lodged in his throat,
 Choking the moist channel of his voice
 And the frail breath of life with blood. Around him
 Many dead soon lay, one old Galaesus,
 Killed as he interposed and pled for peace,
 The fairest-minded of them all, and richest
 In those days in Ausonian lands: he owned
 Five flocks of bleating sheep, five herds of kine,
 A hundred plows that turned his many acres.
 Now while they fought on the wide field, with Mars
 Impartial still, Allecto's promise kept
 When she had stained the field with blood and caused
 First combat losses, now the feral goddess
 Left Hesperia and veered away
 Through airy sky, proud of her feat, to brag
 To Juno:

“See your quarrel brought to the point
 Of grievous war. Now tell them to be friends,
 Tell them to make a pact—now that I've splashed
 The Trojans with Ausonian blood! There's more
 If I am sure you want it: I can send out
 Rumors to stir the border towns to war,
 Fire them with lust for the madness of war,
 So they'll be joining in from everywhere.
 I'll scatter weapons up and down the land.”
 But Juno said:

“Terrors and treacheries
 We have in plenty. All that may prolong
 A war is there: they fight now hand to hand
 And arms luck gave are running with fresh blood.

There is the marriage, there is the ceremony
 Venus' distinguished son and that great king
 Latinus may take joy in! As for you,
 This roving rather freely in high air
 Is hardly as the Father wishes, he
 Who rules highest Olympus. Down with you.
 If any further need to act arises
 I myself will manage."

At these words

From Saturn's daughter, Allecto spread those wings
 That hiss with snakes and left the towering air
 For underworld again. There is a spot
 In central Italy where the mountains are,
 A noted place, heard of in many lands,
 The Valley of Amsanctus. Flanks of forest,
 Dark with leaves, close in on either side,
 And in the midst a torrent rumbles down
 A twisted channel, swirling through the rocks.
 Here people show a shuddersome cold cave,
 An outlet for the breath of cruel Dis,
 And an abyss that opens jaws of death
 Where Acheron bursts through: between these jaws
 The Fury settled in her hateful power,
 Giving relief to earth and sky. But still
 The queenly daughter of Saturn, undeterred,
 Gave her last touches to the war. The crowd
 Of shepherds as one man rushed from the field
 Into the city, carrying the dead—
 Young Almo, and Galaesus all disfigured.
 There they implored the vengeance of the gods
 And called upon Latinus to bear witness.
 Turnus, at hand now, among men on fire
 With rage over the slaughter, made their fears
 Redouble, saying rule fell to the Trojans;
 Italians were to mix with Phrygian stock;
 He had been turned away from the king's door.
 The kin, then, of those mothers in ecstasy
 Who danced for Bacchus in the wilderness—
 Amata's name no light encouragement—

Came in from everywhere with cries for Mars.
 Nothing would do but that, against the omens,
 Against the oracles, by a power malign
 They pled for frightful war. And they all thronged,
 Outshouting one another, round the palace.
 Latinus, though, like a seacliff stood fast,
 Like a seacliff that when the great sea comes
 To shatter on it, and the waves like hounds
 Give tongue on every side, holds grandly on,
 Though reefs and foaming rocks thunder offshore
 And seaweed flung against it streams away.
 But when no power was given him to defeat
 Their blinded counsel, and things took their course
 At cruel Juno's nod, Father Latinus
 Calling upon all the gods, on heaven's
 Empty air, cried:

"I am breached by fate,
 Wrecked, swept away by storm. You'll pay the price,
 Poor people, with your sacrilegious blood.
 This wickedness will haunt you, and the grim
 Punishment, Turnus, will come home to you,
 But it will be too late to pray the gods.
 For me, I've earned my rest, though entering haven
 I am deprived of happiness in death."

He said no more, but shut himself away
 And dropped the reins of rule over the state.

There was a custom then in Latium,
 Held sacred later in Alban towns, as now
 In the world-power of Rome when citizens
 First urge the wargod on—
 To bring the sorrow of war upon the Getae,
 Or upon Arabs or Hyrcanians,
 Or marching Dawnward toward the Indians

To take the Parthian-captured standards back.
 There are two gates, twin gates
 Of war, as they are called, by long observance
 Looked on in awe, for fear of savage Mars.
 One hundred brazen bolts keep these gates closed
 And the unending strength of steel; then too
 Their guardian, Janus, never leaves the portal.
 Now when the Fathers' judgment holds for war,
 The Consul in Quirinal robe and Gabinic
 Cincture goes to unlock the grating doors
 And lifts a call for battle. Fighting men
 Then add their voices, and the brazen trumpets
 Blown together blare their harsh assent.
 In that way, now, Latinus was enjoined
 To declare war on the people of Aeneas
 By setting wide the grim gates. But he would not,
 Would not touch them, only turned away
 From the repellent work, and shut himself
 In the interior darkness.

Heaven's queen

At this dropped from the sky. She gave a push
 To stubborn-yielding doors, then burst the iron-bound
 Gates of war apart on turning hinges.
 All Ausonian lands as yet unroused,
 Unwakened, now took fire. Infantry
 Mustered to cross the flatlands, mounted men
 Tall on their horses in the dust whirled by,
 And all must take up arms. With heavy grease
 They rubbed shields clean and smooth, made javelins bright,
 And whetted axes on the grindstone—thrilled
 At standard-bearing, at the trumpet call.
 Five sizeable towns, in fact, with anvils cleared,
 Now turned out weapons: these were tough Atina,
 Haughty Tibur, Ardea, Crustumeri,
 Towered Antemnae. Workmen fashioned helmets,
 Hollow and hard headgear, or for light shields
 Bent wicker frames, while others molded breastplates
 Out of bronze or trim greaves out of silver.
 Pride in plowshare and scythe had given way

To this, and so had love of plowland labor.
 Swords of their fathers in the smithy fires
 They forged anew. The trumpet calls went out,
 The password, sign of war, went round; one fellow
 Pulled down his helmet from the wall, another
 Yoked his whinnying horses, took his shield,
 Put on his mail shirt, triple-linked with gold,
 And belted on his good sword.

Muses, now

Throw wide the gates of Helicon, your mountain,
 Now lift up your song, to tell what kings
 Were stirred to war, what troops in each command
 Filled all the lowlands, fighting men in whom
 Even in those days bounteous Italy
 Had come to flower, in whom her spirit blazed.
 For you remember, you can bring to life
 That time, immortal ones, while to ourselves
 Faint wraiths of history barely transpire.

First to equip a troop and take the field
 Was harsh Mezentius of Tuscany,
 Who held the gods in scorn. The son who rode
 Beside him, Lausus, unexcelled in beauty
 Except by Turnus of the Laurentines—
 Horse-tamer Lausus, conqueror of beasts—
 Led from Agylla's town a thousand men,
 His followers in vain—he that deserved
 More happiness in the father he obeyed,
 Deserved indeed no father like Mezentius.
 Next after these came Aventinus, athlete
 Son of the athlete, Hercules; he showed
 His palm-crowned chariot and winning team
 And put them through their paces on the grassland,
 Bearing his father's blazon on his shield—
 The Hydra wreathed in snakes, a hundred snakes.
 In woodland on the Aventine the priestess,
 Rhea, in secret brought this child to birth
 In the world of daylight. She had mingled limbs
 With a strong god in love, in that far time

When Tiryns' hero, with Geryon slain,
Reached the Laurentine land and bathed his kine
In Tiber's Tuscan water.

Soldiery

That Aventinus led were armed with javelins
And thrusting spears: with polished poles and points
They fought, or hurling shafted Sabine spikes.
Their captain went on foot, swirling about him
A giant lion skin with stormy mane
Still terrible, and the great head for cowl
With white fangs in the open maw. So cloaked
In Hercules' shaggy accouterment,
He went up to the king's hall.

Then twin brothers

Left Tibur's walls—that town and its townfolk
Named for Tiburtus, elder than these two—
Catillus and fierce Coras, progeny
Of Argos, by descent from Amphiarus.
Ahead of the front line amid the spears
They raced along, as from a mountain top
Two cloud-born Centaurs on the run plunge down
From Homolë or from the snows of Othrys,
Making the mighty forest yield and thickets
Crash before their onset.

Then the founder

Of the great town, Praenestë, joined the rest,
He, too, for war—that king whom every age
Believes a son of Vulcan, Caeculus,
Born amid the pasturing herds but found,
An infant, on the hearth.

From far and wide

His country levies came with him: rough hands
Of high Praenestë and of Gabine Juno's
Pastures and cold Anio's river side,
And Hernican rock ledges, wet with streams;
Then those you nurtured, wealthy Anagnia,
Or you, Amasenus Father, by your waters.
Armor and clanging shields and chariots
Were not for all, but most with slings let fly

Their bullets of blue lead, while others hefted
 Pairs of darts. They wore close-fitting caps
 Of wolfskin and gripped earth with left foot bare,
 The right foot roughly booted.

Now Messapus,
 Horse-taming son of Neptune, not to be
 Brought down by any man with fire or steel,
 Called out his tribes, long settled in their peace,
 Battalions long unused to war, and practiced
 Swordsmanship again. Some of his troops
 Held land on the Fescennine Heights and some
 On the Faliscan lowlands, on Soractë's
 High points or Flavinium's pasture land,
 By Mount Ciminius' lake, Capena's grove.
 All marched in equal ranks and hymned their king,
 Like snowy swans when sometimes after feeding
 And taking flight into the lucent clouds,
 They cry a choral song from their long throats,
 Making Asia's marsh, the stream below,
 Re-echo their high sound. No one who heard
 Would think that throng composed of ranks in bronze
 But rather that a cloud of clamorous birds
 Beat landward from the open sea.

Imagine

One of the ancient line of Sabines, Clausus,
 Leading a host, himself a host of men,
 From whom in our day throughout Latium—
 Since Sabines had an early share in Rome—
 The Claudian tribe and family is diffused.
 With him came Amiternum's regiment,
 And old world Quiritës from Curës came,
 All troops from Eretum and fair Mutusca's
 Olive-bearing land, Nomentum town,
 The Rosean countryside around Velinus,
 The rugged cliffs of Tetrica, and Mount
 Severus, and Casperia and Foruli,
 Men from Himella's brook, and men who drank
 The Tiber and Fabaris river water,
 Levies from that cold upland, Nursia,

From Ortina, and the people called Latini,
 And those whom Allia—distressful name—
 Divides by flowing between.

There were as many

As there are waves upon the sparkling sea
 Off Libya, when cold Orion sets
 In winter, or as ears in fields of wheat
 When they are warmed by summer's early sun
 On Hermus plain or yellowing Lycia.
 Clangor of shields and thud of marching feet
 Made the earth tremble.

Then a captain hostile

To the very name of Troy, Agamemnon's son
 Halaesus, yoked his chariot team and swept
 A thousand fighting clans to war for Turnus—
 Men who hoed the fertile vineyard slopes
 Of Massicus, and men sent by Auruncan
 Fathers from the high hills, or, below,
 By Sidicina's flatland. Others came
 From Calës, or were neighbors of Volturnus'
 Fordable waters, and in arms as well
 Came harsh Saticulans and bands of Oscans.
 Polished clubs were what they used as missiles,
 Leashed for recovery, as their practice was;
 Light shields protected them on the left side,
 And for close combat they had sickle blades.

It will not do for you to go unmentioned,
 Oebalus, in our poem, for the nymph
 Sebethis bore you, so the story goes,
 To Telon when he ruled the Teleboan
 Isle of Capri in his age. The father's
 Lands did not content the son, who now
 Held sway over mainland Sarrastians
 On plains the Sarnus watered, and the men
 Of Rufrae, Batulum, Celemnna's fields,
 With those on whom Abella's walls look down
 In orchard country—fighters trained to fling
 Their boomerangs as the Teutons do. They wore

Headgear of bark stripped from the cork oak tree
And flashed with brazen bucklers, blades of bronze.

Then you, too, Ufens, were sent down to war
From highland Nersae, chieftain as you were
And famed for combat luck among the rugged
Forest hunters, the Aequicoli,
Who worked their stony soil in arms but took
Their joy in cattle raids, freebooter fare.

Just as conspicuous, the priestly Umbro,
Sent from Marruvium by King Archippus,
Came with his helm in olive neatly bound,
A man of power, who had a gift of soothing
Vipers and vile-breathing watersnakes
By a sung rune or stroking into sleep:
He calmed their rabidness and by his skill
Relieved men bitten by them. Yet his lore
Would not enable him to heal the blow
He took from a Dardan spear; no sleepy charms
Or mild herbs gathered in the Marsian hills
Availed against his wounds. Umbro, the wood
Of Angitia mourned you, and Fucinus'
Mirrors mourned you, the clear quiet lakes.

Hippolytus' handsome son rode out to war,
Sent by Aricia, his mother. Virbius
Had grown up in Egeria's wood, around
The moist bank where Diana's altar stands,
A gracious shrine, and rich. The old tale goes
That when Hippolytus went down to death
By cunning of his stepmother, and paid
The penalty his father claimed in blood,
Torn by stampeding horses, he returned
To the upper air of heaven beneath the stars,
Called back to life by Asclepius' medicines
And by Diana's love. Then the omnipotent
Father, taking it ill that any man
Should rise from undergloom to light and life,

Cast down by his own bolt Apollo's son,
 Discoverer of that healing power—Asclepius—
 Into the Stygian river. But the goddess
 Trivia, kind Diana, hid Hippolytus
 In a place apart, and sent him to the nymph
 Egeria in her retired wood.
 There he would live his obscure life alone
 In Italy's deep forest, and his name
 Would now be Virbius. This is the reason
 Horses with hooves are banned from Trivia's shrine
 And all her sacred groves: that on the shore
 In fright from sea-beasts they had wrecked the chariot
 And killed the man Hippolytus. Even so,
 Over the plain behind a fiery team
 His son rode in a chariot to war.

Turnus himself came on, a mighty figure
 Moving among the captains blade in hand
 And by a head the tallest. His high helm
 With triple plume bore a Chimaera's head
 Exhaling Aetnean fires—raging the more
 With savage heat the more blood flowed, the wilder
 Grew the battle. On his polished shield,
 In gold emblazonry, Io appeared
 With lifted horns and hair grown coarse—that instant
 Changed, in the huge blazon, into a cow.
 There stood her escort, Argus, and her father,
 Inachus, the rivergod, poured out
 A stream from a figured urn. And following Turnus
 Marched a cloud of infantry, as all
 The plain filled up with troops in arms—Argive
 Ardea's men, Auruncan bands, Rutulians,
 Old time Sicani, Sacrani in ranks,
 Labici carrying painted shields—all those
 Who plowed in time of peace your sacred shores,
 Numicius, or your woodland pastures, Tiber,
 Or who turned clods on the Rutulian hills
 And Circe's ridge, those lands presided over
 By Jupiter of Anxur and Feronia,

Lady of wild beasts, blithe in her green grove.
 Satura's black marsh lies there, and the chill
 Ufens river winds through bottomlands
 To find peace in the sea.

Besides all these

Camilla of the Volscian people came,
 Riding ahead of cavalry, her squadrons
 Gallant in bronze. A warrior girl whose hands
 Were never deft at distaff or wool basket,
 Skills of Minerva, she was hard and trained
 To take the shock of war, or to outrace
 The winds in running. If she ran full speed
 Over the tips of grain unharvested
 She would not ever have bruised an ear, or else
 She might have sprinted on the deep sea swell
 And never dipped her flying feet. To see her,
 Men and women pouring from the fields,
 From houses, thronged her passage way and stared
 Wide-eyed with admiration at the style
 Of royal purple, robing her smooth shoulders,
 Then at the brooch that bound her hair in gold,
 Then at the Lycian quiver that she bore
 And shepherd's myrtle staff, pointed with steel.

Lines 800-817

BOOK

VIII

ARCADIAN ALLIES

That day when Turnus raised the flag of war
Over Laurentum tower, and his trumpets
Blared hoarse-throated, when he laid the whip
On fiery teams, making bright armor clang—
Then hearts were stirred by fear, then all of Latium
Joined in distracted tumult, and young men
Grew bloody-minded, wild. The high commanders,
Messapus and Ufens, and that one
Who held the gods in scorn, Mezentius,
From every quarter drew repeated levies
And laid the wide fields waste of their field hands.
Dispatched to Diomedes' distant city,
Venulus went to ask for aid: to state
That Trojans had a foothold in Latium,
That, landing there, Aeneas had brought in
His conquered gods and claimed to be a king
Called for by destiny; that many tribes
Made league with the Dardanian, and his name
Reverberated far and wide through Latium;
What he might build on this first enterprise,
What he desired as outcome of the war
Should fortune favor him: that would be clearer
To Diomedes than to either king,
Turnus or Latinus.

Thus affairs

Took shape in Latium. And Laomedon's heir,
 Who saw the whole scene, weltered in his trouble,
 Wave after wave of it. This way and that
 He let his mind run, passing quickly over
 All he might do, as when from basins full
 Of unstilled water, struck by a ray of sun
 Or the bright disk of moon, a flickering light
 Plays over walls and corners and flies up
 To hit high roofbeams and a coffered ceiling.
 Now it was night, and through the lands of earth
 Deep slumber held all weary living things
 Of bird and beast kind, when the Trojan prince,
 Aeneas, heartsick at the woe of war,
 Lay down upon the riverside
 In the cold air, under the open sky,
 And gave his body at long last repose.
 Before him as he slept the very god
 Of that place, Tiberinus of fair waters,
 Lifting his hoary head through poplar leaves,
 Appeared all veiled in cobweb cloak of grey
 And crowned with shady sedge. He seemed to speak
 In these words to relieve the burdened man:

"Sir, born of heaven, in whose care Troy city
 Now comes back to us from its enemies,
 And in whose keeping high and everlasting
 Pergama stands: you whom Laurentine soil
 And Latin countryside have long awaited,
 Here is your home, your hearth gods, fixed and sure.
 Now is no time to let go, or give way
 To fear at threats of war. Angers that rose
 Among the gods have passed. And I can tell you—
 Lest you suppose this nothing but a dream—
 Under the shoreside oaks a giant sow
 Will be discovered, lying on the ground,
 With her new farrow, thirty young all told,
 A white sow, with white sucklings at her teats.

And by this portent, after thirty years
 Ascanius will found the famous town
 Called Alba, or White City. I foretell
 No doubtful matter. But just now, as to
 What lies ahead and how you may win through it,
 Listen, and I'll explain in a few words.
 In this country an Arcadian tribe, descended
 From a forebear called Pallas, colonists
 With King Evander, followers of his flag,
 Marked out a spot and founded on the hills
 A town they named for Pallas, Pallanteum.
 Always at war with Latins, as they are,
 Join forces with them, make them your allies.
 I myself between my banks will take you
 Straight upstream, so you'll make way with oars
 Against the current.

Son of Venus, rise.

Now, while the early stars of evening set,
 Address your prayers in proper form to Juno,
 Melt with your pleas her menaces and anger.
 You'll make return to me when you prevail.
 I am that river in full flood you see
 Cutting through farmland, gliding past these banks,
 The sea-blue Tiber, heaven-delighting stream,
 My mansion's here, my fountainhead far north
 Amid the hilltop cities."

Having spoken,

He sank away into the watery depths
 At the river-bottom. From Aeneas then
 Night-time and sleep departed, and he rose.
 Facing the light that fanned up in the east
 From the pure sun, he cupped his ritual hands
 To lift clear water from the stream, then spoke
 His heartfelt prayer to heaven:

"Nymphs of the springs,

Laurentine nymphs, mothers of river kind,
 And Father Tiber with your sacred stream,
 Take in Aeneas as your guest, at last

Shield him from peril. By whatever source
 The ponds lie that embrace you in your pity
 For our ill fortune, from whatever ground
 You well up in your loveliness, you'll be
 Forever honored and adorned forever
 With gifts from me, O potent stream, great lord
 Of waters in the west. Only be with me,
 And give me confirmation of your will."

He finished, then selected from his squadron
 Two biremes and had them manned and armed,
 But something suddenly caught his eye—a sign
 To marvel at: snow-white in the green wood,
 Snow-white as her own litter, lay the sow
 Upon the grassy bank, where all could see.
 And grave Aeneas dedicated her
 To thee, Juno the great, to thee indeed,
 Lifting both sow and brood before the altar
 In sacrifice. Then all that night's long hours
 The Tiber quieted his swollen stream
 And countering his current with still water
 Slackened so, that like a tranquil pool
 Or placid marsh he smoothed his whole expanse
 And left no toil for oars. Once underway,
 Therefore, cheered on, they made good speed upstream.
 Their tarry hulls with bubbling wakes behind
 Slipped through the water, and the waves were awed,
 The virgin woods were awed at this new sight:
 The soldiers' shields that flashed in distant air,
 The painted ships afloat upon the river.
 Oarsmen outwearied night and day in rowing,
 Passed the long bends, shaded by differing trees,
 And cleft green forests in the mirroring water.
 At that hour when the fiery sun had climbed
 To heaven's midpoint, distant still they saw
 Wall, citadel, a few house tops—the town
 Built heavenward by Roman power now
 But meager then, and poor, held by Evander.
 In toward the settlement they swung their prows.

By chance that day the Arcadian king paid honor
 To Hercules, great son of Amphitryon,
 And to the other gods in festival
 Outside the town, in a green grove. With him
 Were his son Pallas and his leading men
 And homespun senate. They made offerings
 Of incense while hot blood fumed on the altars.
 When they caught sight of the tall ships and saw
 The strangers gliding through the woodland shade,
 Rowing in silence, they were caught by fear
 At the sudden apparition, and all sprang up,
 Leaving the feast. But Pallas with high heart
 Forbade them to disrupt the ritual.
 Taking a spear, he ran toward the newcomers
 And called out, while still distant, from a mound:
 "Soldiers, what brought you this strange way? Where bound?
 What is your nation? Where is your home?" he said.
 "Do you bring peace or war?"

Then Lord Aeneas
 From his high poop called back, as he held out
 A branch of olive signifying peace:

"You see before your eyes men born in Troy,
 Enemy lances to the Latins—those
 Who arrogantly attacked us in our exile.
 We come to find Evander. Take this message:
 Say chosen captains of Dardania
 Have come proposing partnership in war."
 Struck by that far away great name, young Pallas
 Called:

"Disembark, whoever you may be,
 And speak directly to my father . . . Come,
 You'll be the guest of our hearth gods tonight."
 He took Aeneas' hand in a strong grip,
 And up the grove they went, leaving the river.

Then, for the king, Aeneas had friendly words:
 "Most noble son of Greece, Fortune would have me
 Make my appeal to you with suppliant boughs.
 I have not feared you as Arcadian
 Or captain of Danaans, or blood-kin
 Of the Atridae. No, my own manhood
 And heaven's holy words, our ancestry
 In common, and your fame through all the world,
 Have brought me here by destiny, and gladly,
 To join my strength with yours. The Greeks maintain
 Electra bore the founding father of Troy,
 Old Dardanus, who sailed to the Teucrians.
 Electra was the child of that prodigious
 Atlas who upholds the heavenly sphere
 On a snowy shoulder. Father of your line
 Was Mercury, whom snow-white Maia bore
 On the cold summit of Cyllenë—Maia,
 Fathered, if we can trust these tales,
 By that same Atlas, pillar of starry sky.
 So both our lines are branches of one blood.
 Putting my trust in this, I sent no legates,
 Made no round-about approaches to you,
 But have exposed myself, and my own life,
 In coming as a suppliant. The Daunians,
 The race that harries you, now harries us
 In savage war. If they defeat and rout us,
 Nothing, so they believe, stands in the way
 Of their subduing all Hesperia,
 Ruling the seas that bathe her, north and south.
 Trust us as we trust you. We have the stamina
 For warfare, and we have the spirit for it.
 In difficulties our men have proved themselves."

Here Aeneas paused. For all this time,
 Evander's gaze had slowly swept the speaker,
 His eyes, his countenance, and his whole figure.
 Now he replied:

"Most gallant Teucrian,
 How happily I welcome you and know you;

How you remind me of your father's speech,
 The voice of great Anchises, and his look!
 For I remember how Prince Priam, son
 Of old Laomedon, Salamis-bound
 To the kingdom of Hesionë, his sister,
 Visited the cold Arcadian land.
 The bloom of youth was on me. I admired
 The Trojan leaders, and admired Priam,
 But tallest in that company by far
 Your father passed. With a boy's adoration
 I longed to speak to him, to shake his hand,
 So I approached. Then all aglow I led him
 Into Pheneus town. His parting gifts
 Were a fine quiver full of Lycian arrows,
 A gold-brocaded cloak, and two gold bits,
 Those that my Pallas owns now.

Well, then, here

Is what you ask, my right hand in a pact.
 And when first light returns to earth tomorrow
 I'll send you back with a fresh increment
 Of troops to gladden you, and fresh supplies.
 Now, since you come as friends, be kind enough
 To join us at our feast, one held each year
 And not to be postponed. Become acquainted,
 Even so soon, with how your allies fare."

On this he called for dishes and winecups
 Already taken off to be brought back,
 As he himself gave the guests grassy seats
 And led Aeneas to the place of honor—
 A maple chair cushioned with lionskin.
 Then picked men and the priest who served the altar
 Vied with one another to bring roast meat,
 To load bread-baskets with the gifts of Ceres,
 Milled and baked, and to pour out the wine.
 Aeneas with his Trojans feasted then
 On a beef chine and flesh of sacrifice.
 When they were fed, their appetites appeased,
 Royal Evander spoke:

No empty-headed
 Superstition, blind to the age-old gods,
 Imposed this ritual on us, and this feast,
 This altar to a divine force of will.
 No, Trojan guest, we carry out these rites,
 Renewed each year, as men saved from barbaric
 Dangers in the past. Look first of all
 At this high overhanging rocky cliff;
 See how rock masses have been scattered out,
 Leaving a mountain dwelling bare, forsaken
 Where the crags fell in avalanche. Here was once
 A cave with depths no ray of sun could reach,
 Where Cacus lived, a bestial form, half man,
 And the ground reeked forever with fresh blood,
 While nailed up in vile pride on his cave doors
 Were men's pale faces ghastly in decay.
 Vulcan had fathered this unholy brute
 Who as he moved about in mammoth bulk
 Belched out the poisonous fires of the father.

After long prayers, time brought even to us
 A god's advent and aid.

The great avenger,
 Hercules, appeared, still flushed with pride
 In spoils he took when slaughtering Geryon,
 The triple-bodied giant, and as conqueror
 He drove the giant's bulls this way before him,
 While the mild herds grazed in our river valley.
 Cacus' blood-thirsty mind, madly aroused
 To leave no crookedness untried, no crime
 Unventured, turned four bulls out of their grounds,
 Four heifers, too, all of the handsomest.
 But not to leave their hoof-tracks going away,
 He held their tails and pulled the cattle backward—
 Traces of passage thus reversed—and hid
 The stolen beasts in the cave's rocky darkness.

Caveward, then, no sign would lead a searcher.
 Now when Amphitryon's heroic son
 Had got his well-fed cattle on the move
 Out of their pasture, ready to depart,
 The oxen bellowed at this leave-taking,
 Filling the wood with protest, crying loud
 To the hills they left. One answer came: one heifer
 Out of the cave-depth lowed, out of her prison,
 Foiling Cacus' hopes. For now indeed
 The affront of it set Hercules ablaze
 With black bile of anger. Taking arms,
 Taking in hand his knotted massy club,
 He ran for the mountain top. Our people then
 Saw for the first time fear in Cacus' eyes
 As faster than the eastwind he made off
 To reach his cave—and terror winged his feet.
 He shut himself inside, breaking the chain
 Wrought there in iron by his father's hand
 To keep a boulder hanging. Down it crashed
 To block the entrance—none too soon. Imagine
 Hercules of Tiryns in his fury
 Facing that wall! This way and that he turned
 And stared to measure every access point,
 And ground his teeth, and in his rage three times
 Went over all Mount Aventine; three times
 In vain pitted himself against the rock,
 And rested three times, wearied, in the valley.
 But from the ridge over the cave arose
 A flinty pinnacle, sheer on all sides,
 A towering home for nests of carrion birds.
 As to the left this leaned over the river
 The hero strained against it from the right
 And shook it, till the rock-embedded roots
 Were loosened, then torn free; and all at once
 He heaved it over. At that fall great heaven
 Thundered, river margins leapt apart,
 And the shocked stream in flood surged backward. Then
 The cavern, Cacus' huge domain, unroofed,
 Lay open to its gloomy depth, as though

Earth, by some force cracked open to its depth,
 Unlocked the underworld and brought to view
 The ghastly realm the gods hate, the abyss
 Now visible from above, and ghosts atremble
 At the daylight let in. Caught by the light
 Unlooked for, and closed in by stone, the giant
 Bellowed as never in his life before,
 While from above with missiles Hercules
 Let fly at him, calling on every mass
 At hand to make a weapon, raining down
 Dry boughs and boulders like millstones. But then
 The monster, seeing no escape was left,
 Wonderful to relate, belched from his gullet
 Clouds of smoke, blanketing all the place
 In blinding haze that took sight from the eyes
 And thickened in the cave to smoky night,
 Profound gloom laced with fire. Hercules'
 Great heart could not abide this trick, but down
 He plunged headlong in one leap through the flames
 Where the smoke billowed thickest, and the cavern
 Seethed in that black cloud. Down there he caught
 And pinioned Cacus as the monster belched
 His fires in vain: fastening on his throat
 He choked him till his eyes burst out, his gullet
 Whitened and dried up with loss of blood.
 Soon the black den was cleared, the doors torn off,
 The stolen cattle—loot their tracks denied—
 Revealed in the light of day, and the misshapen
 Carcass dragged out by the heels. Our people
 Could not be sated by the spectacle
 But gazed long at the dreadful eyes, the face,
 The shaggy bristling chest of the half-beast,
 His gorge's fiery breath put out. Since then
 This feast is held, and younger men are glad
 To keep the memory of the day—in chief
 Potitius, the founder, and the house
 Of the Pinarii, custodians
 Of rites to Hercules. Here in the grove
 He placed this altar, ever to be called

The Greatest by ourselves, and be the Greatest.
 Come then, soldiers, honor that great feat,
 Garland your heads with leaves, hold out your cups,
 Invoke the god we share, and tip your wine
 Most heartily.”

At this with poplar leaves
 Of shifting color, Herculean shade,
 He veiled his hair, and the leafy braided wreath
 Hung down as the blest winecup filled his hand.
 Tipping their wine at once over the table
 The others made their prayer. Meanwhile Olympian
 Heaven downward turned, evening came on,
 And soon the priests, led by Potitius,
 After their ancient mode, belted in furs,
 Went round with torches. They renewed the feast,
 Bringing a welcome second course, and heaped
 The altar tops with dishes. For a hymn
 At the lit altars came the Salii,
 All garlanded with poplar—files of dancers,
 Here of the young, there of the elder men,
 Who praised in song the feats of Hercules,
 His story: how he grappled monsters first,
 Choking his step-mother's twin snakes, and how,
 Again by might, he ruined tall towns in war,
 Troy-town and then Oechalia, and endured
 A thousand bitter toils under Eurystheus,
 Doomed to these by Juno's enmity.

“O thou unconquered one, who slew the centaurs,
 Pholus and Hylaeus, born of cloud,
 And broke the Terror of Crete by thy right hand
 And killed the lion under Nemea's crag!
 Before thee shook the Stygian lakes, the Keeper
 Of Orcus shook, sprawled in his gory cave
 On bones partly devoured. No monstrous form
 Affrighted thee, even Typhoeus' self
 Though mountainous in arms. And Lema's hydra
 Coiling about thee with a swarm of heads
 Attacked no guileless warrior. Hail to thee,

True son of Jove, new glory of the gods,
With friendly stride come join us, join thy feast!"

So ran the hymns they sang, and crowning all
A song of Cacus' cave and breath of fire—
Voices that filled the leafy wood, and rang,
And sprang back from the echoing hill-sides.

When they had carried out the ritual
They turned back to the town. And, slowed by age,
The king walked, keeping Aeneas and his son
Close by his side, with talk of various things
To make the long path easy. Marveling,
Aeneas gladly looked at all about him,
Delighted with the setting, asking questions,
Hearing of earlier men and what they left.
Then King Evander, founder unaware
Of Rome's great citadel, said:

"These woodland places
Once were homes of local fauns and nymphs
Together with a race of men that came
From tree trunks, from hard oak: they had no way
Of settled life, no arts of life, no skill
At yoking oxen, gathering provisions,
Practising husbandry, but got their food
From oaken boughs and wild game hunted down.
In that first time, out of Olympian heaven,
Saturn came here in flight from Jove in arms,
An exile from a kingdom lost; he brought
These unschooled men together from the hills
Where they were scattered, gave them laws, and chose
The name of Latium, from his latency
Or safe concealment in this countryside.
In his reign were the golden centuries
Men tell of still, so peacefully he ruled,
Till gradually a meaner, tarnished age
Came on with fever of war and lust of gain.
Then came Ausonians and Sicilians,

And Saturn's land now often changed her name,
 And there were kings, one savage and gigantic,
 Thybris, from whom we afterborn Italians
 Named the river Tiber. The old name,
 Albula, was lost. As for myself,
 In exile from my country, I set out
 For the sea's end, but Fortune that prevails
 In everything, Fate not to be thrown off,
 Arrested me in this land—solemn warnings
 Came from my mother, from the nymph Carmentis,
 Backed by the god Apollo, to urge me here.”

Just after this, as he went on he showed
 The altar and the gate the Romans call
 Carmental, honoring as of old the nymph
 And prophetess Carmentis, first to sing
 The glory of Pallanteum and Aeneas'
 Great descendants. Then he showed the wood
 That Romulus would make a place of refuge,
 Then the grotto called the Lupercal
 Under the cold crag, named in Arcadian fashion
 After Lycaean Pan. And then as well
 He showed the sacred wood of Argiletum,
 “Argus' death,” and took oath by it, telling
 Of a guest, Argus, put to death. From there
 He led to our Tarpeian site and Capitol,
 All golden now, in those days tangled, wild
 With underbrush—but awesome even then.
 A strangeness there filled country hearts with dread
 And made them shiver at the wood and Rock.

“Some god,” he said, “it is not sure what god,
 Lives in this grove, this hilltop thick with leaves.
 Arcadians think they've seen great Jove himself
 Sometimes with his right hand shaking the aegis
 To darken sky and make the storm clouds rise
 Towering in turmoil. Here, too, in these walls
 Long fallen down, you see what were two towns,

Monuments of the ancients. Father Janus
 Founded one stronghold, Saturn the other,
 Named Janiculum and Saturnia.”

Conversing of such matters, going toward
 Austere Evander’s house, they saw his cattle
 Lowing everywhere in what is now
 Rome’s Forum and her fashionable quarter,
 Carinae. As they came up to the door,
 Evander said:

“In victory Hercules
 Bent for this lintel, and these royal rooms
 Were grand enough for him. Friend, have the courage
 To care little for wealth, and shape yourself,
 You too, to merit godhead. Do not come
 Disdainfully into our needy home.”

Even as he spoke, he led under the gabled
 Narrow roof Aeneas’ mighty figure
 And made him rest where on strewn leaves he spread
 A Libyan bearskin. Swiftly Night came on,
 To fold her dusky wings about the earth.

Now Venus, as a mother sorely frightened,
 And with good reason, moved by the menaces
 Of the Laurentines and their hostile rising,
 Turned to Vulcan. In her bridal chamber
 All of gold, putting divine desire
 In every word, she said:

“While Argive kings
 Lay their due victim, Pergama, waste—her towers
 Doomed to fall in fires her enemy set—
 Never did I demand for the desperate
 Any relief at all, no weapons forged
 By your skill, in your metal. Most dear husband,

I never wished to tax you, make you toil
 In a lost cause, however much I owed
 To Priam's sons, however long I wept
 Over Aeneas' ordeals. Now, however,
 By the command of Jove he has made good
 His landing on the Rutulian shore, and so
 I do come now, begging your sacred power
 For arms, a mother begging for her son.
 The daughter of Nereus moved you, and Tithonus'
 Consort moved you by her tears to this.
 Look now, and see what masses throng together,
 See what cities lock their gates and whet
 The sword against me, to cut down my own!"
 The goddess spoke and wrapped her snowy arms
 This way and that about him as he lingered,
 Cherishing him in her swansdown embrace.
 And instantly he felt the flame of love
 Invading him as ever; into his marrow
 Ran the fire he knew, and through his bones,
 As when sometimes, ripped by a thunder peal,
 A fiery flash goes jagged through the clouds.
 His wife, contented with her blandishment,
 Sure of her loveliness, perceived it all.
 Lord Vulcan, captive to immortal passion,
 Answered her:

"Why do you go so far
 Afield for reasons? Has your trust in me
 Gone elsewhere, goddess? If concern like this
 Had moved you in the old days, even then
 I might have armed the Trojans lawfully—
 For neither Jove almighty nor the Fates
 Forbade Troy to endure, Priam to live,
 Ten further years. If you are ready now
 To arm for war and have a mind to wage it,
 All the devoted craft that I can promise,
 All that is forgeable in steel and molten
 Alloy by the strength of a blast-fire—
 You need not beg me for these gifts. Have done
 With doubting your own powers!"

He said no more,
 But took her in his arms as she desired
 And gave himself, infused in her embrace,
 To peace and slumber.

When his first repose
 Came to an end in the mid-course of night
 Now on the wane, and waked him, at that hour
 When a poor woman whose hard lot it is
 To make a living by her loom and spindle,
 Pokes up the embers, wakes the sleeping fire,
 Adding some night-time to her morning's work,
 And by the firelight keeps her household maids
 Employed at their long task—all to keep chaste
 Her marriage bed and bring her children up—
 At that same hour, no more slothful than she,
 The Lord of Fire rose from his soft bed
 To labor at the smithy.

Near the coast
 Of Sicily and Aeolian Lipari
 A steep island rises, all of rock
 And smoking. Underneath, a mammoth cave
 And vaulted galleries of Aetna, burned
 Away by blast-fire from the Cyclops' forge,
 Rumble in thunder: mighty blows are heard
 Reechoing and booming from the anvils,
 Chalybian bars of iron hiss in the caverns,
 Vulcan's workshop, named for him Vulcania.
 To this the Lord of Fire came down from heaven.

Working with iron in the enormous cave
 Were Cyclops Thunderclap and Anvilfire
 And Flash, stripped to the waist. They had a bolt
 In hand, such as from open sky the Father
 Often hurls to earth—this one part done,
 Part still unfinished. First the smiths had added
 Twisted hail, three rays, three rays of raincloud,
 Three of red fire and the flying southwind.
 Now they were mixing in terrifying lightning,
 Fracas, and fear, and anger in pursuit

With flares. Elsewhere they strove to finish
 A chariot of Mars, and flying wheels
 On which he might stir fighting men and cities.
 Then to an aegis, cuirass bringing dread
 Of Pallas when aroused, they gave a polish,
 Vying to shine the golden serpent scales,
 The knot of vipers and the Gorgon's head—
 For the goddess' very breast—with severed neck
 And rolling eyes.

“Put all these things away,”
 Commanded Vulcan. “Cyclops under Aetna,
 Drop the work begun. Here is our task:
 Armor is to be forged for a brave soldier.
 Now we can use your brawn, and your deft hands,
 Your craft, your mastery. Shake off
 All reluctance.”

Vulcan said no more,
 But they for their part buckled down as one,
 Allotting equal tasks to each. In streams
 The molten brass and gold flowed. Iron that kills
 Turned liquid in the enormous furnace heat.
 They shaped a vast shield, one that might alone
 Be proof against all missiles of the Latins;
 Fastened it, layer on layer, sevenfold.
 Some smiths drew pulsing in and blasted out
 The air with bellows, others plunged the metal
 Screaching in fresh water, and the cavern
 Groaned under the anvils they set down.
 Now this, now that one, for a mighty stroke
 Brought up his arms in rhythm, as they hammered,
 Shifting the metal mass with gripping tongs.



While in Aeolia Vulcan, Lord of Lemnos,
 Pressed that fiery task, mild morning light
 With birdsong under eaves awoke Evander,

And the old man arose. He slipped his arms
 Into his tunic and bound on his trim
 Tyrrhenian sandals, then by shoulder and flank
 Slung his Arcadian blade. A mantling hide
 Of panther, where it hung down on the left,
 He tossed back. Then his two awakened watchdogs
 Preceded him out of the entrance way
 And kept close to their master. He went on
 To visit the secluded place his guest,
 Aeneas, occupied, and he remembered
 What had been said, what favors he had promised.
 Just as early, Aeneas had come outside,
 And one man had his son beside him, Pallas,
 The other had Achatès. When they met
 They joined hands and sat down in the open court
 To enjoy the talk at last permitted them.
 The king began, saying:

"Greatest of Trojan captains,
 Never while you live shall I consider
 Troy to be conquered and her kingdom gone,
 But, though our name is great, our power is slight
 To strengthen you in war. We are confined
 On this side by the river, and on that
 The Rutulians bring pressure on our wall
 With noisy forays. No, I plan for you
 A league with a great host, an army rich
 In many kingdoms. Here by unforeseen
 Good fortune your salvation now appears.
 Fate called for your coming. No long way
 From here men live in the city of Agylla,
 Built of ancient stone. The Lydians,
 Renowned in war, in the old days settled there
 On the Etruscan ridges, and for years
 The city flourished, till an arrogant king,
 Mezentius, ruled it barbarously by force.
 How shall I tell of carnage beyond telling,
 Beastly crimes this tyrant carried out?
 Requite them, gods, on his own head and on

His children! He would even couple carcasses
 With living bodies as a form of torture.
 Hand to hand and face to face, he made them
 Suffer corruption, oozing gore and slime
 In that wretched embrace, and a slow death.
 But at long last the townsmen, sickening
 Of his unholy ways, took arms and laid
 Siege to the madman and his house. They killed
 His henchmen and threw fire on his roof,
 But in the midst of slaughter he escaped,
 Took refuge in Rutulian territory,
 And got himself defended by the arms
 Of Turnus, host and friend. On this account
 Etruria's people have risen as one man
 In righteous anger, threatening war at once,
 Demanding the king back for punishment.

Now I will make you leader of these thousands,
 Aeneas: for in fact while ships of theirs
 Are crowded on the shore and fret for action,
 Calling for ensigns to go forward, still
 A soothsayer of great age holds them all back,
 Forewarning them:

'Picked men of Maeonia,
 Flower and heart of an old heroic race,
 Though justly moved by your past suffering
 Against your enemy, and though Mezentius
 Fires you with rightful anger, no Italian
 May have command of this great people's cause.
 Choose leaders from abroad.'

Taking alarm
 At heaven's warning, the Etruscan ranks
 Rest on their arms, here in this plain, and Tarchon
 Sends me envoys with his crown and scepter,
 Badges of regal power. He asks that I
 Go up to camp and take the Tyrrhene throne.
 But slow and cold old age, weakened by years,
 Forbids command; an old man's vigor falls

Behind in action. I should urge my son
 To accept, if he were not of mingled blood,
 Through a Sabine mother heir to her fatherland.
 No, you are he whose age and foreign birth
 The fates approve, and whom the gods desire.
 Enter on your great duty now, great heart,
 Commander of Trojans and Italians both!
 I shall, besides, commit to you my Pallas,
 All my comfort and my hope, to learn
 With you as master how to weather battle,
 Mars' dead serious work. May he become
 Familiar with your actions, look to you
 As his exemplar from his early years.
 I'll add two hundred horsemen, all Arcadians,
 Picked for ruggedness. In his own name
 Pallas will give two hundred more."

In silence

After this speech, Anchises' son, Aeneas,
 And faithful at his side Achatès sat
 With downcast eyes. They would have pondered long
 And grimly on the many trials to come,
 Had not the Cytheran queen from open heaven
 Given a sign—one utterly unforeseen:
 A quivering flash out of the upper air,
 A thunder crack, and in that instant all
 The sky seemed falling, as it seemed on high
 A Tyrrhene trumpet gave a rumbling blast.
 They all looked up. Again and yet again
 Tremendous crashes came. Between the clouds
 In sunlit air they saw red glare of armor
 Clashing, thundering at the shock. The others
 Sat still, mystified, but Troy's great captain
 Recognized the sound, and knew the promise
 Made by his goddess mother. Then he said:

"My friend, you need not, truly need not ask
 What new event's portended. I am the man
 Whom heaven calls. This sign my goddess mother
 Prophesied she would send if war broke out,

And said, too, she would bring out of the sky
 Arms made by Vulcan to assist me. Ai!
 What carnage is at hand for poor Laurentines.
 What retribution you will make to me,
 Turnus. Many a shield, many a helm,
 And many brave men's bodies you'll take under,
 Father Tiber. Let them insist on war,
 Let them break treaties!"

After saying this,
 He rose from his high seat and first revived
 The fires for Hercules on slumbering altars,
 Gladly revisiting, as yesterday,
 The guardian Lar and humble household gods.
 Likewise Evander and the men of Troy
 Made sacrifice of chosen ewes. Thereafter
 Back to his ships and comrades went Aeneas,
 And chose among them soldiers known for bravery
 To follow him to war. The rest were carried
 Effortlessly downstream on the current
 To bring Ascanius news of these affairs
 And of his father.

Those Etruria-bound
 Were now supplied with horses. For Aeneas
 They led a special mount, all blanketed
 With a lionskin, gleaming with gilded claws.
 Then suddenly a rumor flew about
 The little town that horsemen were departing
 Quickly for the Etrurian king's domain.
 Mothers in fright doubled their prayers: fear
 Brought danger nearer, and the specter of war
 Grew larger in their eyes. But Lord Evander
 Clung to the hand of his departing son
 And could not have enough of tears. He said:

"If only Jupiter would give me back
 The past years and the man I was, when I
 Cut down the front rank by Praeneste wall
 And won the fight and burned the piles of shields!
 I had dispatched to Hell with this right hand

King Erulus, to whom Feronia,
 His mother, gave three lives at birth—a thing
 To chill the blood—three sets of arms to fight with,
 So that he had to be brought down three times.
 Yet this hand took his lives that day, took all,
 And each time took his arms. I should not now
 Be torn from you and from your dear embrace,
 My son, and neither would Mezentius
 Have shown contempt for me, his bordering power,
 Putting so many cruelly to the sword
 And widowing his town of citizens.
 But O high masters, and thou, Jupiter,
 Supreme ruler of gods, pity, I beg,
 The Arcadian king, and hear a father's prayer:
 If by thy will my son survives, and fate
 Spares him, and if I live to see him still,
 To meet him yet again, I pray for life;
 There is no trouble I cannot endure.
 But, Fortune, if you threaten some black day,
 Now, now, let me break off my bitter life
 While all's in doubt, while hope of what's to come
 Remains uncertain, while I hold you here,
 Dear boy, my late delight, my only one—
 And may no graver message ever come
 To wound my ears.”

These were the father's words,
 Poured out in final parting. He collapsed
 Completely, and the servants helped him in.

And now indeed through open gates the horsemen
 Left the town, Aeneas at their head,
 Achatès at his right hand, then the others,
 Trojan officers, and Pallas himself
 Mid-column in short cloak with blazoned arms,
 A sight as brilliant as the Morning Star

Whom Venus loves above all stellar fires,
 When from the bath of Ocean into heaven
 He lifts his holy visage, making Night
 Dissolve and wane. Mothers with quaking breasts
 Were standing on the walls, watching the cloud
 Of dust, the burnished gleams of cavalry,
 As the armed riders picked their way through scrub
 Cross-country toward their goal. A shout went up,
 And, forming into column, they rode on,
 Hoofbeat of horses shaking the dust of the plain.

Near the cold stream of Caerë there's a grove
 Immense and deep, awesome to our forebears.
 The hills encircle it with dark fir trees.
 The tale goes that the old Pelasgians,
 Who held this Latin country who knows when,
 Made grove and feast day sacred to Silvanus,
 God of the fields and herds. Not far from there
 Tarchon and his Tyrrhenians had encamped
 On favorable ground, and one could see
 From a high hill the tents of all the army
 On the wide plain. Now Lord Aeneas came
 To this place with his soldiers picked for battle.
 Here they refreshed their weariness and gave
 Their horses pasture. Venus the gleaming goddess,
 Bearing her gifts, came down amid high clouds
 And far away still, in a vale apart,
 Sighted her son beside the ice-cold stream.
 Then making her appearance as she willed
 She said to him:

"Here are the gifts I promised,
 Forged to perfection by my husband's craft,
 So that you need not hesitate to challenge
 Arrogant Laurentines or savage Turnus,
 However soon, in battle."

As she spoke
 Cytherëa swept to her son's embrace
 And placed the shining arms before his eyes
 Under an oak tree. Now the man in joy

At a goddess' gifts, at being so greatly honored,
 Could not be satisfied, but scanned each piece
 In wonder and turned over in his hands
 The helmet with its terrifying plumes
 And gushing flames, the sword-blade edged with fate,
 The cuirass of hard bronze, blood-red and huge—
 Like a dark cloud burning with sunset light
 That sends a glow for miles—the polished greaves
 Of gold and silver alloy, the great spear,
 And finally the fabric of the shield
 Beyond description.

There the Lord of Fire,
 Knowing the prophets, knowing the age to come,
 Had wrought the future story of Italy,
 The triumphs of the Romans: there one found
 The generations of Ascanius' heirs,
 The wars they fought, each one. Vulcan had made
 The mother wolf, lying in Mars' green grotto;
 Made the twin boys at play about her teats,
 Nursing the mother without fear, while she
 Bent round her smooth neck fondling them in turn
 And shaped their bodies with her tongue.

Nearby,

Rome had been added by the artisan,
 And Sabine women roughly carried off
 Out of the audience at the Circus games;
 Then suddenly a new war coming on
 To pit the sons of Romulus against
 Old Tatius and his austere town of Curēs.
 Later the same kings, warfare laid aside,
 In arms before Jove's altar stood and held
 Libation dishes as they made a pact
 With offering of swine. Not far from this
 Two four-horse war-cars, whipped on, back to back,
 Had torn Mettus apart (still, man of Alba,
 You should have kept your word) and Roman Tullus
 Dragged the liar's rags of flesh away
 Through woods where brambles dripped a bloody dew.

There, too, Porsenna stood, ordering Rome
 To take the exiled Tarquin back, then bringing
 The whole city under massive siege.
 There for their liberty Aeneas' sons
 Threw themselves forward on the enemy spears.
 You might have seen Porsenna imaged there
 To the life, a menacing man, a man in anger
 At Roman daring: Cocles who downed the bridge,
 Cloelia who broke her bonds and swam the river.

On the shield's upper quarter Manlius,
 Guard of the Tarpeian Rock, stood fast
 Before the temple and held the Capitol,
 Where Romulus' house was newly thatched and rough.
 Here fluttering through gilded porticos
 At night, the silvery goose warned of the Gauls
 Approaching: under cover of the darkness
 Gauls amid the bushes had crept near
 And now lay hold upon the citadel.
 Golden locks they had and golden dress,
 Glimmering with striped cloaks, their milky necks
 Entwined with gold. They hefted Alpine spears,
 Two each, and had long body shields for cover.
 Vulcan had fashioned naked Luperci
 And Salii leaping there with woolen caps
 And fallen-from-heaven shields, and put chaste ladies
 Riding in cushioned carriages through Rome
 With sacred images. At a distance then
 He pictured the deep hell of Tartarus,
 Dis's high gate, crime's punishments, and, yes,
 You, Catiline, on a precarious cliff
 Hanging and trembling at the Furies' glare.
 Then, far away from this, were virtuous souls
 And Cato giving laws to them. Mid-shield,
 The pictured sea flowed surging, all of gold,
 As whitecaps foamed on the blue waves, and dolphins
 Shining in silver round and round the scene
 Propelled themselves with flukes and cut through billows.

Vivid in the center were the bronze-beaked
 Ships and the fight at sea off Actium.
 Here you could see Leucata all alive
 With ships maneuvering, sea glowing gold,
 Augustus Caesar leading into battle
 Italians, with both senators and people,
 Household gods and great gods: there he stood
 High on the stern, and from his blessed brow
 Twin flames gushed upward, while his crest revealed
 His father's star. Apart from him, Agrippa,
 Favored by winds and gods, led ships in column,
 A towering figure, wearing on his brows
 The coronet adorned with warships' beaks,
 Highest distinction for command at sea.
 Then came Antonius with barbaric wealth
 And a diversity of arms, victorious
 From races of the Dawnlands and Red Sea,
 Leading the power of the East, of Egypt,
 Even of distant Bactra of the steppes.
 And in his wake the Egyptian consort came
 So shamefully. The ships all kept together
 Racing ahead, the water torn by oar-strokes,
 Torn by the triple beaks, in spume and foam.
 All made for the open sea. You might believe
 The Cyclades uprooted were afloat
 Or mountains running against mountain heights
 When seamen in those hulks pressed the attack
 Upon the other turreted ships. They hurled
 Broadships of burning flax on flying steel,
 And fresh blood reddened Neptune's fields. The queen
 Amidst the battle called her flotilla on
 With a sistrum's beat, a frenzy out of Egypt,
 Never turning her head as yet to see
 Twin snakes of death behind, while monster forms
 Of gods of every race, and the dog-god
 Anubis barking, held their weapons up
 Against our Neptune, Venus, and Minerva.
 Mars, engraved in steel, raged in the fight

As from high air the dire Furies came
 With Discord, taking joy in a torn robe,
 And on her heels, with bloody scourge, Bellona.

Overlooking it all, Actian Apollo
 Began to pull his bow. Wild at this sight,
 All Egypt, Indians, Arabians, all
 Sabaeans put about in flight, and she,
 The queen, appeared crying for winds to shift
 Just as she hauled up sail and slackened sheets.
 The Lord of Fire had portrayed her there,
 Amid the slaughter, pallid with death to come,
 Then borne by waves and wind from the northwest,
 While the great length of mourning Nile awaited her
 With open bays, calling the conquered home
 To his blue bosom and his hidden streams.
 But Caesar then in triple triumph rode
 Within the walls of Rome, making immortal
 Offerings to the gods of Italy—
 Three hundred princely shrines throughout the city.
 There were the streets, humming with festal joy
 And games and cheers, an altar to every shrine,
 To every one a mothers' choir, and bullocks
 Knifed before the altars strewed the ground.
 The man himself, enthroned before the snow-white
 Threshold of sunny Phoebus, viewed the gifts
 The nations of the earth made, and he fitted them
 To the tall portals. Conquered races passed
 In long procession, varied in languages
 As in their dress and arms. Here Mulciber,
 Divine smith, had portrayed the Nomad tribes
 And Afri with ungirdled flowing robes,
 Here Leleges and Carians, and here
 Gelonians with quivers. Here Euphrates,
 Milder in his floods now, there Morini,
 Northernmost of men; here bull-horned Rhine,
 And there the still unconquered Scythian Dahae;
 Here, vexed at being bridged, the rough Araxes.

All these images on Vulcan's shield,
His mother's gift, were wonders to Aeneas.
Knowing nothing of the events themselves,
He felt joy in their pictures, taking up
Upon his shoulder all the destined acts
And fame of his descendants.

Lines 729–731

BOOK

IX

A NIGHT SORTIE,
A DAY ASSAULT

W

hile all these differing actions were afoot
In the far distance, Juno from high air
Sent Iris down to Turnus. As it chanced,
That day the rash prince rested in the grove
Of his forebear, Pilumnus, in a valley
Blest of old. There Iris, rose-lipped child
Of Thaumias, told him:

“Turnus, what no god
Would dare to promise you—your heart’s desire—
The course of time has of itself brought on.
Leaving his town and ships and followers
Aeneas journeyed to the Palatine
Court of Evander. Still unsatisfied,
He’s gone to distant hamlets of Corythus
To rally and arm the Lydian countrymen.
Why hesitate? Now is the time to sound
The call for cavalry and war-cars, now!
Break off this lull, strike at their flurried camp,
Take it by storm!”

On even wings she rose
Into the sky, inscribing her great bow
In flight upon the clouds. He knew her sign,
And lifting both his hands to starry heaven
Sent these words after her:

“Glory of the sky,
Who brought you down to me, cloudborne to earth?

What makes the sudden brilliance of the air?
 I see the vault of heaven riven, and stars
 That drift across the night-sky. I'll obey
 This great presage, no matter who you are
 Who call me to attack."

Then riverward

He took his way and from the surface drew
 Pure lustral water, then he heaped his vows
 Plenteously on heaven. Soon his army
 At full strength moved out through open land,
 Studded with riders, with dyed cloaks and gold,
 Messapus commanding the forward units,
 Tyrrhus' sons the rear, Turnus the center—
 As Ganges fed by seven tranquil streams
 Flows high and quietly, or Nile goes full
 In a seaward channel when the enriching flood
 Ebbs from the fields at last.

A distant cloud

In black dust mounting up, a darkness rising
 Suddenly on the plain came to the eyes
 Of Trojan lookouts. Then Caicus yelled
 From the rampart facing inland:

"Countrymen,

What is the mass of men there on the plain
 In a dark cloud of dust? Take arms, be quick,
 Hand missiles out, and spears, and man the walls.
 Here comes the enemy. On guard!"

In tumult

Back to the camp through all the gates retiring
 Trojans took position on the walls—
 For so on his departure their best soldier,
 Aeneas, had instructed them: if any
 Emergency arose, not to do battle,
 Not to entrust their fortunes to the field,
 But safe behind their walls to hold the camp.
 Therefore, though shame and anger tempted them
 To a pitched battle, even so they barred
 Their gates as he commanded, and compact
 In towers, armed, awaited the enemy.

Turnus, riding hard, had left the slow
Main column far behind. Now he turned up
Before the camp, with twenty chosen horsemen.
A Thracian piebald was his mount, his helm
All golden with a crimson plume. He shouted:
"Who will it be, men? Who will join with me
To open the attack? Look here!"

He cast

High in the air his spinning javelin—
First in that fight. Then the tall horseman rode
Straight onward in the open field. His troop
Took up the cry and galloped after him
With a wild din, yelling astonishment
At Trojans' faint hearts.

"They won't risk themselves

In the open in a fair fight, won't come down
To stand up to us. How they hug the camp!"

Now Turnus furiously this way and that
Rode round the walls and looked for a way in
Where there was none. As a wolf on the prowl
Round a full sheepfold howls at crevices,
Enduring wind and rain at dead of night,
While nestled safe under the ewes the lambs
Keep up their bleating; he, beside himself,
Tormented by accumulated hunger,
Jaws athirst for blood, in all his fury
Cannot reach them, rend them: so the Rutulian
Flared up with helpless rage at what he saw
Of walls and camp, a fever in his bones.
How could he work an entrance? By what course
Dislodge the shut-in Trojans from their rampart,
Get them to issue on the plain? The fleet!
Next to the camp it lay, shielded by earthworks
On the land side and by the running stream.
He rode for it, calling his cheering men
To bring up fire, and he, himself enflamed,
Took up a blazing pine torch in his hand.
Then as his presence urged them on, they all

Rode to and fro in earnest to arm themselves
 With evil torches, tearing camp-fires apart
 As fuming brands gave off a pitchy glare
 And Vulcan clouded heaven with smoke and ash.

Now which of the immortals, Muse, dispelled
 That cruel conflagration from the Trojans?
 Who turned those fires from the ships? Tell me
 The old belief and the eternal tale.
 In those days when Aeneas shaped his fleet
 On Phrygian Ida and prepared to sail
 The deep sea, then the mother of the gods,
 The Berecynthian, addressed great Jove:

“Son, now Olympus owns your mastery,
 Grant your dear mother what she asks of you.
 There was a forest of pines I loved for years,
 A grove high on a mountain crest, where men
 Brought offerings to me—a dusky place
 With dark pine trees and a tall stand of maple.
 These I gladly gave to the Dardan prince
 When he required a fleet. But now a pang
 Of fear has made my heart contract. Relieve
 My anguish, let your mother’s plea avail
 In this: that those ships’ timbers not be breached
 Or swamped on any course by any storm,
 But let their birth and growth here on our mountains
 Prosper them all.”

But in reply her son
 Who makes the firmament revolve demurred:
 “What swerving, Mother, do you ask of fate?
 What privilege for these, your ships? Shall hulls
 That mortal hands have made enjoy a right
 That only immortals have? And shall Aeneas

Go secure through insecurities
 And dangers? Which of the gods can wield that power?
 Rather, when they have done their work and moored
 In the Ausonian ports one day, those ships
 That have escaped the storm waves and brought home
 The Dardan hero to Laurentine lands,
 Then I shall strip away their mortal shape
 And make them, at my bidding, goddesses
 Of the great deep, like Noto, Nereus' child,
 And Galatëa, in the midsea foam
 Breasting their way."

So ran the pledge of Jove,
 Ratified when by his Stygian brother's
 Rivers, boiling banks, and black whirlpool
 He took oath nodding, making all Olympus
 Tremble at his nod.

Now, then, the promised
 Hour had come, the overshadowing Fates
 Had filled the appointed time. Now havoc planned
 By Turnus roused the Mother to keep away
 His firebrands from her blessed hulls. Fresh light
 Shone in men's eyes, a great cloud from the East
 Appeared to storm across the sky with Ida's
 Retinue of Cybelë. Then a voice
 To chill the blood came falling through the air
 And reached all ranks, Rutulian and Trojan:

"No desperate rallying to defend my ships,
 You Trojans, no equipping men for that.
 Turnus may sooner fire the sea itself
 Than hulls of holy pine. Ships, now go free,
 Go as sea-goddesses. Your Mother sends you."

Each broke her hawser instantly; their bows
 Went under like a school of dolphins diving
 Into the depths, then wondrously came up,
 So many virgin forms now seaward bound.
 The astounded troop drew back; as horses reared,

Messapus, even he, was terrified.
 The river halted with a raucous noise
 As Tiber turned back from the sea. But Turnus'
 Fiery confidence held; in quick response
 He blazed at them to give them heart:

“These wonders

Are all aimed at the Trojans! Jove himself
 Has robbed them of their usual ally,
 Not waiting for our swords and fires to do it.
 The open sea is closed to Trojans now,
 Now they have no way out. That element
 Is taken from them, and dry land is ours,
 Where all the tribes of Italy, men in thousands,
 Take up arms. Those fateful oracles,
 So-called, on which the Phrygians plume themselves,
 Terrify me not in the least: enough
 And more has now been granted Fate and Venus,
 Seeing the Trojans reached Ausonian lands.
 I have my fate as well, to combat theirs,
 To cut this criminal people down, my bride
 Being stolen. Pain over such a loss is not
 For the Atridae only, nor may only
 Mycenae justly have recourse to arms.
 Enough that Trojans perished once? Their sin
 That once had been enough, were they not still
 Given to hatred of all womankind.
 They get their courage from a wall between us,
 Ditches to put us off—a paltry space
 From massacre for them. Did they not see
 The walls of Troy, built up by Neptune’s hand,
 Collapse in flames? Which one of you picked men
 Is ready with his blade to breach their wall
 And rush their flustered camp with me? I need
 No arms from Vulcan, nor a thousand ships,
 To take these Trojans on. Let the Etruscans
 All be quick to join them as allies.
 They need not fear sneak thievery by night
 Of their Palladium, guards on the height cut down,

Nor will we hide in a horse's pitch-dark belly.
 Openly by day I'll have their ramparts
 Ringed with flame, by god: I'll see to it
 They won't suppose they're fighting with Danaans,
 Pelasgian troops Hector held off ten years.
 Now, though, seeing the day's best hours are gone,
 Be of good cheer, men; after the day's good action,
 Rest and be fed. A fight's in preparation,
 You can be sure of that."

In the interim

Messapus had the duty of placing men
 Outside the gates, and watch-fires round the ramparts.
 Fourteen officers were assigned to guard
 The perimeter, with a hundred men to each
 In crimson helmet-plumes and glinting gold.
 Scattering to their posts, they manned the watch
 By turns, and settled on the grass at ease
 To drink their wine, tipping the brazen bowls.
 The campfires gave them light, and wakeful sentries
 Passed the night in gaming.

From their ramparts

Overlooking the scene, the Trojans watched.
 Anxiously they had tried and braced the gates,
 Joined catwalks to their battlements and brought
 Fresh missiles up. Mnestheus had charge of this
 With grim Serestus—for the lord Aeneas
 Appointed them, if a crisis called for it,
 To keep order in troops and settlement.
 On the alert along the walls, the legion
 Faced the danger, each his share of it,
 Guarding in turn what each one had to guard.

Nisus guarded a gate—a man-at-arms
 With a fighting heart, Hyrtacus' son. The huntress
 Ida had sent him to Aeneas' side,

A quick hand with a javelin and arrows.
 Euryalus was his comrade, handsomer
 Than any other soldier of Aeneas
 Wearing the Trojan gear: a boy whose cheek
 Bore though unshaven manhood's early down.
 One love united them, and side by side
 They entered combat, as that night they held
 The gate on the same watch. And Nisus said:

"This urge to action, do the gods instil it,
 Or is each man's desire a god to him,
 Euryalus? For all these hours I've longed
 To engage in battle, or to try some great
 Adventure. In this lull I cannot rest.
 You see how confident the Rutulians are.
 Their watchfire lights wink few and far between,
 They've all lain down in wine and drowsiness,
 And the whole place is quiet. Now attend
 To a thought I'm turning over in my mind,
 A plan that grows on me. 'Recall Aeneas,'
 Everyone, seniors, all our folk, demand:
 'Dispatch men to report to him.' Will they
 Now promise the reward I ask for you?
 The glory of the feat's enough for me.
 Below that rise of ground there I can find,
 I think, a way through to Fort Pallanteum."

Taken aback, his love of glory stirred,
 Euryalus replied to his ardent friend:

"And me? Are you refusing me my place
 Beside you in this great affair? Must I
 Send you alone into such danger? Born
 For that, was I, and trained for that, amid
 The Argive terror, those hard hours of Troy,
 By a true fighter, one inured to battle,
 My father, Opheltēs? Never till now have I
 Behaved so at your side, and as a soldier
 Pledged to see Aeneas' destiny through.

Believe me, here's a spirit that disdains
Mere daylight! I hold life well spent to buy
That glory you aspire to."

Nisus answered:

"Not for a minute had I any qualms
About you on that score. Unthinkable!
Witness great Jupiter—or whoever else
May favor this attempt—by bringing me
In triumph back to you. But if some god
Or accident defeats me—and one sees
Miscarriage of bold missions many a time—
You must live on. Your age deserves more life.
If I am dragged free from a fight or ransomed,
Let there be someone who can bury me.
Or if, as often, bad luck rules that out,
Someone who can carry out the ritual
For me, though I'm not there, and honor me
With an empty tomb.

Then too, I would not bring
Such grief on your poor mother, one who dared
As many mothers did not, child, to come
This far with you, taking no care for shelter
Behind Acestës' walls."

But the boy said:

"Your reasoning is all a waste of breath.
Not by an inch has my position changed.
Let us be off."

With this he roused the watch,
Men who came up to stand guard in their turn,
As he took his relief, matching his stride
With Nisus', and they sought the prince of Troy.
Earth's other creatures now had given over
Care in sleep, forgetful of their toil,
But the high Trojan captains, chosen men,
Held council on the realm's pressing affairs:
What action should they take? Or who should be
Their messenger to Aeneas? In the open
Midcourt of the camp, leaning on spears,
Gripping their shields, they stood. And Nisus came,

Euryalus beside him, eager men
 Who begged for a quick hearing, saying how grave
 The matter was, worth a commander's time.
 Iulus moved first to hear the excited pair,
 Ordering Nisus to speak out. He did so,
 Saying:

 "Soldiers of Aeneas, listen
 With open minds, and let what we propose
 Be looked on without reference to our years.
 The Rutulians have quieted down. Their wine
 Has put them all to sleep. But we make out
 An opening for a sortie where the road
 Divides there at the gate nearest the sea,
 A gap at that point in their line of fires
 With only black smoke rising. If you let us
 Take advantage of this to find our way
 To Aeneas and Pallanteum, you'll see us back
 With plunder before long, and slaughter done.
 No fear the path will fool us: many times,
 Hunting these valleys, we have come in view
 Of the town's outposts, and we know the river,
 The whole course of it."

 Bowed by weight of years
 And ripe of mind, Aletēs here exclaimed:
 "Gods of our fathers, in whose shadow Troy
 Forever lives, you are not after all
 Intent on wiping out the Teucrians,
 Seeing you've given our fighters daring souls
 And resolute hearts like these."

 And as he spoke
 He took each by the shoulder, took his hand,
 While tears ran down his cheeks.

 "What fit rewards
 For this brave action, soldiers, shall I reckon
 We can make to you? The best of all
 The gods will give, and your own sense of duty.
 Then our devout Aeneas will recompense you
 In other ways, and soon; so will Ascanius,
 Young as he is: never will he forget

A feat of this distinction . . .”

Here Ascanius

Broke in:

“Never indeed, as my well-being
Wholly depends on Father’s coming back.
By our great household gods, by our hearthgod,
Lar of Assaracus, by whitehaired Vesta’s
Holy chapel, Nisus, hear my vow:
Whatever fortune I may have, whatever
Hope, I now commit to both of you.
Recall my father, bring him before my eyes.
With him recovered, nothing can be grim.
Then I shall give two cups well shaped in silver,
Rough with embossing, that my father took
The day Arisba fell; twin tripods, too,
Two gold bars and an ancient winebowl, gift
Of Dido the Sidonian. More than this:
If it should happen that my father wins
The land and throne of Italy, and divides
By lot the captured booty—well, you’ve seen
The mount that Turnus rode, the arms he bore,
All golden: I exempt that mount, that shield
And crimson-crested helmet from allotment,
Even now, to be your trophies, Nisus.
Father will reward you, too, with twelve
Deep-breasted beauties and twelve captive men,
Each with his armor; beyond these, whatever
Private lands the king, Latinus, owns.
But as for you whose age my own approaches,
Young but so admirable, I embrace you
With my whole heart, and say you’ll be my friend
In all future adventures. There shall be
No labor for distinction in my life
In wartime or in time of peace without you.
Whether in speech or action, all my trust
Goes now to you.”

Euryalus answered him:

“The day will never come when I shall prove
Unequal to this kind of mission, hard

And daring as it is—if only fortune
 Turns to our benefit and not against us.
 One gift above all gifts I ask of you.
 My mother comes of the old stock of Priam,
 And she is here: poor lady, Ilium,
 Her homeland, could not keep her, neither could
 Acestës' city walls, from following me.
 I leave her ignorant of the risks I run,
 With no leave-taking. Let the present night
 And your sword-arm be witness, I could not
 Endure my mother's tears! Will you, I beg,
 Console her in her deprivation, help her
 If she is left without me. Let me take
 This expectation of your care along—
 I shall face danger with a lighter heart."
 This moved the Dardan officers to tears,
 Iulus most of all. Thoughts of his own
 Devotion to his father wrung his heart.
 When he had wept, he said:

"Be sure of it.

All here will be conducted worthily
 Of the great thing you undertake. That mother
 Will be mine—only the name Creusa
 Wanting to her—and I shall not stint
 In gratitude for parenthood so noble.
 Whatever comes of your attempt, I swear,
 As once my father did, by my own life
 That all I promise on your safe return
 Holds likewise for your mother and your kin."

So he spoke out in tears, and from his shoulder
 Lifted on its belt his gilded sword,
 A marvel of craft. It had been forged and fitted
 To an ivory sheath by the Gnosian, Lycaon.
 To Nisus Mnestheus gave a lion's pelt
 And shaggy mane, and steadfast old Aletës
 Made an exchange of helmets. Both now armed,
 They set out, followed to the gate by all
 The company of officers, with prayers

From young and old; and in particular
 Princely Iulus, thoughtful, responsible
 Beyond his years, gave many messages
 To carry to his father. These the winds
 Of heaven scattered, every one, unheard,
 And puffed them to the clouds.

T
 he messengers

Now issued from the gate, traversed the trench,
 And made their way through darkness toward the encampment
 Deadly to them. Still, before the end,
 They were to bring a bloody death on many.
 Now everywhere they saw in drunken sleep
 Lax bodies on the grass, up-tilted chariots
 Along the river, forms of men at rest
 Amid the reins and wheels, arms lying there
 Where winecups also lay. The first to speak
 Was Nisus, and he said:

“Euryalus,
 Here I must dare to use my sword: the case
 Cries out for it; our path lies there. But you
 Keep watch, keep well alert all round about
 For any stroke against us from behind.
 Ahead, I'll devastate them right and left
 And take you through.”

He broke off whispering
 To lunge at Rhamnes, the proud man propped up
 On rugs and snoring loud, lungs full of sleep.
 A king himself and augur to King Turnus,
 Now by no augury could he dispel
 His evil hour. Three of his bodyguards
 Who lay nearby at random by their spears
 Nisus dispatched, then Remus' armorer
 And then his charioteer, discovered prone
 Under the very horses' feet: the swordsman

Slashed their drooping necks. Then he beheaded
 Remus himself, their lord, and left the trunk
 To spout dark blood. By the warm blood the ground
 And bedding were all soaked. Next Lamyrys
 And Lamus died, and so did Serranus,
 A handsome soldier who had played at dice
 That night for hours and now lay undone
 By abundant Bacchus. Lucky this man had been
 If he had made his gambling last the night
 Into the dawn. Think of an unfed lion
 Havocking crowded sheepfolds, being driven
 Mad by hunger: how with his jaws he rends
 And mauls the soft flock dumb with fear, and growls
 And feeds with bloody maw.

Euryalus

Carried out equal slaughter, all inflamed,
 As he too fell upon the nameless ranks
 Of sleeping soldiery. Then he attacked
 Fadus, Herbesus, Rhoetus, Abaris,
 Unconscious men—but Rhoetus came awake
 And took in everything, struck dumb with fear,
 Trying to hide behind a huge wine bowl.
 Rill in the chest as he arose the Trojan
 Plunged his blade up to the hilt and drew it
 Backward streaming death. Dying, the man
 Belched out his crimson life, wine mixed with blood,
 As the hot killer like a cat pressed on.
 He came then to Messapus' company,
 Their fires burning low, their tethered horses
 Grazing the meadow. But now Nisus spoke
 In a curt whisper—for he saw his friend
 Carried away by slaughter and lust for blood—
 "Let us have done," he said. "The Dawn's at hand
 And dangerous. We've made them pay enough,
 We've cut our way through." Turning now, they left
 A quantity of booty, solid silver
 Armor, wine bowls, handsome rugs. Euryalus
 Took medals and a golden studded belt
 From Rhamnes—gifts the rich man, Caedicus,

In the old days had sent to Remulus
 Of Tibur as a distant guest-friend's pledge,
 And Remulus at death had passed them on
 To his own grandson, at whose death in war
 The Rutulians had got them. These the boy
 Tore off and fitted to his torso—tough
 And stalwart as it was, though all in vain—
 Then donned Messapus' helm with its high plume
 As the marauders put the camp behind them,
 Making for safety.

At that hour, horsemen
 Sent ahead from the city of Latinus—
 Other troops being halted on the plain—
 Came bringing answers to the prince, to Turnus,
 Horsemen three hundred strong, all bearing shields,
 With Volcens in command. Nearing the camp
 And riding toward the rampart, they caught sight
 Of the two Trojans over there who veered
 On the leftward path. Euryalus's helmet
 In the clear night's half-darkness had betrayed him,
 Glimmering back, as he had not foreseen,
 Dim rays of moonlight. And the horsemen took
 Sharp notice of that sight. Troop-leader Volcens
 Shouted:

“Soldiers, halt! What's this patrol?
 Who are you two in arms there, and where bound?”

They offered no reply to him, but made
 All speed into a wood, putting their trust
 In darkness there. Troopers rode left and right
 To place themselves at the familiar byways
 Until they had the wood encircled, every
 Exit under guard. The wood itself
 Covered much ground, all bristling underbrush,
 Dark ilex, and dense briars everywhere,
 The path a rare trace amid tracks grown over.
 Deep night under the boughs, and weight of booty,
 Slowed Euryalus, and fear confused him
 As to the pathway. Nisus, unsuspecting,

Got free of the wood, escaped the foe,
 Ran past the places later known as Alban,
 Latinus' high-fenced cattle pastures then.
 But all at once he stopped and looked around
 In vain for his lost friend.

“Euryalus,

Poor fellow, where did I lose you? Where shall I
 Hunt for you? Back all that winding way,
 That maze of woodland?”

Backward in his tracks,
 As he recalled them, now he went, and strayed
 Through silent undergrowth. He heard the horses,
 Heard the clamor and calls of the pursuit,
 And after no long interval a cry
 Came to his ears: Euryalus now he saw
 Set upon by the whole troop—first undone
 By darkness and the treacherous terrain,
 Now overwhelmed by the sudden rush of men
 Who dragged him off, though right and left he strove.
 Now what could Nisus do? What strength had he,
 What weapons could he dare a rescue with?
 Should he then launch himself straight at the foe,
 Through many wounds hastening heroic death?
 His arm drawn back, hefting his javelin,
 He glanced at the high quiet moon and prayed:

“Thou, goddess, thou, be near, and help my effort,
 Latona's daughter, glory of the stars
 And guardian of the groves. If Hyrtacus,
 My father, ever brought gifts to thy altars,
 Votive gifts for me; if I myself
 Have honored thee out of my hunting spoils
 With offerings, hung in thy dome or fixed
 Outside upon thy sacred roof, now let me
 Throw this troop into confusion: guide
 My weapon through the air.”

He made the cast,
 With all the force and spring of his whole body.
 And through the darkness of the night the javelin,

Whipping on, hit Sulmo's back and snapped there,
 Putting a splinter through his diaphragm.
 The man rolled on the ground and vomited
 A hot flood, even as he himself grew chill,
 With long convulsions. All the rest peered round
 This way, then that way. All the more savagely
 The assailant hefts a second javelin
 Back to his ear. Now see commotion, hear
 The whizzing shaft! It splits the skull of Tagus
 Side to side and sticks in the cleft hot brain.
 Now Volcens in a wild rage nowhere saw
 The man who threw the missile, could not tell
 In what quarter to hurl himself.

"All right,"

He said, "You, then—you'll pay with your hot blood
 For both my men."

And with his sword unsheathed
 He went straight for Euryalus. Now truly
 Mad with terror, Nisus cried aloud.
 He could not hide in darkness any longer,
 Could not bear his anguish any longer:

"No, me! Me! Here I am! I did it! Take
 Your swords to me, Rutulians. All the trickery
 Was mine. He had not dared do anything,
 He could not. Heaven's my witness, and the stars
 That look down on us, all he did was care
 Too much for a luckless friend."

But while he clamored,
 Volcens' blade, thrust hard, passed through the ribs
 And breached the snow-white chest. Euryalus
 In death went reeling down,
 And blood streamed on his handsome length, his neck
 Collapsing let his head fall on his shoulder—
 As a bright flower cut by a passing plow
 Will droop and wither slowly, or a poppy
 Bow its head upon its tired stalk
 When overborne by a passing rain.

Now Nisus

Plunged ahead into the crowd of men
 And made for Volcens only, of them all,
 Concerned only with Volcens. All around him
 Enemies grouped to meet him, fend him off
 To left and right, but onward all the same
 He pressed his charge, swirling his lightning blade
 Until he sank it in the yelling visage
 Straight before him. So he took that life
 Even as he died himself. Pierced everywhere,
 He pitched down on the body of his friend
 And there at last in the peace of death grew still.
 Fortunate, both! If in the least my songs
 Avail, no future day will ever take you
 Out of the record of remembering Time,
 While children of Aeneas make their home
 Around the Capitol's unshaken rock,
 And still the Roman Father governs all.

The Rutulians, now victors, with their trophies
 Bore the dead Volcens into camp with tears,
 And tears flowed in the camp as well, at finding
 Rhamnes bled to death, and many captains
 Taken off at one stroke in that slaughter,
 Even as Numa and Serranus were.
 A great crowd pressed around the dead and dying,
 Pressed toward the ground still fresh with carnage, foaming
 Rills of blood. The men could recognize
 The trophies there, and point them out: Messapus'
 Shining helm, and medals now regained
 That had cost toil and sweat in the attack.
 By this time early Dawn, leaving Tithonus'
 Yellow bed, scattered first rays of light
 Over the lands of earth: down poured the sun,
 The world stood clear.

And Turnus in full armor

Roused his men to arm. Each officer
 Drew up his line of battle, all in bronze,
 And soldiers gave their anger a fighting edge
 With divers versions of the night attack.
 The attackers' heads, indeed—a ghastly sight—
 They fixed on spears, and lifted, and bore out
 In taunting parade: Euryalus and Nisus.
 Aeneas' men-at-arms on the left flank
 Formed their defending line along the walls,
 The right enclosed by river. On high towers,
 Having the ditch before them, broad and deep,
 They stood in sorrow, moved by those grim heads,
 Impaled and dripping gore—heads too well known
 To their unhappy fellows. In the meantime,
 Rumor on strong wings flying went about
 The settlement in dread, until it whispered
 Close by Euryalus's mother's ears.
 Then all at once warm life drained from her body,
 Shuttle and skein unwound dropped from her hands.
 She flew outdoors, all wretchedness, and wailed
 As women do, tearing her hair, and ran
 To reach the rampart, in mad haste, to reach
 The front line, paying soldiers there no heed,
 No heed to danger, none to missiles. Then
 She filled heaven's air with keening: "Must I see you
 Even like this, Euryalus? You that were
 In these last days the comfort of my age
 Could leave me, could you, cruel boy, alone?
 Sent into danger so, had you no time
 For your poor mother's last farewell? Ah, god,
 You lie now in a strange land, carrion
 For Latin dogs and birds, and I your mother
 Never took you—your body—out for burial,
 Nor closed your eyes nor washed your wounds nor dressed you
 In the fine robe I had been weaving for you
 Night and day, in haste, before the loom,
 Easing an old woman's pain. But where
 Shall I go now? Where is the earth that holds

Your trunk dismembered, all your mangled body?
 This—is this all of yourself, my son,
 That you bring back to me? By sea and land
 Did I keep this beside me?

Put your spears

Into me, Rutulians, if you can be moved,
 Let fly your javelins all at me, and let me
 Be the first you kill. Or else take pity,
 Father of the great gods, with your bolt
 Dispatch this hateful soul to the abyss.
 I cannot else break off my tortured life.”
 All hearts were shaken by her cries, and groans
 Of mourning came from all, their strength for battle
 Broken and benumbed. At the behest
 Of Ilioneus and Iulus, weeping hard,
 The woman, as she fanned the flame of grief,
 Was brought inside, supported on the arms
 Of Actor and Idaeus, and given rest.

But now a far-off trumpet sang in bronze
 Heart-chilling clamor, and a battle shout
 Re-echoed from the sky, as Volscians charged
 Under cover of shields evenly locked
 To fill the moat and tear the rampart down.
 Some tried to find a way over and in
 With scaling ladders at points lightly manned,
 Where gaps showed in the high line of defenders,
 Not so close-packed. But the Trojans, trained
 In their long war, knew how to hold a wall.
 They rained all kinds of missiles down, and used
 Tough poles to push off climbers. Stones as well
 Of deadly weight they rolled and tumbled over
 To crack the shield-roofed ranks. Nevertheless,
 Beneath a “tortoise shell” so thick, those troops
 Were glad to take their chances. Yet the time

Came when they could not. Where the massed attackers
 Threatened, Trojans trundled a mass of stone
 And heaved it down to fell men in a swathe
 And smash their armored shell. Now Rutulians
 No longer cared to fight blind under shields
 But strove to clear the wall with archery.
 Mezentius in his quarter of the field,
 A sight to quail at, shook his Etruscan pine,
 His firebrand, and lobbed in smoking darts.
 Messapus, Neptune's child, tamer of horses,
 Breached a wall and called for scaling ladders.

Calliopë, I pray, and Muses all,
 Inspire me as I sing the bloody work,
 The deaths dealt out by Turnus on that day,
 And tell what men each fighter sent to Orcus:
 Help me to spread the massive page of war.
 There was one tower of commanding height
 And served by catwalks, in a strategic place.
 Italian troops with might and main
 Struggled to conquer this or bring it down
 With every trick of siege. And for their part
 The Trojans held it with a hail of stones
 And shafts they shot through loopholes. Turnus now
 Became the first with his thrown torch
 To lodge a fire in the tower's side.
 Blazing up there with wind, it caught the planks
 And clung around the portals it consumed.
 The garrison, in panic at this horror,
 Having no exit, herded to that side
 Still free of deadly fire; but the tower
 Under the sudden shift of weight went down,
 All heaven thundering with its crash. Men dropped
 Half-dead with all that mass of ruin to earth,
 Impaled on their own weapons, or run through

By cruel splinters. Lycus and Helénor
 Barely escaped, the only ones: the young
 Helénor, whom a slave, Licymnia,
 Had borne in secret to Maconia's king
 And sent to Troy—although forbidden arms—
 With naked sword and shield blank, bare of deeds.
 Now as he saw himself amid a thousand
 Troops of Turnus, ranks of Latins waiting
 Here and others there, as a wild beast
 Pinned by a band of hunters in a ring
 Will rage against their spears and hurl himself
 Upon sure death, with one leap on the spearpoints:
 In the same way the young man facing death
 Rushed at the enemy, and where he saw
 The spears were thickest, there he aimed his charge.
 But Lycus, being far quicker on his feet,
 Made for and gained the wall amid the enemy,
 Amid their missiles, trying to reach the top
 And outstretched hands of friends. But on his heels
 Ran Turnus with his spear, and won the race,
 Taunting him:

“Did you hope to get away,
 You madman, from our hands?”

And taking hold
 Of the man hanging there he tore him down
 With a big chunk of wall—as when the bird
 Who bears Jove's bolt takes wing, lugging a hare
 Or snowy swan aloft in crooked talons,
 Or when Mars' wolf steals from the fold a lamb
 Whose mother, bleating, seeks it. Everywhere
 The shouting rose as Rutulians fought onward,
 Filling the moat with piled up earth, while some
 Tossed high upon the rooftops burning brands.
 Casting a stone, a piece of mountain crag,
 Ilioneus brought down Lucetius
 As he approached a gate carrying fire.
 Liger killed Emathion, and Asilas
 Killed Corynaeus: a javelin man won
 Over a bowman's deftness from a distance.

Caeneus brought Ortygius down, and Caeneus,
 Even as he triumphed, fell to Turnus. Turnus
 Then killed Itys and Clonius, Dioxippus
 And Promolus, then Sagaris and Idas
 High on the battlement. But Capys killed
 Privernus. First, Themilla's point had grazed him
 So that he lost his head and threw his shield down,
 Bringing his hand up to the wound: therefore
 The winging arrow sank in his left side
 And, deeply embedded, broke the inner vents
 Of breath with a mortal wound.
 In great style fitted out, the son of Arcens
 Stood in his cloak with figured needlework
 All vivid Spanish blue—a brilliant sight.
 Brought up in Mars Wood by Symaethus stream
 And where Palicus' altar stands, enriched
 By offerings, appeasable and mild,
 The young man had been sent to war by Arcens.
 Mezentius dropped his spears, then made a sling
 Go whipping round his head three times as he
 Put stress upon it, and he split the adversary's
 Temples with a molten leaden slug,
 Knocking him down asplay on a bank of sand.
 At this point, it is said, Ascanius
 First aimed a shaft in war. In days before
 He had been used to scare wild game in flight.
 Now with one shot he brought a strong man down,
 Numanus, Remulus by added name,
 Who late had married Turnus' younger sister.
 Now this captain strode ahead and shouted
 Boasts that had or had not dignity,
 Inflated as he was by his new status.
 He swashbuckled and cried:

"What, not ashamed
 To be besieged again, pinned by a rampart,
 Walling yourselves away from death? You Phrygians
 Twice-conquered! Look, see those who claim
 Our wives, prizes of war! What god, what madness
 Brought you to Italy? Here are no Atridae,

Here is no artful talker like Ulysses.
 Tough pioneer's our stock. Our new-born sons
 We take to the river first to harden them
 In wilderness waves, ice-cold. Our boys are keen
 At hunting, and they wear the forests out;
 Their pastimes are horse-taming and archery.
 Hard labor, too, and a life of poverty
 Our young men are inured to: they can crumble
 Earth with hoes or shake walled towns in war.
 Our life is worn away with iron. A spear
 Reversed will goad an ox. And slow old age
 Enfeebles no man's bravery or vigor.
 No, we press down helms on our white hair,
 And all our days delight in bringing home
 Fresh plunder, and in good freebooter fare.
 You people dress in yellow and glowing red,
 You live for sloth, and you go in for dancing,
 Sleeves to your tunics, ribbons to your caps.
 Phrygian women, in truth, not Phrygian men!
 Climb Mount Dindyma where the double pipes
 Make song for the effete, where the small drums
 And the Idaean Mother's Berecynthian
 Boxwood flute are always wheedling you!
 Leave war to fighting men, give up the sword."

As he broadcast these insults and hard words,
 Ascanius could not abide the man.
 He turned and set a shaft on his bowstring,
 Taut horse-gut, and he drew his arms apart,
 Then stood to make petition to high Jove:

"Almighty Jupiter, only give consent
 To this attempt, this venture. I shall bring
 Thy temple gifts in my own hands each year
 And place a snowy bullock at thy altar,
 Gold leaf on his brow, grown up to hold
 His head high as his mother's, then to charge
 With lowered horns and paw the sand with hooves."

This prayer the Father heard. From a clear sky
 He thundered on the left, just as the bow
 Sang out, freighted with doom. The springing shaft
 Under high tension made a fearful whistle
 Flying to pass clean through the head of Remulus,
 Cleaving both temples with its shank of steel.

“Go on, please, mock our courage with windy talk.
 Twice-conquered Phrygians return
 This answer to the Rutulians.”

Only this
 Ascanius called out. The Trojans cheered,
 Echoing him in joy, lifting up their hearts.
 At that moment in the quarter of high air
 Apollo with flowing hair, from a throne of cloud,
 Looked down upon Ausonian troops and town.
 He spoke to the victor, Iulus:

“Blessèd be
 Your new-found manhood, child. By striving so
 Men reach the stars, dear son of gods
 And sire of gods to come. All fated wars
 Will quiet down, and justly, in the end
 Under descendants of Assaracus,
 For Troy no longer bounds you.”

As he spoke
 He put himself in motion out of heaven,
 Parting the smoothly blowing winds
 To make his way down to Ascanius.
 And then he changed into an ancient man,
 Butès, the armor-bearer of Anchises
 And faithful door-keeper in the old days, now
 An aide given Ascanius by his father.
 Apollo walked like Butès to the life—
 He had his voice, his coloring, his white hair,
 His grimly clinking arms. And now he said
 To Iulus in his ardor:

“Let it suffice
 That Numanus met death by your good shot

Without retaliation, son of Aeneas.
 This feat of arms, your first, mighty Apollo
 Grants you, and he feels no jealousy
 For the weapon matched with his. Only refrain
 From other acts of war . . .”

But even as he thus

Broke into words, midway in speech, Apollo
 Quitted mortal vision, fading fast
 Into thin air and distance. Dardan captains
 Glimpsed the god and the god's bow and heard
 His quiver clanging as he went away.
 Therefore despite his eagerness for battle
 They kept Ascanius from it, by command
 And will of Phoebus, while they all, themselves,
 Pushed forward once again to join the fight
 And put themselves in danger. Battle cries
 Ran tower to tower along the entire wall
 As men bent springing bows, or twisted thongs
 On javelins to whip them out. The ground
 Was littered with flung missiles. Shields and helms
 Rang out as they were hit, and the fierce fight
 Mounted as when a storm out of the west—
 When the Young Goats, the rainy stars, arise—
 Lashes the earth, or as when clouds descend
 In thick hail on the deep, and Jupiter
 Goes rough with southwind, making the downpour veer,
 And bursts the cloudy arches of the sky.
 Two brothers, sons of Alcanor of Ida,
 Pandarus and Bitias, whom Iaera,
 Nymph of the woods, in Jove's wood, reared to manhood,
 Tall as their native pines and hills,
 Relying on their arms alone, unbarred
 And opened the gate their captain had assigned them,
 Daring the enemy to come in. The two
 Then took their stand inside, to right and left,
 Before the gate-towers. They were mailed in steel,
 Their heads adorned with high and windy crests,
 As hard by rivers, on the banks of Po
 Or near the lovely Adige, twin oaks

Go soaring high in air and lift their heads
 Into the sky with foliage uncut
 And nod their utmost tops.

The Rutulians

Now stormed the entrance when they saw it clear,
 And in a moment Quercens and Aquiculus,
 A handsome soldier, and foolhardy Tmarus,
 Haemon as well, a son of the god Mars,
 With all their men were turned and put to flight
 Or else lay down their lives at the very gate.
 Then anger grew in fighting hearts. The Trojans
 Shoulder to shoulder closed in on that place
 For combat hand to hand, and dared to sortie.
 Elsewhere, as he raged and scattered foes,
 The commander, Turnus, heard from a messenger
 That, blooded with fresh kills, his adversaries
 Were offering combat at an open gate.
 He dropped his action, in a towering rage,
 To rush the entry and the insolent brothers.
 First to be brought down by his javelin cast—
 The first to sortie—was Antiphatēs,
 Bastard of tall Sarpedon by a Theban.
 Winging through the soft air the Italian
 Cornel shaft sank in, deep in the chest,
 Struck there, and the black wound's open chasm
 Yielded a foaming wave of blood; the steel
 Grew warm in the transfixed lung. Then with his blade
 He brought down Meropēs and Erymas
 And then Aphidnus: finally Bitias,
 The fiery-eyed, all energy of heart,
 Not with a javelin—for he would not give
 His life up to a javelin—no, a pike,
 A great beam given a spin, with a rushing noise
 That struck with impetus like a thunderbolt.
 His shield's two bulls' hides were not proof against it,
 Nor was his coat of trusty mail with lapping
 Scales of gold. Giant-like he reeled and fell,
 Earth groaned, and his great shield came thundering down.
 Just as at Baiac, on the Euboean shore,

A rocky pier, first built of massive blocks,
 Goes over as men up-end it in the sea,
 Creating surface havoc with its plunge
 To rest deep on the sea-floor, as the water
 Seethes around it and the black sands rise;
 And at the crashing sound that high-peaked isle,
 Procida, shakes, and so does Ischia,
 Typhoeus' flint bed, fixed by Jove's command.
 On this the god of warfare, Mars, instilled
 New heart and vigor in the Latin troops,
 Goading them on, and sent among the Trojans
 Rout and black Dread. The attackers flowed
 From every quarter, now their chance had come,
 And he, the god of battle, swept their souls.
 Pandarus, seeing his brother in the dust,
 Seeing where Fortune lay, how the tide turned,
 Pushed to shut the gate with his broad shoulders,
 Turning it with a great heave on its hinge.
 He left outside a number of his own
 In desperate combat, but took others in
 As they turned back, pell-mell. Demented man,
 Not to have seen the Rutulian prince burst in
 Among them, close-packed there! By his free act
 He shut the prince inside the town, a tiger
 Mingling with cowed cattle. Turnus' eyes
 Shone out with new light, as a deadly clang
 Came from his armor. On his helmet crest
 The plume shook, red as blood, and from his shield
 He flashed out rays like lightning. Taken aback,
 Aeneas' soldiers knew that hated face
 And that gigantic figure. Pandarus
 Flared up, hot with rage for his dead brother,
 Calling:

"Here is no bridegroom's royal house
 From Amata, no Ardean inner court
 To comfort Turnus with his native walls.
 Your enemy's fortress-camp is what you see,
 And not the faintest chance of getting away."
 But smiling calmly at him Turnus answered:

"Step forward if you have the heart for it.
 Come within range. You will be telling Priam
 Achilles has been found again, and here."
 That was all. And the other man let fly
 His knotty spear-shaft, bearing bark untrimmed,
 With his whole strength. But only the blowing air
 Incurred its flight, for Juno warded off
 Impact and wound. It stuck fast in the gate.
 "Not from this blade, the stroke of my sword-arm,
 Will you escape. The man responsible
 For wound and weapon is no bungler."

Turnus

Spoke and rose to full height, sword in air,
 Then cleft the man's brow square between the temples
 Cutting his head in two—a dreadful gash
 Between the cheeks all beardless. Earth resounded
 Quivering at the great shock of his weight
 As he went tumbling down in all his armor,
 Drenched with blood and brains; in equal halves
 His head hung this and that way from his shoulders.
 Trojans, aghast, turned round in a stampede,
 And if the thought had come to the champion
 To break the gate-bars, to admit his friends,
 That would have been the last day of the war,
 The last for Trojans. But high rage and mindless
 Lust for slaughter drove the passionate man
 Against his enemies. He caught Phaleris
 First, and Gyges, slashing from behind
 Their leg tendons, then he took their spears
 To throw at the backs of men in flight, and Juno
 Gave him heart and force. Next he dispatched
 Halys to join the rest, and Phegeus,
 His shield run through, and men still on the walls,
 Unwary there and urging on the fight—
 Alcandrus, Helius, Noemon, Prytanis.
 As Lynceus came against him, shouting out
 To his companions, Turnus on the rampart
 Whirled from the right a great sword-stroke and struck him
 One blow, as he closed, taking off his head,

Which dropped still helmeted at a distance. Next
 He killed Amycus, nemesis of game,
 Unmatched at poisoning lance and arrow points,
 And Clytius, a son of Aeolus,
 And Cretheus, familiar of the Muses,
 Ever in love with gittern harp and song
 And tuning notes on strings, forever chanting
 War-horses and wars and feats of arms.
 The Teucric commanders, at long last,
 Hearing of carnage wrought among their people,
 Came on the scene—Mnestheus and grim Serestus,
 Finding their troops distraught, the enemy
 At large inside. And Mnestheus shouted at them:

“Where do you think you’ll run, then, after this?
 What walls, what fortress have you in reserve?
 Is a single man, hemmed in by your own ramparts
 On all sides, countrymen, going to cause
 A massacre like this throughout the town
 And not be stopped? Will he dispatch so many
 Of our best men to Orcus? You poltroons,
 Have you no shame, no pity for your own
 Unhappy country, for the gods of old,
 For great Aeneas?”

Burning at these words,
 They stiffened and stood fast in close array.
 Now Turnus gradually edged away
 From combat, moving toward the riverside,
 Where the stream closed the camp. Fiercer at this,
 The Trojans with a battle cry began
 To advance against him, massing ranks—as when
 A crowd with deadly lances at the ready
 Corners a savage lion: in his fear
 Still dangerous and glaring balefully,
 He backs away, as neither wrath nor courage
 Allow him to turn tail, yet he’s unable,
 Yearn though he may, to charge the men and weapons.
 Likewise of two minds, Turnus kept stepping
 Backward in no haste, seething with rage,

And even twice he turned to charge his foes,
Put them to flight twice, broken, along the walls.
But then the entire garrison on the run
Formed up in a solid mass, and Juno dared not
Give him power to match theirs. Jupiter
Sent out of heaven Iris, borne on air,
To tell his sister his unkind decrees
Should Turnus not depart the Trojan ramparts.
Therefore neither his shield nor his sword arm
Availed the man to hold out in the end,
Stormed at by missiles from all sides: his helm
Rang out around his head with constant blows,
The bronze dented by stones, the horsehair crest
Knocked off; and neither could his shield-boss take
That battering. Now with redoubled force
The Trojans cast their spears, Mnestheus himself,
A lightning spearman, cast. Down Turnus' body
Streaming sweat made rivers black as pitch,
He could not get his breath, his gasping shook
His arms and shoulders, wearied out. At last,
Headfirst in all his armor, down he plunged
Into the river in one leap. Old Tiber
Welcomed the diver in his yellow depth,
Buoyed him up to the surface in mild water
With carnage washed away, and floated him
Exultant to his fellow soldiers' hands.

Lines 799-818

BOOK

X

THE DEATH OF
PRINCES

The Olympian hall of Jove admitted morning,
And there the father of gods and king of men
Convoked a council, in that starry court
From which he viewed the bright lands far below,
The Dardan fortress-camp, the Latin races.
When all the gods had taken seats together
In the great court, with gates to east and west,
He said to them:

“Lords of the open sky,
Why this reversion to old thoughts and aims
And bitter strife again? I had forbidden
Italy to engage in war with Trojans.
Under that ban, what does this conflict mean?
What fear made those on this side and on that
Resort to arms, incite to arms? The time
For war will come—you need not press for it—
That day when through the Alps laid open wide
The savagery of Carthage blights the towns
And towers of Rome. Then men may strive in hate,
Then havoc one another. Now refrain.
Be pleased to endorse the league I have decreed.”
Jupiter’s words were few. Not so the words
Of golden Venus in reply:

“O Father,
Eternal lord of men and their affairs—

What other power may one call on now?—
 Don't you see how Rutulians gloat, how Turnus
 Rides in his car among them, all puffed up
 With his good luck in war? Closed walls no longer
 Shield the Trojans; no, inside the gates
 They must do battle on their very ramparts,
 And moats run high with blood. All unaware,
 Aeneas is far away. Now will you never
 Let that siege be raised? Once more an enemy
 Looms at the walls of budding Troy, once more
 A host of soldiers! And once more the son
 Of Tydeus, this time from Aetolian Arpi,
 Rises against the Trojans. Yes, I think
 My wounds are yet in store for me, and I,
 Your child, but keep the mortal spearman waiting!
 If without your consent, your heavenly will,
 The Trojans crossed to Italy, then let them
 Pay for their sins, afford them no relief;
 But if they had those many oracles,
 Heaven's and the underworld's, behind them,
 Why can the first who comes ignore your will
 And form new destinies? Must I recall
 The burning ships on Eryx shore,
 The king of tempests, and the gales unleashed
 Out of Aeolia, or Iris borne
 From cloudland? Even the powers of Hell are stirred
 By Juno now—that third part of the world
 Remained untried: Allecto has been ushered
 Suddenly into the upper world and goes
 In frenzy through Italian towns. No thought
 Of empire moves me now; one only hoped
 For that while fortune held. Let those you favor
 Conquer. If there is no place on earth
 Your pitiless consort will allow the Trojans,
 Then by the smoking rubble of fallen Troy
 I beg you, Father, let me send Ascanius
 Unharm'd out of the war, let him live on,
 My grandson! Granted Aeneas may be tossed

On strange waters again and lay his course
 Where fortune shows the way. But let my strength
 Only protect this child and save him now
 From deadly combat. Amathus is mine,
 And Paphos height, Cythera and Idalia.
 There let him put his arms away and spend
 His life ingloriously. Ordain that Carthage
 Crush beneath her sway Ausonia's power—
 No hindrance there to the city-states of Tyre!
 What use then to escape the plague of war,
 To take flight through the midst of Argive fires,
 To taste all bitter perils of the sea
 And the vast earth, looking for Latium—
 For Pergama reborn? And would it not
 Have served them better to have made a home
 Upon the ashes of their land, the soil
 Where Troy once was? Just give them Xanthus back
 And Simoïs, I beg: let the poor Trojans
 Live through Ilium's hard hours again."
 Then queenly Juno, stung to fury, said:
 "Why force me to break silence, long and deep,
 And put abroad in words my hidden pain?
 Of men and gods, did any drive Aeneas
 To choose war, to march as an enemy
 Against the Latin king? 'He sailed for Italy
 Under the Fates' direction.' Let it be so—
 And spurred on by the mad fits of Cassandra!
 Did he leave camp, trust life to the wild winds,
 Under my influence? Or give a boy
 Authority in war, command of ramparts?
 Or trouble Etruscan loyalty, or the lives
 Of peaceful folk? What god, what cruelty
 Of mine impelled him to this harm? Where, now,
 Is Juno to be found in this, or Iris
 Down from the clouds? Intolerable that Italians
 Ring your budding Troy with flames, that Turnus
 Sets foot on the soil of his fatherland—
 Whose grandfather was Pilumnus and whose mother

Divine Venilia. What, then, of the torch
 The Trojans carry smoking against Latins,
 What of their subjugating others' fields
 And driving off their herds? What shall we say
 Of how they take their pick of fathers-in-law
 And drag the betrothed girl from her lover's arms?
 How with their hands outstretched they pray for peace
 And armor their beaked ships? Oh, you, of course,
 Can steal Aeneas from the hands of Greeks
 And spread in the man's place ground-mist and air,
 And change a fleet into so many nymphs;
 That I, for my part, helped the Rutulians
 Somewhat, is this abominable? 'All unaware,
 Aeneas is far away.' All unaware
 And far away let him remain. Your homes
 Are Paphos, Idalium, and Cythera's height;
 Why go afield to a walled town rife with war
 And rugged fighting hearts? Am I the one
 Who has attempted to bring Phrygia's
 Frail kingdom down? Am I? Or is it not
 The man who pitted the poor Trojans once
 Against Achaeans? What is the cause that made them,
 Europe and Asia, break the peace and rise
 In arms—through treachery? Guided by me
 Did the adulterous Dardan make his conquest
 Over Sparta, or did I supply
 The weapons, or foment the war with lust?
 You should have feared then for your people. Now
 Late in the day you rise to make your moan,
 Unfounded too, and bait me pointlessly!"
 So ran the plea of Juno, and the lords
 Of sky, each to his mind, murmured assent,
 As when the early gusts caught in a forest
 Murmur, and the rustling unseen wind
 Rolls on, the harbinger of gales to come
 For men at sea. The Almighty Father then,
 Chief power of the world, began to speak,
 And as he spoke the great hall of the gods
 Fell silent, and earth quaked, and silence reigned

In highest air, the west-winds went to rest,
 The deep sea stilled his waters into calm.
 "Take heed then, and keep fast in memory
 These words of mine. Whereas Ausonians
 Are not allowed to league themselves with Trojans,
 And it is not acceptable to you
 To end your discord, therefore I shall hold
 Without distinction Rutulians and Trojans,
 Whatever fortune each may have today,
 Whatever hope may guide him; whether the camp
 Lies under siege as fated for Italians
 Or through Troy's blunder, and through prophecies
 Malign and dark. Neither do I exempt
 The Rutulians. The effort each man makes
 Will bring him luck or trouble. To them all
 King Jupiter is the same king. And the Fates
 Will find their way."

Then by his Stygian brother's
 Rivers, boiling banks, and black whirlpool
 He took oath nodding, making all Olympus
 Tremble at his nod. There was an end
 Of speaking. Jupiter from his golden throne
 Arose, and lords of heaven on either hand
 Escorted him to the threshold of his hall.

That day the Rutulians beset all gates,
 Fighting to kill, to ring the walls with flame.
 The Aenean legion could but bear the siege,
 Immured within, and had no hope of flight.
 Poor soldiers, helpless to break out, they stood
 On towers aloft and thinly manned the ramparts.
 There were Asius, Imbrabus' son,
 Thymoetes, Hicetaon's son, and both
 Assaraci, with Castor and old Thymbris

In the front line; Sarpedon's brothers, then,
 Clarus and Thaemon from high land of Lycia.
 There Acmon of Lyrnesus—great in bulk
 As Clytius, his father, or his brother,
 Menestheus—with all his might lifted a stone
 So huge it seemed the fragment of a mountain.
 Some with javelins fought the besiegers off,
 Some with stones, or throwing firebrands
 And fitting arrows to the bowstring.

See,

Enclosed by them, the Dardan prince himself,
 Most fitting ward of Venus, his fair head
 Uncovered, as a jewel shines out, inset
 In yellow gold, a jewel for throat or brow,
 Or as pale ivory glows, inlaid by craft
 In boxwood or Orician terebinth:
 Upon his milky nape the flowing hair,
 Caught in a pliant golden band, came down.
 And, Ismarus, you too were seen by young
 High-hearted kinsmen as you aimed your shots
 And armed your shafts with poison, well-born son
 Of a Maconian house, where plowmen turn
 Rich earth, Pactolus waters with its gold.
 And Mnestheus, too, was there, exalted still
 By yesterday's great feat, when he fought Turnus
 Down from the rampart; Capys, too, whose name
 Descends to us in the Campanian city.
 That day all these fought on in bitter war.
 But in the middle of that night Aeneas
 Plowed the coastal sea. When he had left
 Evander and reached the camp of the Etruscans,
 He sought the king, told him his name and race,
 What help he looked for and what help he brought;
 Informed him of the levies that Mezentius
 Won over, and the violent heart of Turnus,
 Reminded him of how unsure the plans
 Of men are and, so reasoning, made his plea.
 No time was lost; Tarchon joined forces with him,
 Sealed a pact; and, freed from fate's delay,

The Lydian host, pledged to a foreign captain,
 At the command of heaven, went to sea.
 Aeneas' ship sailed first in line; her beak
 Showed Phrygian lions below a figurehead
 Of Ida, welcome sight to exiled Trojans.
 There great Aeneas sat and inwardly
 Reflected on the fortunes of the war.
 And Pallas, at his left hand, questioned him,
 Now of the stars, the course laid through the night,
 Now of adventures met by land and sea.
 Muses, throw wide the gates of Helicon
 And lift your song of all that host that sailed
 Beneath Aeneas' flag from Tuscan shores
 And manned the ships and rode the sea.

Massicus

First, in the bronze-beaked Tiger, cleft the waves,
 Commander of a thousand men who left
 The walls of Clusium and Closa city,
 Arrows their weapons, quivers lightly slung
 And deadly bows.

Along with him sailed Abas,
 Grizzled and grim, his whole ship's company
 In richest armor, and his ship a gleam
 With gilt Apollo for a figurehead.
 His Populonian motherland had sent
 Six hundred practiced fighters, and three hundred
 Came from the isle of Elba, rich in ore,
 In inexhaustible mines of the Chalybës.
 Third came the interpreter of gods to men,
 Asilas, who commanded all presage
 Of entrails at the altar, stars in heaven,
 Flight of birds, prophetic lightning fires.
 He hurried aboard ship a thousand men
 In close formation, rugged ranks of spears,
 Placed under him by the Tuscan town of Pisa,
 Settled from Greece, from Alpheus river-side.
 Astyr came next, the handsomest of captains,
 Confident horseman, bearing motley arms.
 Three hundred soldiers more had been dispatched—

Like-minded in their zeal—by those at home
 In Caerē and the plains of Minio,
 In ancient Pyrgi, fever-prone Graviscae.
 Cunerus, never could I pass you by,
 Bravest in war of the Ligurian captains,
 Nor you with your scant following, Cupavo,
 Plumage of swan upon your crest: a sign
 Reproaching Amor and his goddess mother
 With your own father's change of form.
 Cycnus, they say, when mourning Phaëthon
 In Phaëthon's young sisters' poplar shade
 Among the new leaves, quieting with song
 His woe for love lost, dressed himself
 In softest plumage as in snowy age
 And left the earth and chanting sought the stars.
 With crewmen young as he, the son, Cupavo,
 Drove ahead with oars the giant Centaur,
 Figurehead that towered, threatening
 The waves with a great boulder: the tall ship,
 With long keel driven, furrowed the open sea.
 Then Ocnus came, who roused his company
 From the paternal waterways: a son
 Of sibylline Manto and the Tuscan river.
 Mantua, it was he who gave you walls
 And named you for his mother—Mantua,
 Rich in forebears, not of a single stock,
 But three distinct tribes, each with four communes,
 The chief one Mantua, whose vigor came
 From Tuscan blood. Mezentius' cruelty
 Had there aroused five hundred sturdy men
 To take up arms against him. These were led
 By a pine-timbered fighting ship whose prow
 Showed Mincius River flowing out of Garda,
 Father Garda, in grey veil of sedge.
 Then heavy in the waves Aulestes came
 Surging ahead, as a hundred tree-trunk oars
 Lashed at the sea and turned it up in foam.
 Huge Triton bore him, and the blue sea quailed
 Before the figure's conch: the dipping torso

Down to the flanks a shaggy man, his belly
 Merging with a monster of the sea.
 Beneath the semi-human breast the foaming
 Groundswell murmured. All these many captains
 In thirty ships had sailed for Troy's relief
 And sheared the expanse of brine with brazen prows.

Now daylight left the sky, and the mild moon,
 In mid-heaven, rode her night-wandering car,
 But duty would not give Aeneas rest:
 He held the tiller still, still shifted sail.
 Then look: halfway upon his course, a band
 Of old companions hove in sight: the nymphs
 Whom kind Cybelë had, by her command,
 Transformed from ships to nymphs and given power
 Over the sea. Swimming abreast they came,
 Parting the waves—as many as one time
 Had prows of bronze and moored ashore. Far off
 They knew their king, and, like a dancing chorus,
 Veered around his ship. One most adept
 At speaking, Cymodocea, in his wake
 Took hold of the ship aft with her right hand
 And pulled herself up, as her left hand kept
 Her stroke in quiet water. Then she spoke
 To the still unwitting captain:

“Still awake,
 Aeneas, kin to gods? Be wakeful, then,
 And slacken off your sheet. We are those pines
 From Ida's holy crest, and once your fleet,
 Now become sea nymphs. When the base Rutulian
 Bore down on us with sword and fire, headlong
 We broke our cables, though against our will.
 All through the sea we looked for you. This form
 The Mother of Gods in pity fashioned for us,
 Allowing us as goddesses to spend

Our lives under the waves. Now learn from us:
 The boy, Ascanius, is pinned down behind
 His wall and moat, amid attacking spears
 Of Latins, rough in onslaught. Even now
 Arcadian horse, mingled with brave Etruscans,
 Hold their appointed place; but Turnus plans
 To throw his squadrons in between, to keep
 The Arcadians from your camp.

Now up with you,
 As Dawn comes order a call to arms for all
 Your troops, and take the shield the Lord of Fire
 Himself supplied you, made unconquerable,
 And rimmed with gold. If you'll trust what I say,
 The new day sees heaps of Rutulians slain."

When she had said this, as she slipped away
 With her right hand she sped the tall ship onward,
 Having the skill of it: the ship more swift
 Than javelin or arrow down the wind
 Took flight over the waves. The ships behind
 Lifted the pace. Anchises' Trojan son,
 Amazed and baffled, even so took heart
 And comfort from the omen. Raising his eyes
 To heaven's vault, briefly he prayed:

"Benignant
 Lady of Ida, Mother of Gods, to whom
 Mount Dindymus is dear, and towered cities,
 And lions yoked in tandem under harness,
 Be my first patroness in combat; bring
 Fulfilment of the augury; come near
 Thy Phrygian soldiers, goddess, and advance
 With friendly stride."

He prayed thus, as the day
 Came swiftly round again with ripened light
 And routed darkness. First he gave his people
 Orders to act on signals, to devote
 Their minds to war and fit themselves for action.
 By now, as he stood high upon the stern,
 He had the Trojans and the camp in view.

On his left arm holding the shield ablaze,
 He raised it up now. From the walls the Trojans
 Shouted to heaven. Hope reawakened wrath,
 And they hurled missiles, clamoring as when
 The cranes that home on Strymon through the clouds
 Call back and forth as they traverse the heavens,
 Leaving the South behind with cheerful cries.
 Rutulian prince and captains of Ausonia
 marvelled first at all this, till they turned
 And saw the sterns already nearing shore,
 The whole sea moving landward with the ships.
 Aeneas' helmet blazed; flames from the crest
 Gushed upward; the gold boss of his great shield
 Shot out vast firelight, even as when
 Blood-red, ill-omened, through transparent night
 A comet glows, or Sirius comes up,
 That burning star that brings drought and disease
 To ill mankind, and makes all heaven drear
 With baleful shining.

Not for that did Turnus
 Fail in audacity, in his confident hope
 To occupy the shore first and drive back
 The invaders from the beach.

"Here is the chance
 You've prayed for: now to hack them up with swords!
 The battle is in your hands, men. Let each soldier
 Think of his wife, his home; let each recall
 Heroic actions, great feats of our fathers.
 Down to the surf we go, while they're in trouble,
 Disembarking, losing their footing. Fortune
 Favors men who dare!"

Now he took thought
 For what troops he should lead in the assault,
 And those to leave, pressing the siege.

Meanwhile
 Aeneas put men off on landing ramps
 From the high sterns. They waited, many of them,
 For the slack water in a breaker's ebb
 And leapt into the shallows. Some held on

To oars for steadiness. Now Tarchon sighted
 Shoreline without a sandbar or long breakers,
 Only the sea swell mounting, going in
 Unhindered to a line of surf and smother.
 He swung his prows at once and begged his men:
 "Picked oarsmen, now give way with your good oars,
 And lift the bow with every stroke, then split
 This enemy land wide open with your beaks.
 Let each keel plow the shingle. It's all one
 With me if we break up, beaching her here,
 Once the dry land is under us."

At this,

The crew surged at the oars and drove the ships
 In spume against the mainland, till the prows
 Crunched in, and keels in safety came to rest.
 But not yours, Tarchon. Grounded in shoal water,
 She hung tipped over on a sloping reef,
 A long time, balancing, tiring the swell,
 Until she came apart and spilled her crew
 Into the waves. Oar hafts and floating thwarts
 Impeded seamen; undertow pulled back
 Their feet from under them.

At the same time

No sluggishness held Turnus. On the double
 He brought his line of battle down upon
 The Trojans and disposed it on the shore.
 Now trumpets gave their signal. In the lead
 Aeneas broke through troops from the countryside—
 A first good omen for the fight to come—
 And mowed the Latins down. He killed the giant
 Theron, who left ranks to encounter him,
 Bent on meeting the enemy champion.
 A sword-blade driven through his bronze chain-mail
 And tunic stiff with gold drank from his side
 Slashed open. Next Aeneas struck Lichas down,
 A man excised from his dead mother's womb
 And held then consecrate to thee, Apollo,
 As one who had been granted immunity
 In infancy from the perilous knife. Nearby,

Aeneas hurled to death tough Cisseus
 And Gyas the gigantic; these with clubs
 Had bludgeoned ranks of men. But Hercules'
 Old weapon in their powerful hands could not
 Help them win through, nor could their sire, Melampus,
 Comrade of Hercules in those days when Earth
 Afforded him hard labors. Then, as Pharus
 Babbled oaths, Aeneas sent his javelin
 Spinning—look!—into his yelling mouth.
 You, too, unlucky Cydon, at the side
 Of Clytius, your latest joy, whose cheeks
 Were goldening with down, might have succumbed
 To the Dardan's blow and lain, pitiful sight,
 Free of the loves you ever bore young men,
 Had not your band of brothers in a mass
 Come forward, Phorcus' sons, all seven of them,
 Hurling seven javelins. A number
 Glanced ineffectual from helm and shield,
 And others kindly Venus turned aside
 So they should only graze him. Aeneas spoke
 To loyal Achatës:

“Hand me still more spears.
 Of those lodged in the Greeks at Ilium
 My throwing arm will not send one astray.”

He took a heavy spear and cast it hard,
 Winged in the air, so that it crashed clean through
 The brazen shield of Maeon, then stove in
 His breastplate and his breast. Alcanor, who
 Had run to help, held up his falling brother,
 But passing onward on its bloody way
 The spear went through his arm, and the arm hung
 Lifeless on its tendons from his shoulder.
 Numitor, then, pulling the spear away
 Out of his brother Maeon's body, threw it
 Back at Aeneas, but had not the luck
 To hit him, only grazed Achatës' thigh.
 Now up came one from Curës, Clausus, bold
 In the first flush of youth: putting his back

Into a long shot with his rigid spear
 He hit Dryops just under the chin; the point
 Passed through his throat and took his life and voice
 Upon the instant as he gave a cry.
 His forehead smote the ground and he spewed gore.
 By various strokes Clausus brought down as well
 Three Thracians, men of Boreas' high house,
 And three whom Father Idas and their country,
 Ismarus, had sent. Then came Halaesus,
 Then the Auruncan troops; Messapus then,
 The cavalry leader, Neptune's son. First these
 Then those fought hard to push the landing parties
 Back, and on Ausonia's very threshold
 The pitched battle raged. As in wide heaven
 Contrary winds do battle, matched in force
 And impetus; and neither will give way
 To the other, nor will clouds nor sea give way;
 The fight hangs in the balance, power to power
 Locked in stalemate: even so the ranks
 Of Troy with ranks of Latins met in combat,
 Foot to foot, unbudging, man to man.
 At another point a stream in flood had rolled
 A scattering of stones and trees uprooted.
 Here where the rough watercourse had made them
 Leave their mounts and fight on foot
 Against their custom, Pallas saw Arcadians
 Turn their backs on Latins in pursuit.
 In that crisis he had but one recourse:
 To sting them by appeals and bitter chiding:

"Friends, where are you bound? I beg you now
 By all the brave things you have done,
 The wars fought through, your leader, great Evander,
 With my own hopes of emulating him,
 Put no faith in retreat. The way ahead
 Has to be cleared by cold steel through the enemy.
 There where the mass of them is heaviest
 Your proud land calls you forward, and calls me,
 Pallas, your captain. No unearthly powers

Stand in our way; we are hemmed in by soldiers
 Mortal as we are mortal. Just as many
 Lives, as many hands, belong to us.
 Look, how the deep sea's barrier behind us
 Cuts us off: no land there for retreat.
 Is it the camp we head for, or the water?"

With this he charged the clump of enemy center.
 First to meet him, led by cruel fate,
 Was Lagus: as this man tore from the ground
 A heavy boulder, Pallas put a javelin
 Through him where the spine divides the ribs,
 Then pulled it from the cage of bone it clung to.
 There, as he bent over, Hisbo failed
 To hit him, though he hoped to, running up
 In reckless rage at a comrade's cruel death;
 Pallas received him with a sword thrust, deep
 In his expanded lung. Next he went after
 Sthenius and the scion of Rhoetus' line,
 Anchemolus, who dared his stepmother's
 Incestuous bed. And you twin brothers, too,
 Laridës, Thymber, fell on the Rutulian field,
 Identical sons of Daucus, so alike
 Their parents, happily bemused, could never
 Tell the two apart. Now Pallas made
 A grim distinction: now Evander's blade
 Cut Thymber's head off, while for you, Laridës,
 Dying fingers of your right hand, severed,
 Fluttered as they groped for the sword hilt.
 Made hot by his reproach, and seeing him fight
 With such distinction, the Arcadians
 Were armed by rage and shame against the foe.
 Then Pallas put a spear through Rhoeteus
 As he sped past him in his car, escaping
 You, noble Teuthras, and your brother, Tyres.
 That gave a breathing space to Ilus, target
 Of Pallas' spear, which Rhoeteus intercepted.
 Down from his car he rolled and kicked the earth
 Of Italy as he died.

When the winds rise,
 Longed for in summer, a shepherd kindles fires
 In woods at scattered points; then in a rush
 The spaces in between blaze up, and Vulcan's
 Line of battle spreads without a break
 In ragged flame across the countryside;
 And seeing he has brought it off, the man
 Looks down on the triumphant fires: just so
 Brave acts of comrades came together, Pallas,
 In one tableau of bravery for your sake.
 But now against them came Halaesus, keen
 In warfare, braced in armor. First he killed
 Ladon, then Pheres, then Demodocus.
 With a sword flash he lopped off the right hand
 Strymonius had raised, aimed at his throat.
 Then with a stone he smashed the face of Thoas,
 Shattering the skull-bones, mixed with brains and blood.
 His father had foretold Halaesus' fate
 And hidden him in woodland, but the day
 The old man closed his glazing eyes in death
 The Parcae took the son in hand, to be
 Cut down, blood sacrifice, by Evander's spear.
 Thus it was that Pallas prayed before
 He threw against him:

"Grant, O Father Tiber,
 Luck to the steel of this shaft I let fly,
 A passage through the hard chest of Halaesus.
 Then these arms that I shall strip from him
 Shall be your oak's to hold."

This the god heard,
 For while Halaesus held his shield for Imaon,
 He left his chest bare to the Arcadian spear.
 Now Lausus, a great figure in the battle,
 Would let no troops of his be terrified
 By all the carnage heroic Pallas wrought.
 His first exploit was bringing Abas down—
 Abas who faced him, knotty bastion
 Of Trojans in the fight. Arcadians fell,
 Etruscans fell, and you, too, Trojan soldiers,

Bodies the Greeks had left unscathed. The lines
 Of troops met, matched in strength and officers,
 Crowded by rear ranks till the congested front
 Allowed no elbow-room for weaponry.
 Here Pallas strove and pressed; against him, Lausus,
 Not much disparate in age, and both
 Splendid in height and build; but fortune gave
 Neither a homecoming to his native land.
 Now, though, the mighty ruler of Olympus
 Would not let them encounter one another.
 Their fates awaited them, each at the hands
 Of a still greater foe.

T

he nymph Juturna,
 Turnus' loving and immortal sister,
 Counsell'd him to go to Lausus' aid.
 From his command post to the battle's heart
 In a flying chariot he cut his way
 And seeing his own men cried:

"The time has come
 To interrupt this battle. I take Pallas,
 Pallas falls to me. I wish his father
 Stood here to watch."

At his command the troops
 Drew off, clearing the ground. As they gave way,
 The Arcadian, struck by the arrogant command,
 Stood amazed at Turnus. Casting his eyes
 Upon the giant form he took his measure,
 All at a distance still, with a grim stare,
 Then countered thus the tyrant's brutal words:

"Either I win the honor of taking spoils
 From the enemy commander, or I die
 A noble death. My father will bear alike
 One destiny or the other. No more threats."

He strode into the open, and the blood
 Turned cold in hearts of the Arcadians.
 Down from his chariot Turnus leapt and lunged
 On foot to closer quarters, as a lion
 After he sights from some high place a bull
 Far off, spoiling for combat on the plain,
 Goes bounding forward: such was the look of Turnus
 As he came on.

When he seemed near enough
 For a spear-cast, Pallas opened the engagement,
 Hoping his daring would bring luck to him,
 Outmatched in power as he was. He cried
 To the open air above him:

“By my father’s
 Welcome and the feast to which you came
 A stranger, Hercules, now lend your help
 To my great effort here, I pray. Let Turnus,
 Dying, see me take his blood-stained arms,
 And bear the sight of me, his conqueror.”

Hercules heard him. Deep in his heart he quelled
 A mighty groan, and let the vain tears flow.
 At this the Olympian father addressed his son
 In kindness:

“Every man’s last day is fixed.
 Lifetimes are brief, and not to be regained,
 For all mankind. But by their deeds to make
 Their fame last: that is labor for the brave.
 Below the walls of Troy so many sons
 Of gods went down, among them, yes, my child,
 Sarpedon. Turnus, too, is called by fate.
 He stands at the given limit of his years.”

So saying, Jupiter turned his eyes away
 From the land of the Rutulians.

On the field
 With all his might, Pallas let fly his spear,
 Then drew his flashing blade out of the sheath.

Onward the shaft flew till it punched its way
 Through layers of the shield rim, then struck home
 There where the cuirass lapped the ridge of shoulder,
 Grazing Turnus' great torso in the end.
 But after balancing for a long time
 His oaken shaft with whetted head of steel,
 Pointed at Pallas, Turnus hurled it, saying:
 "Watch this, and see if my spearhead has not
 More penetrating power."

With quivering shock
 His point ripped through the center of the shield,
 Through all the skins of steel and bronze and bull's hide
 Outer integuments, and then punched through
 The cuirass armor and the stalwart chest.
 Pallas pulled from the wound the warm spearhead
 In vain, for blood and life came out as well
 By the same passage. Forward on his torn breast
 He plunged, his armor clanging over him,
 And bit the hostile earth with bloody mouth
 As he gave up his life.

Looming above him,

Turnus called:

"Arcadians, note well
 And take back to Evander what I say:
 In that state which his father merited
 I send back Pallas. And I grant in full
 What honor tombs confer, what consolation
 Comes of burial. No small price he'll pay
 For welcoming Aeneas."

As he spoke
 He pressed with his left foot upon the dead
 And pulled away the massive weight of swordbelt
 Graven with pictured crime: that company,
 Aegyptus' sons, killed by Danaus' daughters,
 Young men murdered on one wedding night,
 Their nuptial beds blood-stained. Eurytus' son,
 Clonus, had chased the images in gold.
 Now Turnus gloried in it, in his winning.

The minds of men are ignorant of fate
 And of their future lot, unskilled to keep
 Due measure when some triumph sets them high.
 For Turnus there will come a time
 When he would give the world to see again
 An untouched Pallas, and will hate this day,
 Hate that belt taken.

Now on the battleground
 Pallas's troops in tears with many groans
 Thronged to bear off the prince, laid on his shield.
 O grief, O glory, destined for your father!
 This, your first day, gave you to the war
 And took you from it, even though you leave
 Windrows of Rutulian dead.

No rumor only

Of this great loss, but a sure messenger
 Ran to Aeneas, telling how his men
 Were now within an ace of being destroyed,
 How he must lose no time stemming the rout.
 Near enemies he cut down with his blade,
 Then made a swathe before him in the ranks,
 Driving on Turnus where the man stood, proud
 Of his new kill.

Pallas, Evander, all
 Their history rose before Aeneas' eyes:
 The first feast he had come to as a stranger,
 The right hands joined in friendship. Now he took
 Four sons of Sulmo, four more Ufens reared,
 Took them alive to offer to the shades
 In sacrifice, wetting with captive blood
 The flames of Pallas' pyre. Magus, at whom
 He made a spearcast, cleverly dodged ahead
 So all aquiver the shaft passed over him.
 Embracing then the spearman's knees he pled:

“I pray you by your father’s ghost and by
 Your hope of Iulus’ rising power, preserve
 A life here, for a father and a son.
 I have a great house. Hidden deep within
 Are bars of enchased silver, weights of gold
 Both finished and unfinished. Victory
 For Trojans cannot hinge on this one case;
 This one life cannot weigh so much.”

Aeneas

Retorted in this way:

“Those bars of gold
 And silver that you tell of, spare for your sons.
 Turnus has already done away
 With all such war-trade, Pallas being lost.
 My father Anchises’ ghost feels as I say,
 And so does Iulus.”

And with this he took
 The man’s helm in his left hand, bent the neck
 Backward, still begging, and drove home the sword
 Up to the hilt.

Next, not far off, he met
 Haemonidēs, a sacred minister
 Of Phoebus and Diana of the Crossroads,
 Wearing the holy headband, all in white
 And shining priestly robes. Over the field
 Aeneas drove him till the man went down,
 Then stood, his mighty shadow covering him,
 And took his life in sacrifice. Serestus
 Bent for his arms and shouldered them to be
 Your trophy, Mars Gradivus, battle-king.
 The Italians rallied, led by Caeculus
 Of Vulcan’s line, and Umbro from the Marsian
 Mountains, as the Dardan still raged on
 Against them. With his blade he cut away
 Anxur’s left arm with all his round of shield.
 This man had made some loud threat, thinking words
 Would summon prowess, carried away, perhaps,
 And sure long years would bring him hoary age.

Then to confront Aeneas' fiery course
 Tarquitus came, elate with flashing arms,
 A son the nymph Dryopë bore to Faunus,
 God of woodland. Spear drawn back and thrust,
 Aeneas pinned his big shield to his cuirass,
 Putting him out of action. As Tarquitus
 Vainly pled, and would have pled again,
 The Trojan struck his head off to the ground,
 Then with his foot made the warm trunk roll over,
 Speaking above him from his pitiless heart:
 "Lie there now, fearsome as you are. No gentle
 Mother will ever hide you in the earth
 Or weight your body with a family tomb.
 Either you stay here for the carrion birds
 Or the sea takes you under, hungry fishes
 Nibble your wounds."

Aeneas then ran onward
 After Antaeus and Lucas, front-rank men
 Of Turnus, Numa the brave and tawny Camers,
 Son of great-hearted Volcens, wealthiest
 Landowner in Ausonia once, who ruled
 The silent town, Amyclae. As men say
 The titan Aegaeon had a hundred arms,
 A hundred hands, and sent out burning breath
 From fifty mouths and breasts when he opposed
 Jove's thunderbolt, clanging his fifty shields
 And drawing fifty swords, just so Aeneas
 Multiplied savagery over the whole field
 Once his sword-point warmed.

Now see him rushing
 Niphaeus' four-horse team, their breasts against him:
 When they catch sight of him with his long strides
 And murderous moaning, they wheel round in fear,
 Careering backward, spilling out their driver,
 Whirling the chariot along the shore.
 At the same time Lucagus and his brother
 Liger drove their white team into action,
 Liger at the reins, while grim Lucagus

Made play with his sword. Far from inclined
To await their fiery onset, Aeneas rushed them,
Looming with his spear aimed. Liger called:

“This is not Diomedes’ team you see
And not Achilles’ war-car, not the field
Of Phrygia. Here and now on Latin ground
You’ll have an end of war, an end of life.”

So in his madness he proclaimed. The Trojan
Warrior called out nothing in reply
But sent his javelin spinning. Hanging on
And bending to the stroke, using his blade
To goad the team, left foot ahead, Lucagus
Settled himself to fight, just as the spear
Broke through his gleaming shield’s rim at the bottom,
Penetrating his left groin. Pitched from the car,
He rolled out dying on the field. Aeneas,
That grave captain, mocked him bitterly:

“No panic of your team lost you your footing,
No mere shadows of enemy ahead
Made them shy backward. No, you’ve tumbled out
And left them of your own accord.”

With this,

He took hold of the horses’ heads. Lucagus’
Luckless brother slid from the chariot
And held his hands out helplessly. He said:
“I beg you in your own name, in the name
Of those who gave you life, great as you are,
Soldier of Troy, let this life be; in mercy
Hear my prayer.”

He prayed on, but Aeneas

Said:

“Your speech was not like this just now.
Die and be brotherly, stay with your brother.”
He slashed open the breast where life is hid.
And deaths like these all over the battlefield

The Dardan captain brought about, in fury
 Wild as a torrent or a dark tornado.
 Finally Ascanius and the troops,
 Besieged in vain, broke out and left the camp.

At this point Jupiter slyly said to Juno:

“Sister and wife, too, most delightful wife,
 As you were thinking—not amiss, that thought—
 It must be Venus who sustains the Trojans,
 Not their good right arms in war, their keen
 Combativeness and fortitude in danger.”

In low tones Juno answered:

“Darling husband,
 Why provoke me, heartsick as I am,
 And fearing as I do your grim decrees?
 If my love mattered to you as it did
 And should, you would not, O Omnipotent,
 Deny me this: the power to spirit Turnus
 Out of the battle and to keep him safe
 For his father, Daunus. Well then, let him perish,
 Give Trojans quittance with his gentle blood!
 And yet he took his name from our own stock,
 His sire Pylumus, four generations gone,
 And generously has he often heaped your shrine
 With offerings.”

The king of high Olympus
 Briefly answered:

“If a reprieve is asked
 From imminent death, more time for the young man
 Before he falls—if you so understand me—
 Take Turnus off in flight, wrest him away
 From fate that stands before him. There is room
 For that much lenience. If some greater favor

Lies hid in your mind beneath your prayer,
 If you imagine the whole war affected,
 Changed by this, you cherish a vain hope.”
 Then Juno said in tears:

“Oh, if at heart

You meant to grant what you begrudge in words,
 And life were still ahead, assured for Turnus!
 Now heavy doom’s ahead for him, the innocent!
 Else I’m adrift from truth. Oh, let me be
 Deluded, let my fear be baseless, change
 Your purpose for the better, as you can!”

With this, from heaven straightway she launched herself
 In a tucked-up robe of cloud, driving a storm
 Before her through the air. She made her way
 To the Ilian lines and the Laurentine camp,
 Then made a bodiless shade of spectral mist
 In likeness of Aeneas, weird and strange,
 Adorned the image with Dardanian arms
 And matched the godlike hero’s shield and plume,
 Gave unreal words, a voice without a mind,
 A way of walking, modeled after his.
 This form was like the ghosts that after death
 Are said to hover and haunt, or shapes of dream
 Deluding sight and touch in sleep. Now, then,
 Before the front line sprang the happy phantom,
 Angering Turnus with a threat of arms
 And shouted challenges. Turnus attacked,
 At the extreme range hurling a whizzing spear.
 The phantom wheeled, turning its back, and ran.
 At this, thinking in truth his enemy
 Had given ground, Turnus in his confusion
 Drank deep of an empty hope. He called:

“Where bound, Aeneas? Come, don’t leave behind
 Your wedding vows. That earth you sailed to find
 You’ll get from my sword arm.” And shouting this
 He pressed on after, making his drawn sword flash,

Not seeing that his jubilation now
Was at the mercy of the wind.

One ship,
It happened, stood there moored to a high rock ledge,
Ladders and gangway out: King Osinius
Had sailed in it from Clusium. The distraught
Phantom of Aeneas in flight ran here
To fling itself aboard and under cover.
Hard on its heels, past every obstacle,
Turnus bounded over the steep gangway.
He had scarce reached the prow when Juno broke
The mooring line and wrenched the ship away
Adrift on the ebb of surf. Ashore, Aeneas
Called for the absent man to stand and fight,
While he sent down to earth many a soldier
Met on the field.

But now the weightless phantom
Looked for a lair no longer. Soaring up,
It mingled with a black cloud, as high wind
Bore Turnus out to sea. And he gazed back,
Bewildered at this business, giving no thanks
For safety. Then he spread his hands to heaven
And cried out:

“Father Almighty, have you found me
So to be deplored, and so chastised?
Where am I sea-borne? And from where? And why
This flight, or what am I, to be so taken?
Shall I see my encampment, or Laurentum’s
Walls again? What of that company
Of men who rode with me, followed my flag?
Monstrous that I have left them all to face
A death unspeakable. Now must I see them
Leaderless, and hear the wounded groaning?
What shall I do? What chasm on earth is deep
Enough to hide me? Better, winds be merciful,
Drive this ship on a rocky coast, a reef,
With all my heart I beg you; put her aground
In savage sandbanks where no Rutulians
Or news of my disgrace can come.”

He prayed,
 And in his spirit swayed this way and that,
 Whether for madness at so great a shame
 To fit his breast upon his blade and drive it
 Bloody through his ribs, or else to plunge
 Amid the waves and swim for shore—
 That curving shore where he could meet again
 The Teucrians in arms. Three times he moved
 To try each way, three times almighty Juno
 Held him back, pitying him in her heart,
 And curbed the young man's passion. Smoothly onward
 Cutting a wake in the deep sea he sailed,
 With favoring swell and current, carried home
 To the ancient city of his father, Daunus.

Meanwhile, hot-hearted Mezentius joined the fight,
 Being by Jove alerted, and he drove
 Against the cheering Trojans. But the Etruscan
 Lines converged on him with all their hatred,
 On him alone, on him alone with all
 Their javelins cast in a continual shower.
 He weathered it the way a rocky headland,
 Jutting into the waste sea, bare to gales,
 Bare to the sea-surge, taking all the blows
 And fury of sky and sea, remains unshaken,
 Buffeting back. So he brought Hebrus down,
 Dolichaon's son, then Latagus, with Palmus
 On the run: one smashed in mouth and face
 By a huge stone, a bit of mountain crag;
 The other hamstrung, left to his slow writhing,
 Even while Mezentius handed Lausus
 Shoulder armor and a plume to wear
 Upon his crest. He killed Evanthës then,
 The Phrygian, and Mimas, peer and friend
 Of Paris. Theäno bore him to Amycus

On the same night that Cisseus' royal daughter,
 Hecuba, pregnant with a fire-brand,
 Bore Paris. Paris lies in Priam's town.
 The Italian beach holds Mimas the forgotten.
 Think of a wild boar, one Mount Vesulus
 Kept safe in his pine forests many years
 Before the nipping hounds harried him out—
 Or one the Laurentine marsh for long has fed
 On reedy undergrowth—now ringed by hunters
 Ready with nets, he stands at bay and snorts,
 Ferocious with his bristling hump, and no one's
 Blood is up enough to go in closer:
 They keep safely away as they attack
 With darts and shouts, while he turns on them all,
 Undaunted, waiting for the time to charge,
 Gnashing his tusks and shrugging off the darts.
 So men who justly hated Mezentius
 Had not the gall to meet him, blade to blade,
 But harried him with darts and wild shouts
 At a safe distance.

There was a man named Acron,
 Come from Corythus' old country, a Greek
 Exile who left his marriage unfulfilled.
 As he drove Rutulians into disarray,
 In crimson plumes, in rose-red of his bride,
 Mezentius caught sight of him apart.
 An unfed lion prowling in the bush
 And ravenous, catches sight of a wild goat
 Or a tall-antlered stag: then he exults,
 And gaping terribly ruffles up his mane
 Before he kills and cleaves to a feast of flesh,
 While blood bathes and befouls his cruel jaws.
 With such a spring Mezentius fell upon
 The dense-ranked enemy. Unlucky Acron
 Crumpled first and kicked the black earth, dying,
 Splashing with blood the spear-shaft broken off.
 But when Orodēs turned to run, the killer
 Scorned to hit him from behind, to cast

Unseen and wound him. No, he caught and turned him,
 Facing him man to man—proving the better
 By force of arms, not by an unfair shot.
 With foot pressed on the dying where he lay
 He pulled his spear out, calling:

“Here’s no mean
 Partaker in this battle, men. Here lies
 Orodës, once so high.”

The Italian troops
 Shouted together, echoing in ovation.
 Then, however, as he expired, Orodës
 Whispered:

“Whoever you are, you’ll not take joy
 In this death long, for it will be avenged.
 An equal destiny awaits you here.
 The same field will be yours to lie in soon.”
 Mezentius answered smiling in hard anger:
 “Die now. But as for my fate, let the father
 Of gods and king of men attend to it.”

He pulled the spearhead from Orodës body.
 Harsh repose oppressed his eyes, a sleep
 Of iron, and in eternal night they closed.

Now Caedicus cut Alcathois down,
 Sacrator killed Hydaspës, Rapo killed
 Parthenius and Orsës, man of brawn;
 Messapus finished Clonius and Ericetës,
 Lycaon’s son—one fallen from his unbridled
 Mount and lying prone, the other on foot.
 On foot the Lycian, Agis, too, came forward
 Only to be hurled in the dust by one
 Who had his grandfather’s bravery, Valerus.
 Next Thronius fell to Salius, Salius fell
 Before Nealcës, dead shot with a javelin
 And the sly arrow striking at long range.
 In the battle now Mars evenly dealt out
 To both sides heavy grief and mutual death,

Both killing, both going down in equal numbers,
 Winners and losers, neither any longer
 Knowing the meaning of retreat.

The gods

In Jove's long hall pitied the empty rage
 Of these two armies, and the painful toil
 Mankind must bear. For here Venus looked on,
 There her opponent, Juno, while death-pale
 Tisiphonē in savagery roamed
 The field amid the soldiers in their thousands.
 Yes, and Mezentius shook a giant spear
 As he stormed over the field: tall as Orion
 When he wades through expanses of the sea
 With shoulders unsubmerged, or when he brings
 An aged ash-tree staff from mountain heights
 And treads the earth, head hidden in the clouds.
 So giant-like Mezentius came on
 In his enormous armor.

Sighting him

In the long battle-line, Aeneas made
 His way toward him. Mezentius stood fast,
 Utterly fearless, biding his gallant foe,
 Immobile, massive, measuring with his eye
 The distance needed for his throw. He said:

"My right arm, only god I have, and shaft
 I now let fly, be on my side! I pledge
 You, Lausus, armed in what I strip from him,
 From this free-booter's body, you shall be
 My trophy of Aeneas."

After his speech,

He made a long cast, and the whistling spear
 Winged on, clanged on the shield, but sprang away
 To fix itself between the flank and groin
 Of Antarēs, a distinguished soldier there,
 Hercules' old companion. Sent from Argos,
 He stayed close to Evander and made his home
 In an Italian town. Killed by a stroke

That missed another, now he lay and skyward
 Turned his eyes in death, remembering
 The sweet land, Argos.

Then the godfearing captain
 Aeneas made his throw. Through the round shield,
 Convex with triple bronze, layers of linen
 Worked with triple bull's hide, the spear passed
 And stuck low in the groin. Yet at the end
 It lost force. Cheered at seeing Etruscan blood,
 Aeneas in a flash drew sword from hip
 And closed with his shocked enemy. Now Lausus
 Groaned at the sight for love of his dear father,
 And down his cheeks the tears rolled.

Here indeed

I shall not fail to tell of that hard death
 You came upon, and of your heroism—
 If ancientness for a great act wins belief—
 And of your memorable self, young soldier.
 Mezentius had begun to back away,
 Disabled, hampered, dragging on his shield
 The enemy spear, when in a lightning move
 The young man threw himself into the fight:
 Just as Aeneas rose for a downward cut
 He beat aside the blade, and for a space
 Put the man off. Italian troops came up
 With shouts, while under cover of Lausus' shield
 The father limped away. The soldiers' javelins
 Harassed Aeneas and kept him back, so he
 Took shelter behind his shield in a black rage.
 As when the stormclouds pour down hail in showers,
 Every farmer and plowman leaves his field,
 And every traveler takes cover, snug
 In some good shelter, overhanging bank
 Or rock-vault, while the rain falls: they defer
 The day's work till the sun comes out again;
 So, swamped by missiles left and right, Aeneas
 Suffered the war-cloud till its thunder passed
 And meanwhile had harsh words and threats for Lausus:

“Why this rush deathward, daring beyond your power?
Filial piety makes you lose your head.”

But Lausus all the same leapt to the clash,
Beside himself. Now in the Dardan captain
Anger boiled up higher. The Parcae wound
The thread of Lausus to the end: Aeneas
Drove his tough sword through the young man's body
Up to the hilt—for it pierced the half-shield, light
Defense for one so menacing—and the shirt
His mother had woven him, soft cloth of gold,
So blood filled up the folds of it. His life
Now left his body for the air and went
In sorrow to the shades. But seeing the look
On the young man's face in death, a face so pale
As to be awesome, then Anchises' son
Groaned in profound pity. He held out
His hand as filial piety, mirrored here,
Wrung his own heart, and said:

“O poor young soldier,
How will Aeneas reward your splendid fight?
How honor you, in keeping with your nature?
Keep the arms you loved to use, for I
Return you to your forebears, ash and shades,
If this concerns you now. Unlucky boy,
One consolation for sad death is this:
You die by the sword-thrust of great Aeneas.”

Then giving Lausus' troops a sharp rebuke
For hanging back, he lifted from the ground
The dead man as he lay, his well-combed hair
Soaking with blood.

By rippling Tiber now
His father slowed the bleeding of his wound
With river water and eased himself, his back
Against a tree-trunk. His bronze helm nearby
Hung from the boughs, and on the grass in peace
His heavy armor lay. Men of his choosing
Stood in a circle; he himself, in pain,

His flowing beard combed forward on his chest,
 Panted and tried to rest, to ease his neck.
 Repeatedly he asked for news of Lausus,
 Repeatedly sent messengers to recall him
 Bearing his gloomy father's word. But weeping
 Troops bore Lausus lifeless on his armor,
 A mighty prince brought down by a mighty wound.
 Mezentius' heart knew well for whom they wept
 When still far off. Gouging up dust he soiled
 His white hair, spread his hands to heaven; and when
 The body came, he clung to it.

"Did such pleasure
 In being alive enthrall me, son, that I
 Allowed you whom I sired to take my place
 Before the enemy sword? Am I, your father,
 Saved by your wounds, by your death do I live?
 Ai! Now at the end exile is misery to me,
 Now the wound of it goes deep! There's more:
 My son, I stained your name with wickedness—
 Driven out as I was, under a cloud,
 From throne and scepter of my ancestors.
 Long since I owed my land, my hating folk,
 Punishment for my sins. I should have given
 My guilty life up, suffering every death.
 I live still. Not yet have I taken leave
 Of men and daylight. But I will."

At this
 He stood up on his anguished thigh, and though
 Strength ebbing and the deep wound made him slow,
 Undaunted he commanded that they bring
 His mount, his pride and stay, on which he rode
 From all his wars victorious. Then he said
 To the mournful animal:

"Rhaebus, we two
 Have had a long life now, if lives are ever
 Long for mortals. Either you win today
 And bring that armor yonder back, blood-smeared,
 Aeneas' head, too, and avenge with me
 What Lausus had to bear, or if no force

Can clear that way, you'll die as I must die.
 Brave heart, I know you will not bend the neck
 To strangers' orders or to Trojan masters."

He eased himself on the warm back of the horse,
 Astride him as before, and took a sheaf
 Of javelins in each hand, his bronze helm shining,
 Horse-hair plume a-bristle, and off he galloped
 Into the battle-lines. In that one heart
 Shame seethed amain, and madness mixed with grief.
 Three times with a great voice he called Aeneas,
 Who knew the voice and prayed in joy:

"So be it!

So may the father of gods and high Apollo
 Bring it on! Begin the fight!"

At this

He moved on up to meet him with his spear.
 Mezentius in his turn said:

"Hard enemy,

How can you think to terrify me, now
 My son is lost? That was the only way
 You could destroy me. Neither do I quail
 At death nor act in deference to any god.
 So drop your talk, I come resolved to die.
 But first there are these gifts I bring for you."

At once he hurled a javelin at his enemy,
 Then sent another and another still
 Straight to the mark, as he rode wide around
 In a great circle. But the golden boss
 Held intact. Leftward the assailant rode
 Three times around. Aeneas faced the shots
 And three times turned a thicket of javelins
 On the bronze shield. The contest, long drawn out,
 The toil of plucking steel points from his shield,
 The disadvantages of fighting on foot,
 Grew wearisome. Racking his brains, at last
 He burst from his position to hurl a spear
 Squarely between the temples of the war-horse.

The beast reared back and high, pawing the air
 With his forefeet; then on his rider thrown
 The horse came down, entangling the man,
 And with his shoulder out of joint, headlong
 He plunged and pinned him. Trojan and Latin shouts
 Flared to heaven. Aeneas on the run
 Came up, pulling his sword out of the sheath,
 Stood over him and said:

“Where is the fierce
 Mezentius now, and his bloodthirsty soul?”

The Etruscan with his eyes cast up regained
 His senses, drinking in the air of heaven,
 Answering:

“Bitter as gall, my enemy,
 Why pillory me and hold up death before me?
 Taking my life you do no wrong; I had
 No other expectation, coming to battle.
 Lausus, my son, made no compact with you
 That you should spare me. One request I'll make
 If conquered enemies may ask a favor:
 Let my body be hid in earth. I know
 On every hand the hatred of my people.
 Fend off their fury and allow me room
 In the same grave with my son.”

This said, he faced
 With open eyes the sword's edge at his throat
 And poured his life out on his armored breast
 In waves of blood.

Lines 892–908

BOOK

XI

DEBATERS AND A
WARRIOR GIRL

W

hen Dawn came up from Ocean in the east,
Though Pallas' death had left Aeneas shaken,
And duty pressed him to give time
For burial of the dead, he first
In early light discharged his ritual vows
As victor to the gods. A big oak trunk
Lopped of its boughs, he planted on a mound
And dressed it with Mezentius' bright gear
To make a trophy, god of war, to thee.
He fitted it with a crest still oozing blood,
With javelins of the warrior, and his cuirass,
Twelve times cut and breached. On the left side
He tied the bronze shield, and he slung the ivory
Scabbard and sword around the figure's neck.
Then he addressed the officers who thronged
About him in elation:

“One great mission
Stands accomplished, men. For what remains
Let all our fears depart from us. I stripped
These arms from a proud king—my offering now,
First trophy in the war: Mezentius,
Become this figure at my hands. The road
Before us leads to the Latin town and king.
Look to your gear, and courage. Think ahead
With good cheer of the war to come, and when

By will of the high gods our flag is raised,
 Our troops led from the camp, nothing amiss
 Or unforeseen will cumber or delay us,
 No heavy heartedness will slow us down.
 Meanwhile let us give over to the earth
 Our friends' unburied bodies: the one honor
 Possible for them now in Acheron.
 Go," he continued, "and make beautiful
 The funeral rites for those heroic souls
 Who won this land for us. Let Pallas first
 Be sent to Evander's grieving town. He lacked
 No valor when the black day took him off
 And sank him in death's bitterness."

He wept

As he said this, then made his way again
 To his own threshold, where the corpse of Pallas
 Lay in care of old Acoetës, once
 Arcadian Evander's armor-bearer,
 Chosen under less happy auspices
 To be companion of a cherished ward.
 Their household stood around, with men of Troy,
 And Trojan women, hair unbound in mourning.
 Then as Aeneas entered the tall doorway
 Everyone there groaned mightily to heaven,
 Beating their breasts. The prince's lodge rang out
 With sobs and lamentation. When he saw
 The head at rest, the snow-white face of Pallas,
 The smooth chest and the open wound
 The Ausonian spearhead made, his tears welled up
 With grim words:

"Was it you, poor boy, that Fortune
 Would not let me keep when she came smiling?
 You who were not to see our kingdom won,
 Or ride in victory to your father's house?
 This was not the pledge I made Evander
 On your behalf, on leaving him, when he
 Embraced me and gave godspeed to my quest

For country-wide command. Anxiously, too,
He warned of battle with a rugged race,
With savage fighting men.

Even at this hour
Prey to false hope, he may be making vows
And heaping altars with his gifts, while here
We gather with a soldier, young and dead,
Who owes no vows to heaven any longer;
Here is our helpless ritual and our sorrow.
Father ill-fated, you will see his funeral.
Can this be our return, our longed-for triumph,
This my great pledge carried out? Enough.
Evander, you will see no shameful wound
Of one who ran, hit from behind; you'll pray
For no hard death because a son lives on
Disgraced. What a defence Ausonia lost
And you, too, Iulus!"

Having wept his fill,
He had the forlorn body taken up
For journeying, and from the army chose
A thousand men to march as retinue
At Pallas' funeral; these would take part
In mourning with his father—for great pain
Small consolation, but the poor king's due.
Deft hands now made a pliant bier of wicker,
Arbutus shoots and oak twigs interwoven,
Shading the piled-up couch with screens of leaves.
Here on his rustic bed they lay the prince,
Most like a flower a girl's fingers plucked,
Soft-petaled violet or hyacinth
With languid head, as yet not discomposed
Or faded, though its mother earth no longer
Nourishes it and makes it stand in bloom.
Aeneas brought two robes all stiff with gold
Embroidery and purple. Dido of Sidon
Herself had loved the toil of making these
With her own hands one day for him, inweaving

Golden thread into the fabric. One
 Of these the sorrowing man wrapped round the prince
 In final honor, and he spread the other,
 Mantling the hair soon to be set aflame.
 He heaped the many prizes Pallas won
 In the Laurentine battle, to be borne
 In a long file, and added mounts and weapons
 Taken in his own fights from the enemy.
 Then came, hands bound behind their backs, the prisoners
 He sent as offerings to the shades below,
 Intending that when slain they should bedew
 The pyre's flames with blood. And he commanded
 Officers themselves to carry trophies—
 Tree-trunks in foemen's gear—with names attached.
 Acoetēs had to be led, far gone in age
 And misery, his breast stung by his blows,
 His cheeks torn by his nails; at times he fell,
 Full-length, flinging himself to earth. War cars
 They also led, a-glisten with Rutulian blood.
 The war-horse Aethon, bare of insignia,
 Came behind, with big tears rolling down
 To wet his cheeks, then men who bore the spear
 And helm of Pallas—for his belt and sword
 Were held by Turnus the victorious.

And now the whole sad column marched: the Trojans,
 All the Etruscans, the Arcadians,
 With arms reversed.

When the long file had gone
 A distance on its way, Aeneas halted,
 Sighed from the heart, and spoke a final word:
 "More of the same drear destiny of battle
 Calls me back to further tears. Forever
 Hail to you, my noble friend, my Pallas,
 Hail and farewell forever."

That was all.

Then he turned backward toward the parapets
 And made his way to camp.

From the Latin city
 Spokesmen wearing chaplets of olive boughs
 Had now arrived with a petition for him:
 Let him give back their dead, felled by the sword,
 Who lay upon the field; let him permit
 Interment of them under an earthen mound.
 There was no combat with defeated men
 Who breathed the air no longer. Let him spare them,
 Hosts, he called them once, and fathers-in-law.
 This request the good heart of Aeneas
 Could not spurn but granted, and he added:

“What unmerited misfortune, Latins,
 Could have embroiled you in so sad a war
 That now you turn your backs on us, your friends?
 Do you ask peace from me for those whose lives
 Were taken by the cast of Mars? Believe me,
 I should have wished to grant it to the living.
 Never should I have come here had not Fate
 Allotted me this land for settlement,
 Nor do I war upon your people. No,
 Your king dropped our alliance, lent himself
 Instead to Turnus’ fighting. In all fairness,
 Turnus should have faced death on this field.
 If he would end the war by force, and drive
 The Trojans out, he should have fought me, fought
 My weapons; then the one for whom great Mars—
 Or his own sword—prevailed would have lived on.
 Go now, light fires beneath your wretched dead.”

He finished, and they stood stricken and still,
 Turning their eyes to look at one another.
 Drancēs, an aging man, forever hostile
 To the young Turnus, whom he blamed and hated,
 Spoke in reply:

“Great man by fame, and proven

Greater in warfare, prince of Troy, how can I
 Match your godly nobleness with praise?
 Shall I admire the just man first, or first
 His deeds of war? Surely in gratitude
 We'll take your generous words back to our city,
 Then, Fortune willing, we shall see that you
 And King Latinus reunite. Let Turnus
 Look for his own ally! Our happiness
 Will be to raise your destined bulk of wall
 And bear the stones of Troy upon our shoulders.”

To this the rest as one man spoke assent,
 And so they made a twelve-day truce, while peace
 Should hold between them, Teucrians and Latins
 Mingling without harm as they traversed
 The wooded ridges. Lofty ash-trees rang
 With strokes of double-bladed axes, pines
 That towered starward toppled and came down,
 And men with wedges all day long
 Split oak and fragrant cedar logs, or hauled
 The trunks of mountain ash on groaning wains.

Rumor already flown ahead inland
 Had heralded the mournful news: it filled
 Evander's ears, his house, his city walls—
 Rumor that only lately had reported
 Pallas victorious in Latium.
 Arcadians crowding to the gates by night
 Took up the funeral torches custom called for:
 Flames whose glare in a long line moved out
 Along the road, between the fields. The Phrygian
 Column came to meet and join that line
 Of men lamenting. When the women saw them
 Near the walls, they made the darkened town
 Blaze up with wailing cries. As for Evander,
 Nothing could hold him, but he took his way
 Amid them all to where they set the bier,
 Then threw himself on Pallas. Clinging there

With tears and sobs, he barely spoke at last
When pain abated:

“This you had not promised,
Pallas, telling your father with what care
You would go into action, facing Mars.
I knew how heady it could be to draw
First blood, to taste the wine of victory
In your first combat—manhood’s bitter gain,
War’s hard initiation, close at hand,
My vows, my prayers unheard by any god.
O blessed wife, so lucky in your death,
Not kept alive to suffer this! For my part,
I have outlived my time to linger on,
Survivor of my son. Would god Rutulians
Had found me side by side with Trojan troops
And pinned me to the earth with spears. I should
Myself have given up my life. Would god
This cortège brought me and not Pallas home.
Not that I blame you or decry our compact,
Trojans—and our hand-grip, guest and host.
This lot awaited me in my old age.
But if my son had early death before him
I can rejoice that first he took the lives
Of countless Volscians, that he met his end
Leading the Trojans into Latium.
Besides, I could not wish a funeral
More noble for you, Pallas, than this one
Aeneas in his piety performs,
With Phrygian leaders and Etruscan captains,
All the Etruscan army. Men to whom
Your sword-arm dealt out death are here as trophies,
Great ones; you, too, Turnus, would stand here,
A huge trunk hung with arms, had age and strength
And seasoning of years matched him with you.
But in my misery why do I hold back
The Trojans from the war? March on; remember
This, my message to your king: ‘If I
Live out my hateful life now, Pallas gone,

Your sword-arm keeps me—Turnus' life the debt
 You see it owes to father as to son.
 In this alone your greatness and your fortune
 Now have scope. I ask no joy in life—
 I may not—but to take word to my son
 Far down amid the shades.' ”

Dawn at that hour
 Brought on her kindly light for ill mankind,
 Arousing men to labor and distress.
 By now Aeneas and Tarchon had built up
 Their pyres along the curving shore. On them
 In the old-time ritual each bore and placed
 The bodies of his men. The smoky fires
 Caught underneath and hid the face of heaven
 In a tall gloom. Round pyres as they blazed
 Troops harnessed in bright armor marched three times
 In parade formation, and the cavalry
 Swept about the sad cremation flame
 Three times, while calling out their desolate cries.
 Tears fell upon the ground, fell upon armor.
 High in air rose the wild yells of men,
 The metal knell of trumpets. There were some
 Who hurled gear taken from the Latin slain
 Into the fire, helmets and ornate swords,
 And reins and chariot wheels. Others tossed in
 Gifts more familiar to the dead, their spears and shields
 Which luck had not attended. On all sides
 Death received burnt offerings of oxen,
 Throats of swine were bled into the flames
 With cattle commandeered from all the fields.
 Then over the whole shore they stood to see
 Their fellow-soldiers burning, and kept watch
 On pyres as they flared: men could not be
 Torn from the scene till dew-drenched night came on
 And a night sky studded with fiery stars.
 The wretched Latins, also, in their quarter,
 Built countless pyres, and of their many dead
 They buried some, took some inland, or home
 Into the city. All the rest they burned,

Heaped up in mammoth carnage, bodies jumbled,
 Numberless and nameless. Everywhere
 Field strove with field in brightness of thick fires.

A third day lightened heaven of cold and gloom
 Before the mourners raked from the deep ash
 Scattered bones and piled warm earth upon them.
 That day, in the city, within the walls
 Of rich Latinus, high-pitched wailing rose,
 The climax of long mourning. Mothers, brides
 Bereft, and tender hearts of sisters grieving,
 Orphaned boys—all cursed the war, the marriage
 Hope of Turnus. "Let him fight alone,"
 They called, "and fight it out to a decision,
 He who demands kingship in Italy
 And highest honors for himself." Then Drancēs
 Gave his weight to this, fiercely avowing
 Turnus alone was called to single combat.
 At the same time, many declared themselves
 In one way or another on Turnus' side;
 The queen's great name protected him; renown
 And trophies fairly won stood in his favor.

Amid these hot exchanges, as the tumult
 Reached its height, who should arrive in gloom—
 One more misfortune—but the emissaries
 Back from Diomedes' city, bearing
 His reply: and nothing had been gained
 By all their effort and expense; their gifts,
 Their gold, their long entreaties had not moved him;
 Latins must look elsewhere for reinforcement
 Or ask for peace terms from the Trojan prince.
 Now King Latinus at this grievous blow
 Lost heart, he too, for the gods' anger shown
 In burial mounds before his eyes had told him

Aeneas came as one ordained,
 Brought by palpable will of the unseen.
 Therefore he called together his high council,
 Principal men of Latium, in his court,
 And in all haste they came to the royal house,
 Through the full streets. Eldest among them, first
 In power of the scepter, grim in aspect,
 King Latinus took his chair, commanding
 Those returned from the Aetolian town
 To tell their tale, their answers, point by point.
 Silence being enjoined on all the rest,
 Obediently Venulus began:

“We have seen Diomedes, fellow townsmen,
 Seen the Argive camp. We made the journey,
 Won through all the dangers, gripped the hand
 That brought the realm of Ilium down. We saw him
 Laying the foundations of his city,
 Named Argyripa for his father’s race,
 In Iapyx country, hard by Mount Garganus.
 When we were in the camp, with leave to speak
 Before him, tendering our gifts, we told
 What name was ours, what fatherland, what enemy
 Made war upon us, and what urgent cause
 Drew us to Arpi. First he heard us out,
 Then answered peaceably:

‘Fortunate race
 And realm of Saturn, men of old Ausonia,
 What happened to disturb your quiet life
 And make you rouse the unknown that is war?
 We who did violence to the Ilian land
 With cold steel—and I now pass over pain
 Endured in warfare under those high walls
 And soldiers the Simois there holds under—
 All of us have paid throughout the world
 Beyond belief in suffering for our crimes.
 Priam himself might pity the lot of us.
 Witness Minerva’s deadly star and storm,
 Euboean crags, vengeful decoying lights;

Then too, after our conquest, driven far
 To strange landfalls, Menelaus Atreides
 Tastes exile near the pillars of Proteus,
 Ulysses has beheld Actnean Cyclops.
 Neoptolemus' realm—shall I tell of that,
 And hearth gods of Idomeneus destroyed?
 Of Locrians, now displaced in Libya?
 Even that marshal of the great Achaeans,
 The Mycenaean, entering his home
 Met death at his unspeakable consort's hands.
 The adulterer lay in wait at Asia's fall.
 And must I add all that the gods denied me:
 Return to the altars of my fatherland,
 My longed-for wife, Calydon's loveliness?
 At this hour still, portents I dread to see
 Pursue me: lost companions, turned to birds,
 Have taken to the air and roam the streams—
 What torture for my soldiers—as they fill
 The seacliffs with their cries, their mewling cries.
 These punishments were all to be expected
 From that day when I so far lost my mind
 As to attack a being formed in heaven,
 Wounding, defiling, Venus' hand.

No, no.

Invite me to no warfare such as this.
 Troy fallen, I have had no quarrel with Trojans,
 No delight in calling up evil days.
 The gifts you bring me from your country, take
 Instead to Aeneas. I have stood my ground
 Against his whetted spear, fought him with swords.
 Trust one who knows the surging mass of him
 Behind his shield, the whirlwind of his cast!
 Had Ida's land borne two more men like him,
 Troy would have marched upon the towers of Argos,
 Greece would be mourning a contrary fate.
 As to our stalemate before stubborn Troy,
 The sword arm of Aeneas, with Hector's, halted
 Dominance of the Greeks for ten long years;
 Both known for courage, both for skill in arms,

Aeneas first in reverence for the gods.
 Your right hands and your forces should be joined
 And well may be. Take care they do not clash
 In combat.²

Now your majesty has heard
 Both Diomedes' responses and his views
 Of our great war."

Barely had the legates
 Finished their story when a hubbub rose,
 And turbulence among the listening faces,
 As when rock-beds that stem a rushing stream
 Make the roiled current roar, and banks re-echo
 Foam-lash of the waves. But soon the council's
 Mood grew calm, excited tongues were stilled,
 And calling on the gods from his high throne
 The king spoke out:

"Much earlier than this
 I should have wished—and wiser it would have been—
 To meet and take decisions in this crisis,
 Not with the enemy at our walls, as now.
 My countrymen, we make ill-omened war
 With men of heavenly birth, unconquerable,
 Untired by battle, and even in defeat
 Unable to put up the sword. What hope
 You had of brothers-in-arms, Aetolians,
 You must dismiss. Each man may have his hope,
 But this how narrow now you see. Then too
 All that we had, now visited with ruin,
 Lies before your eyes and in your hands.
 But I accuse no one. What bravery
 Could do was done. The whole strength of our kingdom
 Fought the battle. It is over. Now
 Let me disclose the plan formed in my mind
 Still tentatively. Give me your attention.
 I shall be brief. There is an old domain
 Of mine along the Tuscan stream, extending
 Far toward sundown, well beyond Sicilian
 Boundaries. Auruncans and Rutulians
 Sow crops there, plow the stony hills, or graze

The wildest of them. Let this region all
 Be ceded now in friendship to the Trojans,
 With a pine-forested zone of mountain heights.
 Let us make equitable treaty terms
 And in the realm call them co-citizens.
 Here let them settle and here build their walls
 If such desire is in them. If their hearts
 Are set on other lands and other races,
 And they are able to leave our soil, why then
 Twice ten good ships of stout Italian oak
 We'll build them; if they muster crews for more,
 The timber lies at the sea's edge. They may
 Prescribe the number and rig, and we shall give
 The bronze, the labor, and the launching ways.
 It will content me, further, that one hundred
 Emissaries chosen from our best
 Shall bring our terms and sign the pact and offer
 Olive boughs of peace, carrying gifts—
 Gold bars and ivory, and throne and robe,
 Insignia of our kingship. All take counsel
 Here and now. Shore up our tired strength.”

Then Drancës rose, belligerent as before.
 The fame of Turnus galled him, made him smart
 With envy unconfessed, this wealthy man,
 A lavish spender and an orator
 But a cold hand in battle; held to be
 No empty counselor; a strong party man.
 His mother's nobility made him arrogant,
 Though he had no certain father. Now he spoke
 To add to and to aggravate their anger:

“Excellency, it is all clear as day,
 The situation you address: no need
 For us to enlarge on it. All here concede

They know what these events mean for our people,
Yet they keep silent.

Let the man we know
Allow us liberty to speak, and let him
Hold his bluster. His unlucky star,
His baleful influence—and I shall say it,
Threaten as he may to run me through—
His whim put out so many shining lights
Among our captains that we see our city
Founder in grief—while at the Trojan camp
He skirmishes, being sure to get away,
Frightening the air with javelins.

One more gift,
Your gracious majesty, include with all
You'd have us send or offer to the Trojans,
One gift more; and let no violence
From any man prevail on you to yield
A father's right: betrothal of your daughter
Fittingly to an exceptional son,
By that eternal bond to accomplish peace.
But if our minds and hearts are so oppressed
By terror, let us plead with Turnus here
Himself to do this kindness to us all:
Resign his marital rights to king and country.
Why must you, sir, send into open peril
Time and again your suffering countrymen,
You, chief of woes to Latium, cause of all?
In war there's no salvation. We require
Peace of you, Turnus, and along with it
The one pledge that makes peace inviolable.
Look: I whom you pretend to be your rival—
I will not linger on that—I first of all
Come to beg you: pity your own people!
Cool your hot head, being beaten; leave the field.
In our defeat we have seen enough of death
And made a landscape desolate. If glory
Is on your mind still, iron self-conceit,
Or a royal house for dowry charms you so,
Then take the risk and brave the enemy!

Must I suppose that for the sake of Turnus'
 Royal marriage we poor common souls
 Should strew the field, unburied and unwept?
 Come, sir, if any fighting blood is in you,
 Any native legacy from Mars,
 Go face the man who calls you out to combat!"

Under this taunting Turnus' fiery temper
 Flared up; but he gave a groan of scorn,
 Then broke out in his deep voice:

"Plenty of talk
 You always have when contests call for action.
 Summon a senate, you are the first one there.
 No need to fill this hall with words, big words
 You can let fly in safety, keeping walls
 Between you and the enemy, no moats
 As yet running with blood. Hammer away
 With all your rhetoric. Say I'm afraid
 When your own sword has left the dead in heaps,
 The field brilliant with trophies everywhere.
 What bravery in action can achieve
 You are still free to experience; no need
 To hunt for enemies; they ring the walls.
 Go out to meet them, shall we? Why hang back?
 Will all your skill for battle rest forever
 In a windbag's breath and in those flying feet?
 Beaten, am I? Can anyone have cause
 To utter that word, beaten, you foul wretch,
 Seeing the Tiber risen with Ilian blood
 And all Evander's house, his line, brought low,
 Arcadians killed and stripped? I should not say
 I seemed a beaten man to Bitias
 And Pandarus, that giant, or the throngs
 I sent to hell on one victorious day,
 Shut between walls, at that, with enemy
 Earthworks to right and left of me. In war
 There's no salvation? Sing that to your Trojan
 Chief and your own prospects, you mad fool!
 Go on confusing everything with fear,

Exalt a race twice-conquered and their strength,
 Cry down Latinus' power. Nowadays
 The Myrmidons tremble at Phrygian spears,
 Diomedes and Achilles tremble—
 Yes, and Aufidus torrent flows uphill
 In flight from the Adriatic.

Take him now

Pretending to be frightened when I blast him,
 The artful devil, just to add that touch—
 Intimidation—to his case against me.
 You'll never lose that life, such as it is,
 To this right hand, don't worry: let it stay
 Long resident in that tame breast of yours.
 Now, Father, I revert to you, to your
 Large-scale proposal. If you put no further
 Hope in our fighting power; if we are left
 So unsupported; if our army corps
 By one reversal has gone all to pieces,
 Our fortune reached the point of no return,
 Then let us beg for peace with beggar's hands.
 Yet, oh, had we a spark of our old spirit!
 The luckiest of men in this hard time,
 The finest man, to my mind, would be he
 Who bit the dust, once and for all, and died
 To avoid a sight like this! But if in fact
 We have resources, fresh reserves of men,
 Italian states and peoples with us still,
 And if the Trojans won at a great cost
 In blood—they have their burials as well,
 The storm struck all alike—why then give up
 Like cowards on the threshold? Why allow
 Our knees to shake before a trumpet blows?
 Days passing and the changing work of time
 Have often righted things. Fortune returns
 To put on solid ground those she derided.
 Say the Aetolian will not help, nor Arpi,
 Messapus will, so will that lucky seer,
 Tolumnius, so will chiefs whom many nations

Sent to us—and no small fame will come
 To the picked men of Latium and Laurentum—
 Yes, and Camilla of the noble Volsci,
 Leading her cavalry, splendid in bronze.
 But if the Trojans call on me alone
 For combat, and if you approve, and I
 Am blocking something for the good of all,
 Then Victory has not so bitterly
 Hated these hands and so eluded them
 That I should not, in such a hopeful cause,
 Make my attempt. And cheerfully I'll go
 Against him, though he overshadow Achilles,
 And wear gear made, like his, by Vulcan's hands.
 This life of mine I, Turnus, not outdone
 In valor by the men of old, have sworn
 In service to my father-in-law and you.
 'Aeneas calls on him alone.' Call on,
 I pray. If this brings anger of the gods,
 May Drancēs not appease it with his death,
 Nor if it brings honor and feats of arms
 May he bear off the palm for these."

The two

Debated the obscure future in this way,
 In bitter strife. Meanwhile Aeneas left camp
 And took the field. Now see a messenger
 Hastening through the palace with hue and cry
 To alarm the town. He brought word that the Trojan
 Battle-line, and the Tuscan complement
 Had left the Tiber to move down the plain.
 Their minds in tumult, shaken by the news,
 The common people felt their anger roused
 As by a goad. With oaths their hands went out
 For arms, and then the young men yelled "To arms!"
 Even as their despondent fathers wept.
 Everywhere now clamor and discord rose
 Into the air above the town, as when
 Bird-flocks come down in a tall grove, or swans
 Where the Padusan Channel teems with fish

Give their hoarse-throated cries on echoing pools.
 But Turnus caught the moment and made it his.
 He said:

“Just so, my townsmen. Hold your council.
 Sit and praise the name of peace. And they?
 Their army sweeps to attack our capital.”
 That was all. He leapt up and away,
 Quitting the council hall with rapid stride,
 Then gave commands:

“Volusus, it’s for you
 To make the Volscian squadrons arm. You lead
 The Rutulians. Messapus, arm your horsemen. Coras, you
 And your twin brother see our cavalry
 Deployed across the plain. One foot battalion
 Reinforce the approaches to the city
 And man the towers. All the rest, prepare
 With me for action, as and where I order.”

Running crowds made for the city walls,
 And King Latinus, prey to the dark hour,
 Left the council chamber and postponed
 All he had set afoot. Bitterly now
 He blamed himself for having failed to welcome
 Aeneas the Dardanian to his realm
 As son-in-law.

Before the city gates
 Deep pits were dug, big stones and pikes brought up;
 A vibrant trumpet sang bloodshed and war.
 In long uneven lines mothers and boys
 Appeared atop the ring of walls: the final
 Effort drew them all. The queen as well
 Rode in her carriage with a company
 Of mothers to the shrine of Pallas, high
 Above the town, with gifts, and close beside her
 The young princess, Lavinia, rode—the cause
 Of so much suffering, lovely eyes downcast.
 The women, entering, beclouded all
 That shrine with smoke of incense, and sad voices
 Rose from the portal in a tide of prayer:

“O power over battle, our protectress,
 Virgin, Tritonia, shatter in thy hand
 The spearhaft of the Phrygian corsair!
 Throw him headlong to earth, let him lie dead
 Below our high gates!”

Turnus, furiously
 On edge for battle, pulled his armor on,
 First his cuirass, glowing red, with scales
 A-quiver; then he encased his legs in gold,
 His head still bare; then belted on his sword
 And ran down from the citadel, his figure
 Glittering, golden, while his heart beat high,
 At grips with foemen even now in thought—
 As a stallion breaks his tether and goes free
 At last out of the stall, and down the meadow,
 Gaining the open land: there he may turn
 To a grazing herd of mares, or canter on
 To a stream he knows well for a cooling plunge,
 Neighing and frisking, tossing back his head,
 His mane at play over his neck and shoulders.

Square in his path, her Volscian squads behind her,
 Camilla came, hard-riding warrior queen.
 Before the gates she leapt down from her mount,
 And her whole troop, taking the cue, dismounted
 At the same instant slipping to the earth.
 She spoke then, saying:

“Turnus, as confidence goes hand in hand
 With bravery that earned it, now I dare
 And undertake to meet Aeneas’ horsemen,
 Charging the Tuscan cavalry alone.
 Let me first risk the combat at close quarters;
 You with your infantry stand by the walls
 Meanwhile, and guard the city.”

His eyes intent
 Upon the awesome virgin, Turnus answered:
 “Virgin, glory of Italy, how tell
 My gratitude, or how repay my debt?”

Courageous spirit, towering above all here,
 Now share the toil with me. Rumor, confirmed
 By scouts I send, informs me that that dog
 Aeneas dispatched his light-armed horse ahead
 To scour the plain, while on the mountain track
 Through the wild land, crossing the ridge, he makes
 His own descent upon the town. I'll set
 An ambush where the path is arched by forest,
 Soldiers to close both ends of the defile.
 You take the field, engage the Tuscan horse;
 Messapus and the Latin cavalry
 Will be there with you, and Tiburtus' troop.
 Plan your battle as my co-commander."

With corresponding orders he dispatched
 Messapus, with his Latins, to that fight,
 While he himself marched on his enemy.

The mountain road curves in a pass, designed
 By nature for entrapment and surprise,
 Heavily wooded, dark on either hand.
 The road thins out here, and the narrowing gorge
 Begrudges a way through. But on high ground
 Amid the look-out posts along the crest
 There's a concealed plateau, a safe retreat,
 Whether you plan a rush from right or left
 Or stand fast on the ridge and roll down boulders.
 Here by familiar shortcuts Turnus came,
 Pre-empted the high ground, and lay in wait
 In woods made dangerous.

||
 In heaven meanwhile

Diana spoke to Opis, the fleet huntress,
 One of the divine virgins in her train.
 Her lips opened in sadness, and she said:

"Sister, now Camilla goes her way
 To the cruel war, equipped with bow and quiver,
 Weapons of ours, but all in vain,
 Cherish her as I may beyond the rest.
 No new love, this, come just now to Diana,
 Moving my heart with pleasure.

Years ago

When haters of his insolent power drove him
 Out of Privernum, ancient realm and town,
 Metabus took along his infant child
 In flight amid the struggles of that war
 To share his exile. By her mother's name,
 Casmilla, changed a bit, he called the child
 Camilla. Now he carried her before him
 Close to his breast, and toiled for refuge on
 Long ridges in the wilderness, though spears
 Of grim pursuit were everywhere behind,
 And Volscian patrols cast a wide net.
 Lo and behold, square in his path, in flood,
 The torrent Amasenus, foaming high,
 Ran over banks and brim, filled by so wild
 A cloudburst. As the man prepared to swim it,
 Love for his infant stayed him, and he feared
 For his dear burden. Weighing all the choices
 Possible, he settled suddenly
 And desperately on this: in his tough hand
 He chanced to carry a battle-spear of oak,
 Knotted and seasoned; now to this he tied
 His child, encased in cork-tree bark, and bound her
 Trimly in the middle of the shaft.
 He balanced it in his big hand and prayed
 To the air of heaven:

'Daughter of Latona,
 Diana, kindly virgin of the groves,
 I, her father, swear this child shall be
 Thy servant—the first weapon she embraces
 Thine, as by thy mercy through the air
 She escapes the enemy. I beg thee, goddess,

Take her as thine own, this girl committed
Now to the veering wind.³

Then he drew back
His arm and let the spun shaft fly. The waters
Dinned below, and over the rushing stream
Small and forlorn Camilla soared across
Upon the whistling spearshaft. Well aware
Of troops in force approaching from behind,
Metabus took to the river. Spear and child
In triumph he recovered from the turf,
His offering to the Virgin of the Crossroads.
Now not a city gave him sanctuary,
Public or private—nor would he himself,
Because of his fierce nature, yield to any—
So he lived out his life upon the shepherds'
Lonely mountains. Here in undergrowth
Amid rough haunts of beasts he nursed his daughter,
Putting her to the breast of a wild mare
Whose teats he milked into her tender mouth.
When the small child took her first steps, he armed
Her hands with a sharp javelin, and hung
A bow and quiver from her infant shoulder.
No gold headband, no flowing outer garment
Covered her, but a tiger skin hung down
Her back from head to foot; and as a child
She flung play darts with her soft hand and whirled
A sling-stone on a strap around her head
To fell a crane of Strymon or a swan.
Then many mothers in the Tuscan towns
Desired her in vain to be their daughter.
All her contentment being with Diana,
The girl remained untouched and ever cherished
Passion for arms and for virginity.
I wish that she had not been swept away
In this campaign, or tried to challenge Trojans;
She would be still my dear, one of my sisters.
Come, though, granted harsh fate is at hand,
Go gliding out of heaven, nymph, and visit
Latin lands where, with unlucky omen,

Battle is begun. Here are my weapons.
 Take one vengeful shaft out of the quiver.
 By this let any Trojan or Italian,
 One or the other, who may violate
 Her sacred body with a wound, pay back
 In blood an equal penalty to me.
 Then I shall carry, pillowed in a cloud,
 The body of the pitiable one—
 Her war-gear intact—to her final rest
 In her own land and tomb.”

When she had finished,
 Opis dropped from heaven through light airs
 With a rushing sound, wrapt in a dark whirlwind.

The Trojan column now approached the town,
 With Tuscan chiefs and all their cavalry
 In numbered squadrons. Over the level ground
 With thudding hoofs the war-horse trots and snorts
 And rears up, tugging at the check of rein,
 And curvets here and there. The wide, steel-glinting
 Field bristles with lances; the long vista
 Teems with upright arms. Against them soon
 Messapus and the headlong Latin horse,
 Coras, his brother, and Camilla's wing
 Came into view, defenders in the field,
 With lances drawn back, then in forward thrusts,
 And with a brandishing of javelins.
 The onward rush of men and horses neighing
 Blazed in the sunlight. When they came within
 Spear-throw of one another, Trojan and Latin
 Pulled up in a halt; then, all at once,
 With shouts they spurred their furious mounts and flung
 Their javelins in showers from both sides
 As thick as snow-flakes, making a daytime dusk.
 Now shaft to shaft, Tyrrhenus and the savage

Latin horseman, Aconteus, met head-on
 With a mighty crash that caused the first downfall
 From shock of horses, breast to bursting breast:
 Aconteus, pitched off like a thunderbolt
 Or stone out of a catapult, came down
 Far off, his life dispersed into the air.
 At this, their lines disordered, Latin troopers
 Turned and, tossing shields behind their shoulders,
 Rode off toward the town. Asilas led
 The Trojan squadrons in pursuit. But then
 When near the walls, again the Latins shouted,
 Yanked the horses' yielding necks about
 And wheeled to fight. Now Trojans fled in turn
 At a full gallop, as in full retreat—
 Just as the sea with alternating rush
 Now runs ashore in foam above the ledges
 And lapping soaks the sand high on the beach,
 Now in a rapid seething ebb recedes
 And glides from land and pulls the rolling pebbles—
 Twice the Tuscans drove the Rutulians
 Headlong to the walls, but thrown back twice
 They fled, glancing behind, their shoulders covered.
 Now, when they came together a third time
 The two formations mingled, man to man,
 And then indeed groans of the dying rose,
 Then arms and bodies in a mire of blood
 Went down, and dying horses, with their riders
 Butchered, as the bitter fight surged on.
 Orsilochus, in dread of meeting Remulus,
 Hurlled his javelin at the other's mount
 And left the steel point under its ear; at this
 The war-horse reared in fury, forelegs high,
 To shake the wound away, with towering chest,
 And Remulus was thrown to earth. Catillus
 Brought down Iollas, then Herminius,
 Great-souled, great-bodied warrior, his bare head
 Flowing with tawny locks, his shoulders bare.
 Wounds held no terrors for him, great as he was,

Fighting uncovered—but the driven lance
 A-quiver passed clean through his shoulders' breadth
 And made him double up in agony.

Dark blood spilt everywhere. Men dealt out death
 By cold steel as they fought and strove by wounds
 To win the beauty of courageous death.

Amid the carnage, like an Amazon,
 Camilla rode exultant, one breast bared
 For fighting ease, her quiver at her back.
 At times she flung slim javelins thick and fast,
 At times, tireless, caught up her two-edged axe.
 The golden bow, Diana's weapon, rang
 Upon her shoulders: yes, when she gave ground,
 Forced to retreat, with bow unslung in flight
 She turned and aimed her arrows. At her side
 Rode chosen comrades, virgins all: Larina,
 Tulla, Tarpeia shaking her bronze axe.
 These were the girls of Italy that she,
 Divine Camilla, picked to be her pride,
 Her staunch handmaidens, both in peace and war.
 So ride the hardened Amazons of Thrace
 With drumming hooves on frozen Thermodon,
 Warring in winter, in their painted gear,
 Sometimes around Hippolyta, the chieftain,
 Or when the daughter of Mars, Penthesilæa,
 Drives her chariot back victorious
 And women warriors bearing crescent shields
 Exult, riding in tumult with wild cries.

Savage girl, whom did your lance unhorse,
 What victims, first and last,
 How many thrown down on the battlefield,
 Torn bodies dying? Eunaëus, Clytius' son,
 Came first: he faced her with unarmored breast,
 And with her shaft of pine she ran him through.
 He tumbled, coughing streams of blood, took bites

Of bloody earth, and dying writhed on his wound.
 Then she brought Liris down, and then Pagasus.
 Liris, his mount stabbed under him, spun off
 And tried to gather up the reins; Pagasus,
 Coming to help, put out his hand, unarmed;
 And both alike went down. She sent to join them
 Hippotas' son, Amastrus. At a distance,
 Pressing on with couched lance, she rode after
 Tereus, Harpalycus, Demophoön.
 And Chromis. And for every javelin
 She twirled and cast a Phrygian trooper fell.
 Still out of range, Ornytus, a hunter, rode
 A Iapygian horse, in strange war-gear:
 His broad shoulders covered by bullock's hide,
 His head by a huge wolf's muzzle gaping wide
 With gleaming fangs. In his right hand he held
 A forester's bladed hunting spear. This man
 Now wheeled about, the tallest by a head
 Amid his company; but soon Camilla
 Caught him from behind—no effort there,
 Since all were in retreat—and ran him through.
 Then from above, heart full of hate, she said:

"In forests, were you, Tuscan, flushing game?
 The day has come when boasts of all your kind
 Are proven wrong, by women under arms.
 You'll take no light fame to your fathers' shades:
 To have been killed by the lance-head of Camilla."

She killed next two of the very tallest Trojans,
 Orsilochus and Butës. Butës' head
 Being turned, she put her lancehead in the gap
 Between his helm and cuirass, where the neck
 Showed white, above the shield on the left arm.
 Then running as Orsilochus gave chase
 In a wide circuit, tricking him, she closed
 A narrowing ring till she became pursuer;
 Then to her full height risen drove her axe

Repeatedly through helmet and through bone
 As the man begged and begged her to show mercy.
 Warm brains from his head-wound wetted his face.
 One who came upon her at that moment
 Reined in, taken aback at the sudden sight—
 The son of Aunus, Appennine mountaineer.
 Not the least guileful of Ligurians
 This man was, while fate allowed him guile.
 Seeing he could not spur away from combat,
 Could not deflect the queen from her attack,
 Resorting to a cunning ruse, he said:

“What’s so remarkable if, to a girl’s taste,
 Your mainstay is your horse? No running away!
 Take me on, hand to hand, on level ground;
 Get ready for a fight on foot, and learn
 Whose blown-up vanity will have a fall.”

Now bitter anger made her burn at this.
 She gave a friend her mount and faced the man
 Fearlessly, on foot with equal arms:
 A naked blade, a shield without device.
 But he, who thought his ruse had worked, rode off
 Without a pause, reining his mount around,
 Goaded him into a run with iron spurs.

“Ligurian fool, too cocksure, much too soon,
 Your slippery native trickery has failed.
 No chance it will return you in your skin
 To Aunus, the old deceiver.”

So the girl

Called out as in a sprint with lightning pace
 She came abreast and passed the running horse,
 Then whirled and yanked the reins and met the shock
 Of the Ligurian’s onset, making him pay
 Her penalty in hated blood. So easily
 A falcon, sacred bird, from his rock tower
 Will strike a soaring dove high in a cloud

And grip her as he tears her viscera
 With crooked talons; blood and plucked-out feathers
 Fall from the sky.

But on that scene the father
 Of gods and men kept no indifferent watch
 From his aerial seat high on Olympus.
 He roused the Tuscan, Tarchon, to the mêlée,
 Instilling anger in him, far from mild,
 So that amid the carnage, where the companies
 Of horse were giving way, Tarchon rode out,
 With one shout or another rallying
 The left and right wings, calling men by name,
 Putting new fight in routed cavalry.

"Incapable of shame, poltroons forever!
 Tuscans, what is this fright, what cowardice
 Has entered into you? Shall a single woman
 Drive you out of line, break your formations?
 What do we carry swords for? Why hold on
 To useless lances? None of you is tame
 When it comes to making love, bed wars at night,
 Or when a flute preludes the dance of Bacchus.
 Look for a feast, and cups on laden tables
 (All you care for, all you're keen for), yes,
 When some dependable reader of the entrails
 Heralds an offering, and a fatted lamb
 Is calling you into the sacred wood!"

With this he gave rein to his mount, prepared
 To face death, he as well, in the battle's heart,
 And straight for Venulus went storming on.
 With his right arm he swept him from the saddle,
 Hugged him to his chest, and spurring hard
 With a great effort lugged the man away.
 A yell went up to heaven as all the Latins
 Turned to watch. And like a streak of lightning
 Tarchon with his load of man and weapons
 Flew over open ground. Then he broke off
 The steel point of the enemy lance and groped

For an opening where he could wound and kill him.
 But fighting back the other warded off
 The hand aimed at his throat, met force with force.
 As when a golden eagle flapping skyward
 Bears a snake as prey—her feet entwined
 But holding fast with talons, while the victim,
 Wounded as it is, coils and uncoils
 And lifts cold grisly scales and towers up
 With hissing maw; but all the same the eagle
 Strikes the wrestler snake with crooked beak
 While beating with her wings the air of heaven.
 Just so, out of the Latin squadron, Tarchon
 Triumphant bore off his prey. And Tuscans
 Heeding the example their captain gave,
 His daring that came off, at once attacked.



One Arruns, a man marked by fate, rode wide
 Around Camilla, javelin at the ready,
 Waiting his chance, ahead of her in cunning.
 Wherever in the mêlée the girl rode
 In her wild forays, Arruns kept behind,
 Silently stalking her; when she turned back
 Blooded from the enemy, he drew rein
 In stealth and swung his nimble mount away.
 Now this way, looking for an opening,
 Now that, he shadowed her, going about
 A circuit on all sides, the dangerous man,
 A dead shot, hefting clear his pointed shaft.
 By chance Chloreus, Mount Cybelus' votary,
 Once a priest, came shining from far off
 In Phrygian gear. He spurred a foaming mount
 In a saddle-cloth of hide with scales of bronze
 As thick as plumage, interlinked with gold.
 The man himself, splendid in rust and purple
 Out of the strange East, drew a Lycian bow

To shoot Gortynian arrows: at his shoulder
 Golden was the bow and golden too
 The helmet of the seer, and tawny gold
 The brooch that pinned his cloak as it belled out
 And snapped in wind, a chlamys, crocus-yellow.
 Tunic and trousers, too, both Eastern style,
 Were brilliant with embroidery. Camilla
 Began to track this man, her heart's desire
 Either to fit luxurious Trojan gear
 On a temple door, or else herself to flaunt
 That golden plunder. Blindly, as a huntress,
 Following him, and him alone, of all
 Who took part in the battle, she rode on
 Through a whole scattered squadron, recklessly,
 In a girl's love of finery.

Now at length
 From where he lurked, seeing the time had come,
 Arruns went into action, let his javelin
 Come alive, and prayed aloud to heaven:

"Supreme god, holy Soractë's guardian,
 Above all others we are blest in thee,
 For whom the pine-chips' glowing pile is fed.
 Assured by our devotion, in thy cult
 We step through beds of embers without harm.
 Mighty Apollo, grant that we wipe out
 With arms this ignominy. I want no spoils,
 No trophy of a beaten girl. My actions
 Elsewhere will bring me honor. May this dire
 Scourge of battle perish, when hit by me.
 Then to the cities of my ancestors
 With no pretence of glory I'll return."

Phoebus heard, and felt disposed to grant
 His prayer in part; the rest he gave the winds
 To blow away. Granted, Arruns should fell
 Camilla in the shock of death; denied
 That Arruns' land should see the man return:
 That plea the gale winds wafted to the South.

So when the javelin whistled from his hand
 The Volscians to a man, fiercely intent,
 Looked toward their queen. Oblivious of the air
 Around her, of the whistling shaft, the weapon
 Gliding from high heaven, she remained
 Until the javelin swooped and thudded home
 Beneath her naked breast. There, driven deep,
 The shaft drank the girl's blood. In consternation
 Fellow troopers gathered on the run
 To catch and hold their captain as she dropped.
 But Arruns on the instant galloped off
 In a daze, in fearful joy; he put no further
 Trust in his lance nor in himself to meet
 The warrior girl in arms. Just as a wolf
 Who killed a shepherd or a full-grown steer
 Makes off cross-country for the hills, to hide
 Before the arrows chase him—knowing well
 His kill was reckless—tail curved down between
 His legs to his quaking belly, off he goes;
 Just so, Arruns in panic made himself scarce,
 Well out of it amid a crowd of horsemen.
 Dying, Camilla tugged at the javelin,
 But the steel point between the ribs held fast
 In the deep wound. She drooped from loss of blood,
 Her eyelids drooped, chill with approaching death,
 And the fresh glow of youth drained from her cheeks.
 With halting breath she whispered now to Acca,
 One of her company, equally young,
 Her confidante, most faithful of them all,
 And said:

"Until now, sister, I was able.
 Now this wound galls me and finishes me.
 Everything around is growing dark.
 Make your escape and take my last command
 To Turnus: that he join the battle here
 To keep the Trojans from the town. Farewell."

Even while speaking she let slip the reins
 And slid fainting to earth. Little by little,

Growing cold, the girl detached herself
 From her whole body and put down her head,
 Death's captive now, upon her strengthless neck,
 And let her weapons fall.
 Then with a groan for that indignity,
 Her spirit fled into the gloom below.
 Now, spreading measureless, a shout went up
 To strike the golden stars. Camilla gone,
 The fight became more savage. Massed for battle,
 Trojans in all their force pressed on, with Tuscan
 Captains and the Arcadians of Evander.

As for the sentinel of Diana, Opis,
 Resting all this time on a mountain top,
 She had been watching without fear. But now
 She sighted, far off in the furious din
 Of cavalries, Camilla beaten down
 And pitifully dead. Then from her heart
 The nymph said, groaning:

"It is too cruel, girl,
 Your punishment—too cruel for having tried
 To challenge Trojans in the war. Devotion
 Paid to Diana in your solitude,
 In the wild wood, our arrows on your shoulder,
 Did not avail you. Yet your queen has left you
 Not without honor at the hour of death,
 Nor will your end be unrenowned
 Among earth's peoples, nor will it be known
 As unavenged. Whoever dared to pierce
 Your body, impiously, pays with his life
 And justly."

On a mound in a mountain's shade
 The ancient king, Decennus of Laurentum,
 Had an ilex-darkened massive tomb.
 Here with an easy spring, most beautiful,
 The goddess mounted and looked down on Arruns.
 Seeing him bright in arms and puffed with pride,
 "Why turn aside?" she said. "Step this way, come
 And perish here; enjoy the fit reward

Camilla brings. You wretch, will even you
Die by Diana's arrows?"

Then she picked
A feathered shaft out of the gilded quiver
And, taking deadly aim, drew the bow back
Full circle, till the tips could almost meet.
Her hands aligned, the left hand felt the point,
The right hand, and taut bowstring, touched her breast.
All in one instant Arruns heard the arrow
Whistle in the ripped air and the arrowhead
Thud in his body. As he moaned and died
His fellow troopers rode off, unaware,
And left him in the dust, a spot unknown
On the wide terrain. Opis, taking wing,
Went soaring to the high Olympian air.

Now first to leave the field, their mistress lost,
Were Camilla's light-armed cavalry. Then routed
Rutulians made off, and fierce Atinas.
Captains torn from squadrons, troops astray
Wheeled toward the town and looked for safety there.
No one at all could hold or make a stand
With javelins against the Trojan onset.
Bows were unstrung on slumping shoulders, galloping
Hooves shook up the loose dry mire of the field.
A dusky cloud of churned-up dust rolled on
To the city walls, where mothers on the towers
With beaten breasts lifted their women's cry
To the stars of heaven. Hard on the heels of men
First breaking through the open gates, a crowd
Of enemy pressed, or men of both sides mingled,
So there was no escape from piteous death,
But in the very entry, amid the walls
Of their own city, their protecting houses,
Lanced from behind, they gave up life and breath.
Then after some had shut the gates, they dared not
Open a way in for their friends, or take them
Into the town, beg as they would. Now came
A wretched slaughter, as the gates' defenders

Shot at the crowd that rushed upon their shots.
 Kept out before the eyes of weeping parents,
 Some of those borne onward in the rout
 Plunged headlong in the moat, and others rode
 In blind panic to batter at the gates,
 Unyielding, barred against them. On the walls
 Even older women, mothers—as true love
 Of homeland taught them, and as they had seen
 Camilla fight—outdid each other now
 At hurling missiles with unsteady hands,
 In place of steel, hard oaken balks and pikes
 With fire-hardened points. For their town wall
 They dared, they burned, to be the first to die.

In the mountain wood, meanwhile, the cruel news
 Filled Turnus' thoughts, as Acca brought him word
 Of the great tumult: Volscian troops destroyed,
 Camilla fallen, foes in Mars' good graces
 Carrying all before them, riding on,
 Panic already at the city walls.
 Raging, as Jove's hard will required, Turnus
 Left the heights that he had manned and left
 The rough wood. Hardly was he out of sight
 And holding level ground, when Lord Aeneas
 Entered the pass, unguarded now, and crossed
 The ridge and issued from the woodland shade.
 Then both, with no time lost, marched on the city,
 Two whole hosts, not many miles apart.
 Aeneas viewed the plain smoking with dust
 Far off, and saw the army of Laurentum;
 Turnus at the same time recognized
 Aeneas, pitiless captain in the field,
 And heard the tramp of feet, the neigh of horses
 Coming behind. In moments they would skirmish,
 Go to the test of battle, had not reddened
 Phoebus already dipped his weary team
 In the Spanish sea and, as the bright day ebbed,
 Brought on the night. One army strengthened walls,
 The other encamped in quiet before the town.

BOOK

XII

THE FORTUNES
OF WAR

Turnus now saw how Latin strength had failed,
How the day's fight was lost and they were broken;
Saw that they held him to his promise now
All eyes upon him. But before they spoke
His passion rose, hot and unquenchable.
As in the African hinterland a lion,
Hit in the chest by hunters, badly hurt,
Gives battle then at last and revels in it,
Tossing his bunch of mane back from his nape;
All fighting heart, he snaps the shaft the tracker
Put into him, and roars with bloody maw.
So Turnus in the extremity flared up
And stormed at the old king:

“No one waits
While Turnus shirks a battle. No pretext
Allows Aeneas' riffraff to renege
Or take their challenge back. By god, I'll fight him.
Father, bring sacred offerings and state
The terms of combat. Either by this right arm
I send to hell that Dardan prince who left
His Asia in the lurch—and let the Latins
Rest and look on! while I alone disprove
With my sword-point the charge against us all—
Or else let him take over a beaten people,
Let Lavinia be the winner's bride.”

To this Latinus answered steadily:

“Soldier without a peer, as you surpass
 The rest in heroism, all the more
 Must I labor to think, and weigh my fears,
 Taking account of all that may occur.
 You have your father Daunus’ realm, you have
 Your many conquered towns. Gold and the heart
 To spend it are not lacking to Latinus.
 Here in Latium, in the Laurentine land,
 Are other girls of noble blood unmarried.
 Allow me these reflections, painful, yes,
 But open and above-board. Take to heart
 This fact: it was not right that I should pledge
 My daughter to a suitor of other days:
 Gods, and prophecies of men, forbade.
 Affection for you, our Rutulian kinsman,
 Won me over—and my wife in tears.
 I broke my bonds of duty, stole the girl,
 Though promised, from her husband, and took arms
 Against the will of heaven. You see what followed,
 Turnus: the bloody wars and the defeats,
 The bitter days you, most of all, endure.
 Beaten in two great battles, barely alive
 We keep Italian hopes within our town,
 The Tiber’s currents warm still with our blood,
 The open land white with our bones. And why,
 Again and yet again, am I pulled back
 From action? What mad dream blurs my resolve?
 Granted with Turnus dead I am prepared
 To make them partners in the realm, why not
 Stop fighting, rather, while he lives unharmed?
 What will Rutulians of your family say,
 What will all Italy say, if I betray you—
 Heaven forbid!—to death while you contend
 For marriage to my daughter? Only give thought
 To the veering ways of war, take pity on
 Your aged father whom Ardea keeps
 At home, secluded from us and forlorn.”

All that he said affected Turnus' fury
 Not in the least: it mounted, all the more
 Fevered at words of healing. When the man
 Could speak at last, he said:

“My lord, I beg you,
 Put this reckoning for my sake aside
 For my sake; let me bid my death for honor.
 Father, I too can make a rapid cast
 Of javelins, not puny when they strike.
 Blood flows from wounds I, too, can give. This time
 His goddess-mother, she who, when he runs,
 Hides him in womanish cloud, who hides herself
 In empty phantoms—she'll be far away.”

But now the queen, Amata, terrified
 By the new hazard of the single combat,
 Wept and pale as death clung to her ardent
 Son-in-law:

“Turnus, I beg you by these tears,
 By all you hold at heart for me, Amata—
 You our one hope, our stay in grim old age—
 Latinus' honor and authority
 Rest in your hands, all our declining house
 Now leans upon you: this one thing I beg:
 Refrain from single combat with the Trojans.
 Any mischance that may await you there
 Awaits me, too; for with you I'll forsake
 This hostile daylight. Never as a captive
 Shall I look on Aeneas as my son.”

Lavinia, listening to her mother, streamed
 With tears on burning cheeks; a deepening blush
 Brought out a fiery glow on her hot face.
 As when one puts a stain of crimson dye
 On ivory of India, or when
 White lilies blush, infused with crimson roses,
 So rich the contrast in her coloring seemed.
 Desire stung the young man as he gazed,

Rapt, at the girl. He burned yet more for battle,
Briefly answering Amata:

“Please,
Mother, no tears for me, no parting omen
So unpromising, as I go out
To combat ruled by iron Mars. No longer
Is Turnus free to put off risk of death.
Idmon, come, be my messenger, say this
To the Phrygian tyrant—words not to his liking.
When Dawn tomorrow, borne from the Ocean stream
On crimson chariot wheels, reddens the sky,
He need not lead the Trojans in attack
On the Rutulians. Let all Trojan weapons
Rest, Rutulians rest. With our own blood
Let us two put an end to war, and there
On that field, let Lavinia be the prize.”

With this he whirled away into his quarters,
Called for his team, and smiled with joy at horses
Whinnying before him. These were the two
That Orithyia, consort of the North Wind,
Gave as a glory to Pilumnus: horses
Rivaling snow in whiteness, wind in speed;
And, flanking them, the nimble chariotceers
Clapped hollow palms to chests and combed their manes.
Then round his shoulders Turnus donned his cuirass
Glinting with golden and pale copper scales,
Made ready sword and shield, and helm with horns
To bear his crimson plume. The sword was one
The Fire God himself had forged for Daunus,
Dipping it white-hot in the wave of Styx.
And finally, from where it leaned against
A pillar of the hall, he picked a spear,
His powerful hand gripping that hardy shaft
He took in battle from Auruncan Actor.
Shaking it, making it vibrate, he cried out:

“Spear, that never failed me once when called on,
Now the time has come. A champion once

Carried you; Turnus bears you now. See to it
 That I smash down that body and tear away
 With my strong hand the breastplate of the Phrygian
 Eunuch, and befoul in dust those lovelocks
 Curled with hot iron, drenched with liquid myrrh.”

To this length driven by passion, he gave off
 A sparkling glow from his whole face, and fire
 Flashed from his eyes, as a wild bull at bay
 Will give a fearsome bellow and whet his horns
 To fury on a tree-trunk, striking blows
 Against the wind, kicking up spurts of sand
 In prelude to the fight.

Likewise, meanwhile,
 Aeneas, fierce in his maternal armor,
 Whetted his edge for war, and roused himself
 To anger, full of joy that, by the terms
 He offered, war should cease. He comforted
 His officers, allayed pale Iulus' fear,
 Recalling fate's design, then ordered men
 To take Latinus an assured reply
 And set conditions for the coming peace.

The next day's dawn had barely cast its glow
 On mountain tops—at that hour when the Sun's
 Heaven-climbing team strives from the deep, exhaling
 Light from flaring nostrils—when Rutulian
 Troops and Trojans, under the city walls,
 Laid out a field for combat. Some built hearths
 And grassy altars for their common gods,
 While fire and fresh spring water were brought out
 By priests in cloaks, rosemary round their brows.
 The compact legion of Ausonians
 Debouched now from the crowded city gates;
 The Trojan-Tuscan army from the plain

Streamed up in various accouterment,
 Ranks glinting steel, as though rough work of Mars
 Had called them, and amid their numbers captains
 Wheeled about in pride of gold and crimson:
 Mnestheus of Assaracus's line,
 Valiant Asilas, and the master of horse,
 Messapus, Neptune's son. At a trumpet note
 Each side retired to its appointed zone
 With lances fixed in earth and shields at rest.
 Then matrons and townspeople, pouring out
 With old men and infirm, thronged towers and roofs,
 While others clustered at the tall gateways.

But gazing from the height we now call Alban—
 Nameless then, it had no fame or glory—
 Juno surveyed the plain, the facing lines,
 Troy's and Laurentum's, and Latinus' town.
 Promptly she turned, immortal to immortal,
 And spoke to Turnus' sister, nymph of ponds
 And purling streams. Heaven's king Jupiter
 For the maidenhead that he had ravished, gave
 This divine dignity: rule over limpid things.

"Nymph," she said, "and loveliness of rivers,
 Cherished by me, you know I honor you
 Above all Latin girls who ever entered
 Great-hearted Jove's unwelcome bed: I've kept
 Most happily for you a place in heaven.
 Now let me tell you of your grief-to-be,
 Lest you think me the cause. While Fortune seemed
 Compliant, and the Fates let power rest
 With Latium, your brother and your city
 Had my protection. Now I see the soldier
 Meeting a destiny beyond his strength:
 His doom's day, mortal shock of the enemy,
 Are now at hand. I cannot bear to watch
 This duel, this pact. If you dare help your brother
 More at close quarters, do it, and well done.
 A better time may follow present pain."

The words were barely out before Juturna's
 Eyes brimmed over tears; with her clenched hand
 She thrice or four times beat her comely breast.

"This is no time for tears," the goddess said,
 "Be quick, go snatch your brother back from death
 If there's a way. Or else renew the war,
 Cast out the pact which they drew up. I'll be
 Sponsor to your audacity."

With this
 Last urgent word she left her wondering, torn,
 In turmoil from the pang her heart had suffered.
 Meanwhile the kingly men appeared: Latinus
 Mighty in aspect in a four-horse car,
 His shining brow crowned with twelve golden rays
 In token of the Sun, his ancestor,
 While Turnus rode behind his snowy team,
 Handling a pair of spears, broad in the blade.
 Then from his quarters Lord Aeneas came—
 The father of the Roman race—aglow
 With starry shield and armor forged by heaven,
 Close at his side the second hope of Rome,
 Ascanius. A priest in a clean robe
 Brought out a boar's young and a sheep unshorn
 To place before the altar fires. These men
 With eyes turned to the rising sun, bestowed
 Their handfulls of salt meal, took knives to mark
 The foreheads of the beasts, and poured from shallow
 Ritual cups libations on the altars.
 Aeneas, the god-fearing, with drawn sword
 Spoke out his vows:

"Sun be my witness now
 And this land for whose sake I could endure
 Hard days and many; then the almighty Father
 Also, and his lady—thou, Saturnia,
 More kindly to us, goddess, now, I pray;
 And thou, too, famous Mars, whose hand hurls down
 On men all wars according to thy will;
 I call on springs and streams, and all the powers

Both of high heaven and the deep blue sea:
 Should victory fall to the Ausonian, Turnus,
 It is agreed that in defeat we shall
 Retire upon Evander's town, that Iulus
 Quit this region, and Aeneas' people
 Never afterward return in war
 Or send this kingdom challenges to arms.
 If on the other hand the day is ours,
 Conferred by divine Victory, as I think—
 And may the gods confirm it by their will—
 I shall not make Italians underlings
 To Trojans. For myself I ask no kingdom.
 Let both nations, both unconquered, both
 Subject to equal laws, commit themselves
 To an eternal union. I shall give
 Rituals and gods to both. My father-in-law
 Latinus, let him keep his arms, and keep
 His royal authority. My share will be
 A town with walls, laid out and built by Trojans.
 Lavinia will give that town her name.”

In these terms first Aeneas declared himself.
 Latinus followed, with a skyward look,
 His right hand lifted to the stars.

“Aeneas,
 I swear by the same powers—by earth and sea
 And stars, by the twin children of Latona,
 Janus' two faces, and the nether powers,
 Shrines of pitiless Dis: let this be heard
 By the Sky Father who with lightning bolts
 Can seal inviolate the pacts of men.
 Here as I touch the altars I appeal
 To ritual fires, and mediating gods,
 Never shall that day dawn that sees our peace,
 Our treaty, ruptured by my countrymen,
 However things fall out. No force on earth
 Can make me swerve from my intent, no force,
 Though it embroil the earth and water in flood

To pour land into sea, heaven into hell.
 Just as this scepter here in my right hand
 Will never put out foliage or shade,
 Once cut from the live tree-bole in the forest,
 Torn from that mother, and laid bare by steel
 Of branching arms and leaves. This one-time bough
 The artificer's hand has fitted well
 In a bronze sheath and given to our Latin
 Lords to carry."

By these spoken vows
 They sealed the pact between them in the sight
 Of captains on both sides, then cut the throats
 Of duly hallowed beasts over the flames
 And tore the living entrails out, to heap
 In freshly loaded platters on the altars.



On the Rutulian side the coming match
 Seemed more unfair, however, as time went on.
 Fears came and went, troubling them all the more
 When, seeing the contenders close at hand,
 They saw their strength unequal. This disquiet
 Multiplied now as Turnus walked in silence
 Reverently and humbly to the altars,
 Eyes downcast, his cheeks drawn, his flesh pale.

Now when Juturna saw troops in commotion,
 Whispering ever louder, and losing heart,
 She moved into the ranks, disguised as Camers—
 An officer whose ancestry was noble,
 His father's valor a matter of renown
 And he himself assiduous in arms—
 Taking this form, amid the ranks she went,
 Aware of their condition, putting out
 One rumor and another, asking them:

“Does no one blush, Rutulians, to expose
 One life, one soldier, for so large a force?
 In numbers of good men, in fighting power,
 Are we no match for them? Look: all are here,
 Trojans, Arcadians, fate-driven Tuscans,
 Foes to Turnus. If we take them on
 With merely every other man, we barely
 Find a foe for each. Turnus will rise
 In fame to those high gods upon whose altars
 He makes the offering of his life: he’ll be
 Alive upon the lips of men. Not so
 With all the rest! Losing our fatherland,
 Proud masters on our backs, we’ll be enslaved
 For never stirring on this field today.”

This fueled the fire of what the soldiers thought,
 And louder murmuring crept through the ranks,
 Laurentine, too, and Latin. Their mood changed,
 And men who lately hoped for rest from combat,
 Safety for their way of life, now felt
 A hankering for weapons, wished the pact
 Could be unmade, and pitied Turnus’ lot
 As underdog. To add to all this, then,
 Juno gave a more insidious stroke,
 For high in heaven she produced a sign
 Most potent to confuse Italian minds,
 A strange, deceitful tableau. Winging down
 Through rosy dawnlit air, Jove’s golden bird
 Came chasing offshore seafowl, noisy flocks,
 And with a swoop upon the waves caught up
 In crooked talons a surpassing swan.
 The Italians gazed, enthralled. Then all the birds
 In flight wheeled round with screams—wondrous to see—
 Their wings darkening heaven, and in a cloud
 Harried the enemy through the air until
 Their pressure and the swan’s weight broke his grip:
 His talons dropped the prey into the river,
 Then gaining depth of cloud he soared away.
 Cheers at this omen broke from Rutulian ranks,

And hands were freed for arms. Tolumnius,
The augur, gave a cry:

“Here was the sign!

The sign I often looked for in my prayers.
I welcome it, I see the gods behind it.
Arm with me! Follow my lead! poor countrymen
On whom that vulture from abroad has come
To scare like light-winged terns or gulls in war
And to lay waste your seaboard. He'll be gone,
His canvas wide-winged toward horizon cloud!
It is for you to take heart, all together,
Close your formations, and fight on to save
The prince this raiding stranger took for prey.”

He finished, then ran forward with a spear
To launch it at the facing enemy.
The whistling shaft of cornel sang ahead
Unwavering through the air. At the same time
A great shout sounded from all companies,
Their hearts grown hot with turmoil, as the spear
Flew on toward where nine handsome brothers stood—
All of them borne to the Arcadian
Gylippus by his faithful Tuscan wife.
The spear hit one of them just at the waist
Where the sewn belt rubbed on his upper belly,
And a brooch clamped the strap from either side.
The spear that passed from rib to rib brought down
This well-built soldier, all a-gleam in armor,
Pitching him on the tawny sand. His brothers,
Brave men, now as one, in shock and grief,
Some with swords out, some with steel to throw,
Came in a blind rush forward. But Laurentine
Squads moved out to meet them, double-quick.
Then from the other side again came Trojans,
Tuscans from Agyllina, Arcadians
In painted gear, now charging side by side.
One passion took possession of them all:
To make the sword their arbiter. They ripped
The altars to get firebrands, missiles flew

In darkening squalls over the whole sky,
 A rain of steel, while sacrificial bowls
 And hearth fires of the peace were snatched away.

His treaty void, Latinus took to flight
 With images of his defeated gods.
 Others caught up their chariot reins or vaulted
 Into the saddle, drawing blades, advancing.
 Avid to break the pact, Messapus rode
 Against Aulestes, the Etruscan prince
 Who wore a prince's blazon. This poor captain
 Flinched aside, then stumbled as he whirled
 Amid the obstructing altars and went down
 On head and shoulders. In a flash Messapus
 Rode up with his spear, high on his horse,
 And even as the prone man begged for mercy
 Thrust hard downward with his beam-like shaft.
 Then he called out.

"That does for him. A richer
 Carcase for the great gods!"

And Italians

Running up despoiled the still-warm body.
 Out of one altar Corynacus pulled
 A half-burnt firebrand, facing Ebysus
 As he came lunging for a stroke; he hit him
 Between the eyes with flames; his bush of beard
 Flared up and gave a smell of burning flesh.
 Corynacus closed, and caught in his left hand
 His staggered enemy's hair, then struck a knee
 Into his groin and bent him to the ground
 To be dispatched with a sword-thrust in the side.
 With naked blade Podalirius rose behind
 The shepherd Alsus, as he ran along
 The front through spears, but Alsus whirled his axe
 Backward and split the skull of his enemy
 From brow to chin. Gore splattered on his armor;
 Harsh repose oppressed his eyes, a sleep
 Of iron, and in eternal night they closed.

Meanwhile the man of honor, Aeneas, stood
 Bare-headed with his right hand out, unarmed,
 And called his troops:

“Where bound? Are you a mob?
 Why this outbreak of brawling all at once?
 Cool your hot heads. A pact has been agreed to,
 Terms have been laid down. I am the one
 To fight them. Let me do so. Never fear:
 With this right hand I’ll carry out the treaty.
 Turnus is mine, our sacrifice obliged it.”

But even as he called out, as he spoke,
 A winging shaft—look!—whizzed and struck the man,
 Sped by who knows what hand, what spinning gust—
 What stroke of luck, what god won this distinction
 For the Rutulians. Glory for the shot
 Went afterward suppressed; no claims were made
 By anyone of having hit Aeneas.

When Turnus saw Aeneas in retreat,
 Leaving his troops, and saw the Trojan captains
 Thrown into disarray, he seethed again
 With sudden hope and called for team and weapons.
 Flashing aboard his car in one proud leap,
 He pulled hard at the reins and went careering,
 Handing over to death dozens of men
 And bringing others down half-dead. Whole files
 He smashed under his wheels. He wrested spears
 From men who fled and killed them on the run.
 Like blood-stained Mars himself he rode, when Mars
 Goes headlong by the frozen Hebrus river,
 Beating out claps of thunder on his shield
 And lashing on his furious team for war—
 That team that on the open ground outruns

The south and west winds, while the farthest land
 Of Thrace re-echoes to their drumming hooves;
 And riding with him go black visages
 Of Fright, Ambush, and Anger, Mars' companions.
 That was the way of Turnus, lashing on
 A team that smoked with sweat amid the battle,
 Trampling foes in wretchedness brought down.
 His running hooves kicked up a bloody spray
 And poked the mire of sand and gore. The rider
 Cut down Sthenelus with a long throw,
 Thamyris and then Pholus at close quarters;
 With a long throw, again, Imbrasmus' sons
 Glaucus and Ladēs, whom their father reared
 In Lycia and richly fitted out
 To fight on foot or to outride the wind.
 Elsewhere on the field Eumedēs charged
 Into the mêlée—a man famed in war,
 Son of the fabled Dolon—having his name
 From his old grandfather, his recklessness
 And deft hand from his father, who had dared
 To ask Achilles' team as his reward
 For spying on the Danaan camp at Troy.
 For that audacity Diomedes gave
 A different reward: all hope expired
 For horses of Achilles. Now when Turnus
 Caught sight of Eumedēs at a distance
 Across the plain, he had a shot at him
 With a light javelin over the open space,
 Drove after it, reined in, and vaulted down
 To where the man had fallen and lay dying.
 With one foot on his neck he wrenched away
 The sword from his right hand, then sank the blade
 Shining but soon encrimsoned in his throat.
 Then from above he said:

"Here's good land, Trojan,
 The western land you thought to take in war.
 Lie there and measure it. See what is gained
 By daring to face up to me in arms.
 See how far you go in founding cities."

To bear him company he brought Asbytēs
 Down with a spear-cast, then killed Chloreus,
 Sybaris, Darēs, and Thersilochus,
 Thymoetēs too, thrown when his horse shied.
 As Thracian Northwind, Boreas, in a gale
 Roars on Aegean deeps and shoreward surf
 Where squalls roll down the dark and the scud flies,
 Just so, wherever Turnus cut his way,
 Formations yielded to him, ranks turned tail
 And ran before him. His own impetus
 Carried him on; the wind his chariot made
 Whipped back and forth his flying crest. One man,
 Phegeus, hated the sight
 Of Turnus tall before him thundering on.
 Square in the chariot's path he flung himself
 And yanked aside the galloping horses' jaws
 That foamed upon the bits. While he hung on
 To the yoke, borne onward, Turnus' broad spearhead,
 Now thrust at his unshielded flank, broke through
 His mail of double mesh and grazed his body.
 None the less, turning his shield around,
 Resorting to his blade, he made a lunge,
 Only to go down headlong as the wheel
 And axle spinning struck and laid him low.
 Then by a stroke between the helmet rim
 And breastplate, Turnus cut his head away,
 Leaving his trunk mired in sand.

While all these

Deaths were being brought about by Turnus,
 Mnestheus and Achatēs, ever faithful,
 Accompanied by Ascanius, helped Aeneas
 Into the camp, bleeding, putting his weight
 With every other step on his long spear.
 He strove in rage to extract the arrowhead
 With snapped-off shaft, and asked for the quickest way:
 A sword-cut, making a deeper and open wound
 To expose the embedded point, then send him back
 Into the battle. But now Iapyx came,
 Son of Iasus, and most dear to Phoebus.

Captured one time by sharp desire, Apollo
 Made him gifts of skills that were the god's—
 Augury and the lyre and speeding arrows.
 Iapyx, however, to postpone the death
 Of a father desperately ill, preferred
 To learn the powers of herbs, a healer's ways,
 And practice without glory silent arts.
 Aeneas, bitterly impatient, stood
 And leaned on his great spear, unmoved
 By tears of soldiers gathering in a crowd
 And Iulus grieving. In Paconian style
 The old man rolled his cloak back carefully
 And worked with his physician's hand, with herbs
 Of potency from Phoebus—all in vain,
 In vain trying to worry out the barb
 Or grip and tug the embedded steel with tongs.
 No luck guided his probes, and no help came
 From Phoebus, the arch-healer. More and more
 Savage the terror of the field grew; nearer
 Came the calamitous end. By now they saw
 A wall of dust that stood against the sky,
 Horsemen approaching, arrows falling thick
 Into the middle of the camp; and skyward
 Rose the shouts of men who fought, the cries
 Of men who fell, cut down by pitiless Mars.
 Now, shaken by the pain unmerited
 Her son bore, mother Venus picked a stalk
 Of dittany from Cretan Ida—dittany
 With downy leaves and scarlet flower, a plant
 That wild goats know about when stuck with arrows.
 Venus now brought this down, veiling her face
 In a dark cloud, and for a secret poultice
 Dipped the leaves to imbue a shining bowl
 Of Tiber water, sprinkling in ambrosia's
 Health-giving juices and the fragrant Heal-all.
 Quite unaware of her, old Iapyx used
 The medicated fluid to lave the wound.
 Then, sure enough, all anguish instantly
 Left Aeneas' body, all his bleeding

Stopped, deep in the wound. The arrowhead
 Came out, unforced and ready to his hand.
 New strength renewed his old-time fighting spirit.

“Here, be quick, and give the man his armor,”
 Iapyx exclaimed. “Why stand there?”

First to speak.

He fired their hearts against the enemy.
 “No mortal agency brought this about,
 No art however skilled, not my own hand
 Preserves you, but a greater power, Aeneas.
 A god is here at work. He sends you back
 To greater actions.”



avid for battle now,
 The captain sheathed his left leg and his right
 In golden greaves, hating the minutes lost,
 And hefted his long spear. Once he had fitted
 Shield to flank, harness to back, he hugged
 Ascanius, embracing him with steel,
 Then through his vizor brushed his lips and said:

“Learn fortitude and toil from me, my son,
 Ache of true toil. Good fortune learn from others.
 My sword arm now will be your shield in battle
 And introduce you to the boons of war.
 When, before long, you come to man’s estate,
 Be sure that you recall this. Harking back
 For models in your family, let your father,
 Aeneas, and uncle, Hector, stir your heart.”

This said, his powerful figure passed the gates,
 His long spear flashing in his hand. With him
 Antheus and Mnestheus and a dense battalion
 Sortied en masse, and all reserves inside
 Flowed outward from the abandoned camp. The field

Went dark with blinding dust, the marching feet
 Awakened crumbled earth and made it tremble.
 Turnus from the rampart opposite
 Saw them coming; so did the Ausonians,
 And felt a chill of dread run through their bones.
 First of them all to hear and know the sound,
 Juturna trembled and turned back. Aeneas
 With flying feet led through the open field
 His dark battalion at high speed—as when
 A stormcloud out at sea moves toward the land
 And cuts the sunlight off; then farmers know,
 Alas, what's coming, shivering in their hearts,
 For it will bring down trees, devastate crops,
 And flatten all things far and wide. The winds
 Fly in ahead and bring the tempest roar.
 Just so the captain from the Troad led
 His troops in close formation, swarming on,
 Against the enemy. With his long blade
 Thymbraeus cut massive Osiris down,
 Mnestheus killed Arcetius, Épulo
 Fell to Achatès, Ufens fell to Gyas,
 Tolumnius, the augur, too, succumbed,
 He who had made the first spear-cast against them.
 Skyward the shouting rose as in their turn
 Rutulians turned their dusty backs and fled
 Across the fields. Aeneas held aloof
 From fugitives and would not chase or kill
 Those met on foot or mounted men with lances.
 In the dense murk he tracked Turnus alone,
 Called on Turnus alone to stand and fight him.

Stricken with dread of this, Juturna, now
 Nerved as a man for combat, made Metiscus,
 Turnus' charioteer, tumble headfirst
 Along the reins and fall from the chariot pole.
 Then she left him far behind as she
 Drove onward, swerving, reins in hand, and took
 The entire guise, voice, armor of Metiscus.

About a rich landowner's farm a black-winged
 Swallow flits through lofty rooms and picks
 A meal of scraps and crumbs for her loud nestlings;
 Now she is heard in empty colonnades,
 Now skimming over ponds. Just so, Juturna,
 Borne by that team amid her enemies,
 In her swift car traversed the field: now here,
 Now there she showed her brother glorying
 And would not let him fight but flew far onward.

Aeneas all the same kept after him,
 Following his twists and turns, and calling out
 In a loud voice among the scattered troops.
 But each time that he glimpsed his enemy
 And tried to match on foot the speed in flight
 Of the racing team, Juturna whirled away.
 He groaned. What could he do? As in a cross-rip
 Weltering without headway, in his heart
 He felt desires clash. But now against him
 Messapus came, light on his feet, with two
 Steel-pointed and tough spears in his left hand.
 He twirled and threw one, aimed for a direct hit,
 And, halting, falling to one knee, Aeneas
 Crouched behind his shield. The driven spear
 Still carried off the apex of his helm
 And knocked away his plume.

At this attack,

A tide of battle-fury swept the Trojan,
 Overcome by Rutulian bad faith.
 The team and car of his great adversary
 Being out of range, he called on Jove and called
 On altars of the broken peace to witness,
 Many times, then into the mêlée
 He raced, most terrible to see, with Mars
 Behind him, rousing blind and savage slaughter,
 All restraints on wrath cast to the winds.
 What god can help me tell so dread a story?
 Who could describe that carnage in a song—

The captains driven over the plain and killed
 By Turnus or in turn by Troy's great hero?
 Was it thy pleasure, Jupiter, that peoples
 Afterward to live in lasting peace
 Should rend each other in so black a storm?
 One duel briefly stayed the Trojan charge,
 When Sucro, the Rutulian, held Aeneas;
 Then on that side where fate is quickest, Aeneas
 Drove his raw steel through the man's rib-cage.
 Turnus unhorsed Amycus and his brother,
 Diorēs, and dismounted then to strike them,
 Killing with his spear the one who came
 Against him, and the other with his sword.
 He cut their heads away and bore them off,
 Dripping blood, hung to his chariot rail.
 Aeneas consigned Talos and Tanaïs
 To bloody death, and brave Cethegus—three
 In one fight; then Onitēs as he mourned them,
 A son of Peridía from fabled Thebes.
 Turnus killed certain brothers sent from Lycia,
 Apollos's highlands, and went on to kill
 Menoetēs, hater of war—his hatred vain.
 A fisherman in his Arcadian youth,
 He had his poor hut near the brooks of Lerna,
 Crowded with perch, and knew no seats of power:
 His father tilled a plot of rented land.

The two assailants were like fires begun
 On two sides of a dry wood, making laurel
 Thickets crackle, or like snow-fed streams
 That foam and roar seaward down mountain-sides
 And leave, each one, a watercourse laid waste.
 With no less devastating power these two,
 Aeneas and Turnus, cut their way through battle.
 Now with fury rising, now again
 With bursting hearts and reckless of defeat,
 They spent their whole strength running upon danger.
 Here came Murranus, and he boasted loud

Of grandfathers, and grandfathers of theirs,
 Of old names, and one family entire
 That came down through the Latin kings. Aeneas
 Tumbled him headlong with a whirlwind cast
 Of a big stone and bashed him to the ground.
 Under the yoke and reins, his own wheels knocked him
 Rolling where with beating hooves his team,
 Oblivious of their master, trampled him.
 Then Hyllus charged ahead in boundless rage,
 But Turnus met him with a javelin flung
 Against his gilded brow, and through his helm
 The shaft stuck in his brain.

Bravest of Greeks,
 Cretheus, neither could you, by your sword arm,
 Be saved from Turnus. Nor when Aeneas came
 Did gods protect their minister, Cupencus.
 Facing the blade thrust at his breast, he could not
 Fend it with his brazen shield, poor soldier.
 Then the Laurentine fields witnessed your death,
 Aeolus, yours too, sprawled on the earth,
 Whom once the Argive columns and Achilles,
 Bane of Priam's realm, could not bring down.
 Here was your finish. Though your manor stood
 In Ida's shade, your manor at Lyrnesus,
 Laurentine earth would be your sepulchre.

Each army's total strength was now engaged,
 All Latins and all Trojans, every man:
 Mnestheus and brave Serestus, too; Messapus,
 Master of horse, valiant Asilas; ranks
 Of Tuscans, and Arcadians of Evander,
 Each putting all he had into the struggle,
 Never a let-up, never a breathing spell;
 In the vast combat every man fought on.

Here, though, Aeneas' lovely mother sent
 The captain a new thought: to approach the walls,
 To bring his troops to bear upon the city
 Quickly, and take the Latins by surprise,
 Threatening sudden ruinous assault.
 Following Turnus down the long front, he viewed
 The city from one vantage or another
 And saw how quiet it lay, immune, untouched
 By the wild battle. Now in his mind's eye,
 Afire, he saw a greater fight to come.
 He called his officers, Mnestheus, Sergestus,
 Brave Screstus, and climbed a rise of ground
 Round which the Trojan legion came together,
 Crowding, shields and spears held at the ready.
 Standing amid them on the mound, he said:

"There will be no time lost in carrying out
 What I shall say now. Jupiter stands with us.
 Granted this change of action unforeseen,
 On that account let no man lag behind.
 Unless our enemies accept our yoke
 And promise to obey us, on this day
 I shall destroy their town, root of this war,
 Soul of Latinus' kingdom. I shall bring
 Their smoking rooftops level with the ground.
 Must I go on, awaiting Turnus' whim
 To face and fight me once again in battle,
 Beaten already as he is? I think not.
 Countrymen, this town is head and heart
 Of an unholy war. Bring out your firebrands!
 Make terms, this time, with a town in flames!"

On this he ended. Vying with one another
 High-hearted troops formed up in echelon,
 A compact mass, and headed for the walls.
 Now scaling ladders all at once appeared,
 Now spurting fires. One company rushed the gates
 And cut down the first guards they met; another

Launched their missiles, darkening the sky.
 Aeneas himself, among the foremost, held
 His right hand up in shadow of the walls
 With shouted accusations of Latinus,
 Calling the gods to witness that once more
 The fight was forced upon him, that Italians
 Twice had turned his foes, that a second pact
 Had now been broken. Amid the townspeople
 Panic and discord grew: some said the town
 Should be unbarred, gates opened to the Dardans;
 These would hale to the walls the king himself.
 The rest ran to fetch arms and man the ramparts.
 As when a shepherd, tracking bees, has found
 Their hive in tufa, he fills up the cleft
 With acrid smoke; inside, roused in alarm,
 The bees clamber about their waxen quarters,
 Buzzing loud and growing hot with rage
 As black and reeking puffs invade their home,
 And deep in rocky dark their hum resounds
 While smoke goes up in the clear air.

More trouble

Came now to weary Latins, a new grief
 That shocked the whole town to its heart.
 When Queen Amata from her window saw
 The enemy at hand, the walls besieged,
 Flames flying to the roofs, she saw no soldiers
 Drawn up against them, no Rutulians
 Under Turnus' command—and thought, poor woman,
 Her prince had been destroyed in the mêlée.
 Her mind riven by this thunderclap, she cried
 That she had been the cause, the source of evil,
 And many such laments in her sad frenzy.
 Maddened now, wishing to die, she rent
 Her crimson gown and knotted round a beam
 The noose that strangled her in hideous death.
 When Latin women heard of this disaster,
 Doubling their sorrow, princess Lavinia first
 Tore her flowerlike hair and scored her cheeks,

Then all the rest crowded about her, mad
 With horror and grief. The palace rang with wailing.
 Everywhere in the town the black news ran
 And hearts grew sick. Ripping his robe, Latinus
 Fouled his snowy hair with dust and filth,
 Stunned by his wife's death and the city's fall.
 Fighting his war meanwhile, and far away
 At the edge of the battlefield, Turnus pursued
 A straggling few, but now more sluggishly,
 Less and less joyous in his winning team.
 Faint outcries, with dark overtones of terror,
 Came to him on the breeze; he cupped his ears
 And heard the sound of turmoil in the city,
 A joyless uproar.

"Sink, heart. What great loss
 Has brought on this commotion, this wild cry
 Borne from the distant city on the wind?"

With this, distraught, he took the reins and halted.
 Then his sister, who seemed his charioteer,
 Metiscus, driver of his team and car,
 Bent toward him and protested:

"Turnus, this way
 For our pursuit of Trojans! Victory
 Opened the way here first. And there are others
 Able over there to defend their homes.
 Aeneas is attacking the Italians
 In pitched battle; let us play our part
 By massacring Teucrians. Your death-toll
 And feats of war will be no less than his."

But Turnus answered:

"Sister—yes, I knew you
 Long since, when you spoiled the pact by guile
 And gave yourself to this war. Now again
 You need not try to hide your divinity.
 But who has wished you sent down from Olympus
 To take this rough work on? That you should see

The painful end of your unhappy brother?
 What am I to do? What stroke of luck
 Can guarantee my safety now? I saw
 Before my eyes, and calling on my name,
 Murranus downed—great soul by a great wound—
 And none survives more dear to me. Poor Ufens
 Died as though to avoid seeing my shame;
 The Trojans have his body and his gear.
 But now destruction of our homes—the one thing
 Lacking to my desperate case—can I
 Face that? Should I not give the lie to Drancēs?
 Shall I turn tail? Will this land know the sight
 Of Turnus on the run? To die—is that
 So miserable? Heaven has grown cold;
 Shades of the underworld, be friendly to me.
 As a pure spirit guiltless of that shame
 I shall go down among you—never unfit
 To join my great forefathers.”

Just as he finished, here came Sacēs riding
 At a dead run amid the enemy,
 His mount foaming, his face torn by a wound,
 Crying out “Turnus!” as he rode, and then:

“Turnus, our last chance rests with you: be moved
 For your own people. Like a thunderbolt
 Aeneas falls on us. He means to topple
 The citadels of Italy in ruin.
 Firebrands even now fly to the roofs.
 The Latins turn their faces toward you, turn
 Their eyes to you; the king himself, Latinus,
 Mutters in doubt, unsure whom to call sons,
 What alliance to turn to. Worst of all,
 The queen who put such trust in you is gone,
 Dead by her own hand, fleeing daylight in fear.
 Only Messapus and Atinas still
 Maintain a fighting line before the gates.
 In close formation on both flanks the enemy

Bristles with spearheads like a crop of steel.
 And yet you keep your chariot in play
 On this deserted meadow.”

Stunned and confused

By one and another image of disaster,
 Turnus held stock-still with a silent stare.
 In that one heart great shame boiled up, and madness
 Mixed with grief, and love goaded by fury,
 Courage inwardly known. When by and by
 The darkness shadowing him broke and light
 Came to his mind again, wildly he turned
 His burning eyes townward and from his car
 Gazed at the city.

Look now: billowing

Flames went up from floor to floor and twined
 About a defensive tower that he himself
 Had built and braced, fitted with wheels and ramps.

“Ah, sister, see, fate overpowers us.
 No holding back now. We must follow where
 The god calls, or implacable Fortune calls.
 My mind's made up on what remains to do:
 To meet Aeneas hand to hand, to bear
 All that may be of bitterness in death.
 You'll find no more unseemliness in me.
 Let me be mad enough for this mad act,
 I pray, before I die.”

He left his car

In one swift leap upon the field and coursed
 Away from his sad sister. Then, amid
 The spear-casts of the enemy, on the run,
 He broke through the attacking Trojan line.
 As when a crag dislodged by wind rolls down
 From a mountain-top—for either a storm of rain
 Washed earth from under it or time and age
 Had undermined it—and it goes headlong,
 A mass ungovernable, bounding on
 In huge descent, sweeping along with it

Trees, herds, and men: so through the broken ranks
 To the city walls went Turnus in his rush.
 With blood spilled there the ground was drenched, the air
 A-swish with javelins cast. His hand held up
 To arrest the fighting, with a great shout he called:

“Rutulians, hold! Put up your weapons, Latins!
 The outcome here, for good or ill, is mine.
 Better that single-handed in your stead
 I pay for a broken truce and fight it out
 To a decision.”

When Aeneas heard
 The name of Turnus, he forsook the walls,
 Forsook the high point of the citadel,
 Threw off all hindrance, cut all action short,
 In joy, clanging in arms a fearsome thunder,
 Grand as Mount Athos or Mount Eryx or
 Old Father Appennine himself, when high
 Oak forests flash and roar, and into heaven
 He rears his crown of snow.

Now, sure enough,
 Rutulians and Trojans and Italians
 All outdid each other, dropping combat,
 Craning to see; now those men on the ramparts,
 Those at the battering ram low on the walls,
 Put down their shields. Even Latinus marveled,
 Seeing two giant men of action, born
 In countries so far distant, come together,
 Vowed to a decision by the sword.



nce a space on the open ground was cleared,
 The combatants ran forward, hurling spears
 At a distance first, then closing hand to hand.
 Their brazen shields and harness rang; the earth
 Groaned under them; redoubling stroke on stroke,

They fought with swords, and prowess merged with luck
In the fighting power of each.

On Sila's flank

Of mighty mountain, or Taburnus' height,
When two bulls lower heads and horns and charge
In deadly combat, herdsman blanch and scatter.
Then cattle all stand mute
As heifers muse on a new forest lord
Whom all the herds will follow. The contenders,
Compact of shocking force, with lowered horns
Gore one another, bathing necks and humps
In sheets of blood, and the whole woodland bellows.
Just so Trojan Aeneas and the hero
Son of Daunus, battering shield on shield,
Fought with a din that filled the air of heaven.
Jupiter held the two pans of a scale
In balance and placed in each a destiny—
Doom for him whose weight would bring death down.
Turnus, thinking himself secure, flashed out
To his full height, blade lifted overhead,
And struck. The Trojans and the anxious Latins
Raised a cry, both ranks of men on edge,
But then the treacherous blade on impact broke
And left the man undone, enraged, his one
Recourse in flight. Swifter than wind he fled
And stared at the strange sword-hilt in his hand,
Disarmed now. Legend tells that when he first
Stepped up behind his team for headlong combat,
Haste made him leave his father's blade behind
And snatch that of his charioteer, Metiscus.
This for a long time had sufficed, while he
Rode down the Trojan stragglers from behind;
But now, encountering the armor forged
By the god Vulcan, the mere mortal blade
Snapped into fragments like an icicle,
And shattered bits shone on the yellow sand.
Crazed by the loss, in search of open ground,
Turnus ran, weaving circles at a loss
This way and that—for the dense crowd of Trojans

Ringed and shut him in, and on one side
 A broad marsh, on the other high stone walls
 Made limits to his flight. As for Aeneas,
 Slowed though his knees were by the arrow wound
 That hampered him at times, cutting his speed,
 He pressed on hotly, matching stride for stride,
 Behind his shaken foe. As when a stag-hound
 Corners a stag, blocked by a stream, or by
 Alarm at a barrier of crimson feathers
 Strung by beaters, then the dog assails him
 With darting, barking runs; the stag in fear
 Of nets and the high river-bank attempts
 To flee and flee again a thousand ways,
 But, packed with power, the Umbrian hound hangs on,
 Muzzle agape: now, now he has him, now,
 As though he had him, snaps eluded jaws
 And bites on empty air. Then he gives tongue
 In furious barking; river banks and pools
 Echo the din, reverberant to the sky.
 As Turnus ran he raged, raged at Rutulians,
 Calling their names, demanding his own sword.
 Aeneas countered, threatening instant death
 For any who came near; he terrified them,
 Promising demolition of their city,
 And pressed the chase, despite his wound. Five times
 They ran the circular track and five again
 Reran it backward, this way and now that.
 They raced for no light garland of the games
 But strove to win the life and blood of Turnus.

Now on this field there happened to have stood
 An old wild olive, bitter-leaved, a tree
 Sacred to Faunus, with a trunk revered
 By seamen long ago: those who survived
 Shipwreck or storm fixed votive offerings there
 And hung their garments to Laurentum's god.
 The Trojans, treating it like any other,
 Had left a stump but lopped away the tree,
 So they could fight on a clear field. The spear

Thrown by Aeneas had stuck in that tough stump
 Where winging force had carried it and held it.
 The Dardan bent to extract the weapon now
 And cast it at the man he could not catch.
 At this, Turnus grew mad with fear. He said:

“Faunus, have pity, I entreat you! Gracious
 Earth, hold fast the steel, if I have honored you
 All my life, whereas Aeneas’ men
 Warred on you and profaned you.”

So he prayed

And asked divine assistance, not in vain,
 For pausing at the stump, and struggling long,
 Aeneas, using all his power, could not
 Pry apart the bite of stubborn oak.
 As bitterly he braced and strove, Juturna
 Ran up, once again changed to Metiscus,
 Giving her brother back his sword. At this,
 Indignant that the nymph had made so free,
 Venus came forward, and she tore away
 Aeneas’ weapon from the deep oak root,
 So both men were rearmed. They towered up,
 One confident of his own blade, the other
 Tall and savage, with a spear to throw,
 And both now, panting, faced the duel of Mars.



mnipotent Olympus’ king meanwhile
 Had words for Juno, as she watched the combat
 Out of a golden cloud. He said:

“My consort,
 What will the end be? What is left for you?
 You yourself know, and say you know, Aeneas
 Born for heaven, tutelary of this land,
 By fate to be translated to the stars.

What do you plan? What are you hoping for,
 Keeping your seat apart in the cold clouds?
 Fitting, was it, that a mortal archer
 Wound an immortal? That a blade let slip
 Should be restored to Turnus, and new force
 Accrue to a beaten man? Without your help
 What could Juturna do? Come now, at last
 Have done, and heed our pleading, and give way.
 Let yourself no longer be consumed
 Without relief by all that inward burning;
 Let care and trouble not forever come to me
 From your sweet lips. The finish is at hand.
 You had the power to harry men of Troy
 By land and sea, to light the fires of war
 Beyond belief, to scar a family
 With mourning before marriage. I forbid
 Your going further."

So spoke Jupiter,
 And with a downcast look Juno replied:

"Because I know that is your will indeed,
 Great Jupiter, I left the earth below,
 Though sore at heart, and left the side of Turnus.
 Were it not so, you would not see me here
 Suffering all that passes, here alone,
 Resting on air. I should be armed in flames
 At the very battle-line, dragging the Trojans
 Into a deadly action. I persuaded
 Juturna—I confess—to help her brother
 In his hard lot, and I approved her daring
 Greater difficulties to save his life,
 But not that she should fight with bow and arrow.
 This I swear by Styx' great fountainhead
 Inexorable, which high gods hold in awe.
 I yield now and for all my hatred leave
 This battlefield. But one thing not retained
 By fate I beg for Latium, for the future
 Greatness of your kin: when presently

They crown peace with a happy wedding day—
 So let it be—and merge their laws and treaties,
 Never command the land's own Latin folk
 To change their old name, to become new Trojans,
 Known as Teucrians; never make them alter
 Dialect or dress. Let Latium be.
 Let there be Alban kings for generations,
 And let Italian valor be the strength
 Of Rome in after times. Once and for all
 Troy fell, and with her name let her lie fallen.”

The author of men and of the world replied
 With a half-smile:

“Sister of Jupiter

Indeed you are, and Saturn's other child,
 To feel such anger, stormy in your breast.
 But come, no need; put down this fit of rage.
 I grant your wish. I yield, I am won over
 Willingly. Ausonian folk will keep
 Their fathers' language and their way of life,
 And, that being so, their name. The Teucrians
 Will mingle and be submerged, incorporated.
 Rituals and observances of theirs
 I'll add, but make them Latin, one in speech.
 The race to come, mixed with Ausonian blood,
 Will outdo men and gods in its devotion,
 You shall see—and no nation on earth
 Will honor and worship you so faithfully.”

To all this Juno nodded in assent
 And, gladdened by his promise, changed her mind.
 Then she withdrew from sky and cloud.

That done,

The Father set about a second plan—
 To take Juturna from her warring brother.
 Stories are told of twin fiends, called the Dirae,
 Whom, with Hell's Megaera, deep Night bore
 In one birth. She entwined their heads with coils
 Of snakes and gave them wings to race the wind.

Before Jove's throne, a step from the cruel king,
 These twins attend him and give piercing fear
 To ill mankind, when he who rules the gods
 Deals out appalling death and pestilence,
 Or war to terrify our wicked cities.
 Jove now dispatched one of these, swift from heaven,
 Bidding her be an omen to Juturna.
 Down she flew, in a whirlwind borne to earth,
 Just like an arrow driven through a cloud
 From a taut string, an arrow armed with gall
 Of deadly poison, shot by a Parthian—
 A Parthian or a Cretan—for a wound
 Immedicable; whizzing unforeseen
 It goes through racing shadows: so the spawn
 Of Night went diving downward to the earth.

On seeing Trojan troops drawn up in face
 Of Turnus' army, she took on at once
 The shape of that small bird that perches late
 At night on tombs or desolate roof-tops
 And troubles darkness with a gruesome song.
 Shrunken to that form, the fiend in Turnus' face
 Went screeching, flitting, flitting to and fro
 And beating with her wings against his shield.
 Unstrung by numbness, faint and strange, he felt
 His hackles rise, his voice choke in his throat.
 As for Juturna, when she knew the wings,
 The shriek to be the fiend's, she tore her hair,
 Despairing, then she fell upon her cheeks
 With nails, upon her breast with clenched hands.

"Turnus, how can your sister help you now?
 What action is still open to me, soldierly
 Though I have been? Can I by any skill
 Hold daylight for you? Can I meet and turn
 This deathliness away? Now I withdraw,
 Now leave this war. Indecent birds, I fear you;
 Spare me your terror. Whip-lash of your wings
 I recognize, that ghastly sound, and guess

Great-hearted Jupiter's high cruel commands.
 Returns for my virginity, are they?
 He gave me life eternal—to what end?
 Why has mortality been taken from me?
 Now beyond question I could put a term
 To all my pain, and go with my poor brother
 Into the darkness, his companion there.
 Never to die? Will any brook of mine
 Without you, brother, still be sweet to me?
 If only earth's abyss were wide enough
 To take me downward, goddess though I am,
 To join the shades below!"

So she lamented,
 Then with a long sigh, covering up her head
 In her grey mantle, sank to the river's depth.

Aeneas moved against his enemy
 And shook his heavy pine-tree spear. He called
 From his hot heart:

"Rearmed now, why so slow?
 Why, even now, fall back? The contest here
 Is not a race, but fighting to the death
 With spear and sword. Take on all shapes there are,
 Summon up all your nerve and skill, choose any
 Footing, fly among the stars, or hide
 In caverned earth—"

The other shook his head,
 Saying:

"I do not fear your taunting fury,
 Arrogant prince. It is the gods I fear
 And Jove my enemy."

He said no more,
 But looked around him. Then he saw a stone,
 Enormous, ancient, set up there to prevent
 Landowners' quarrels. Even a dozen picked men
 Such as the earth produces in our day
 Could barely lift and shoulder it. He swooped
 And wrenched it free, in one hand, then rose up
 To his heroic height, ran a few steps,

And tried to hurl the stone against his foe—
 But as he bent and as he ran
 And as he hefted and propelled the weight
 He did not know himself. His knees gave way,
 His blood ran cold and froze. The stone itself,
 Tumbling through space, fell short and had no impact.

Just as in dreams when the night-swoon of sleep
 Weighs on our eyes, it seems we try in vain
 To keep on running, try with all our might,
 But in the midst of effort faint and fail;
 Our tongue is powerless, familiar strength
 Will not hold up our body, not a sound
 Or word will come: just so with Turnus now:
 However bravely he made shift to fight
 The immortal fiend blocked and frustrated him.
 Flurrying images passed through his mind.
 He gazed at the Rutulians, and beyond them,
 Gazed at the city, hesitant, in dread.
 He trembled now before the poised spear-shaft
 And saw no way to escape; he had no force
 With which to close, or reach his foe, no chariot
 And no sign of the charioteer, his sister.
 At a dead loss he stood. Aeneas made
 His deadly spear flash in the sun and aimed it,
 Narrowing his eyes for a lucky hit.
 Then, distant still, he put his body's might
 Into the cast. Never a stone that soared
 From a wall-battering catapult went humming
 Loud as this, nor with so great a crack
 Burst ever a bolt of lightning. It flew on
 Like a black whirlwind bringing devastation,
 Pierced with a crash the rim of sevenfold shield,
 Cleared the cuirass' edge, and passed clean through
 The middle of Turnus' thigh. Force of the blow
 Brought the huge man to earth, his knees buckling,
 And a groan swept the Rutulians as they rose,
 A groan heard echoing on all sides from all
 The mountain range, and echoed by the forests.

The man brought down, brought low, lifted his eyes
And held his right hand out to make his plea:

“Clearly I earned this, and I ask no quarter.
Make the most of your good fortune here.
If you can feel a father’s grief—and you, too,
Had such a father in Anchises—then
Let me bespeak your mercy for old age
In Daunus, and return me, or my body,
Stripped, if you will, of life, to my own kin.
You have defeated me. The Ausonians
Have seen me in defeat, spreading my hands.
Lavinia is your bride. But go no further
Out of hatred.”

Fierce under arms, Aeneas
Looked to and fro, and towered, and stayed his hand
Upon the sword-hilt. Moment by moment now
What Turnus said began to bring him round
From indecision. Then to his glance appeared
The accursed swordbelt surmounting Turnus’ shoulder,
Shining with its familiar studs—the strap
Young Pallas wore when Turnus wounded him
And left him dead upon the field; now Turnus
Bore that enemy token on his shoulder—
Enemy still. For when the sight came home to him,
Aeneas raged at the relic of his anguish
Worn by this man as trophy. Blazing up
And terrible in his anger, he called out:

“You in your plunder, torn from one of mine,
Shall I be robbed of you? This wound will come
From Pallas: Pallas makes this offering
And from your criminal blood exacts his due.”

He sank his blade in fury in Turnus’ chest.
Then all the body slackened in death’s chill,
And with a groan for that indignity
His spirit fled into the gloom below.

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