



VIRGIL
AENEID

TRANSLATED BY STANLEY LOMBARDO

INTRODUCTION BY W. R. JOHNSON

AENEID

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Ben Graham

insignem pietate virum



The Wanderings of Aeneas



Translator's Preface

I come to the *Aeneid*, as Virgil did, through Homer. The *Aeneid* is modeled so closely upon Homeric epic that the poet Joseph Brodsky was moved to remark that Homer is the only true audience Virgil can have. And yet, although he adopts the structure, theology, episodes, and even many of the stylistic features of Homeric poetry, Virgil does not merely mimic the old Greek master but transforms everything he takes from Homer—and other poets—into a distinctly Latin and Roman composition. Encouraged by the emperor Augustus to write the national epic of Rome, Virgil settled on a mythological rather than historical approach, choosing Aeneas, a Trojan hero in Homer's *Iliad*, as his central character and picking up the story at the fall of Troy. The first half of the poem traces Aeneas' Odyssean wanderings in his quest to found a new city; the second half brings him to his destiny in Italy, where he must fight a great war as an Iliadic hero before he can found the settlement that was the precursor to Rome. In this way Virgil established Rome as successor to Troy, giving both his city and his poem a Homeric lineage. He had substantially completed his *Aeneid* when he died in 19 B.C.E., leaving behind an epic that was almost instantly monumentalized as a literary and cultural icon, a status it has retained for two thousand years, becoming a standard school text and exerting enormous influence on such major European poets as Dante and Milton.

The primary issues for the translator of the *Aeneid* revolve about the poem's classicism, or "Augustanism." T. S. Eliot expressed a received tradition when in his presidential address to the Virgil Society in 1944 he pronounced the *Aeneid* the exemplar of classic style, by which he meant mature, conservative, morally elevated, sure of its civilized values in language as well as politics—in a word, Augustan. One might think that few would wish to quarrel with this characterization of the *Aeneid*, but there has been in fact a strong minority protest.

Donatus, one of Virgil's ancient biographers, tells us that as the poet lay dying he gave instructions that the manuscript of the *Aeneid* be burned. It is an understandable impulse for an author who was used to polishing his work to the last degree of perfection. But the German novelist Hermann Broch, in *The Death of Vergil*, takes a more interesting, darker view of Virgil's deathbed wish,

representing him as profoundly dismayed over the poem's glorification of Augustus' imperial regime. Broch, who began his work in the shadow of the Nazi regime and published it during World War II (about the same time as Eliot's address to the Virgil Society), anticipated a school of Virgilian criticism that took shape during the Vietnam War and heard the poet's dismay in the very lines of the great Roman national epic. These critics have pointed to oppositional and even subversive elements in the *Aeneid*, a species of pathos that amounts to protest against the Augustan regime, or at least against the expressions of inhumanity that necessarily found their way into the epic. Is the poem Augustan, anti-Augustan, or reluctantly Augustan? Is there one poetic voice in the *Aeneid*, or is it radically polyphonic? Listening for the discordant voices in the *Aeneid*, and making poetic and ideological sense of them, has been central to Virgilian criticism since the 1960s.

My response to these issues as translator is based on my sense that Virgil's posture in the *Aeneid* is contemplative. For all of the action and drama in the *Aeneid*, there is at its core a profound stillness, and a subdued light. If, as the ancient critic Longinus says, the light in Homer's *Iliad* is the intense light of noon, and in the *Odyssey* the magical glow of the setting sun, it is in the *Aeneid* a chiaroscuro, a play of light amid the shadows of evening, a darkness visible. This is so not only as Aeneas moves through the Underworld or the ashes of Troy or seeks shelter from a storm in a cave with Dido. A twilight mood gathers around almost every scene in the poem. Like Homer, Virgil reflects a complex world steadily and as a whole, but, much more so than Homer, he is consciously reflective as well, both in his melancholy voice as narrator and in the conflicted voices of his characters. The Roman poet has, in the words of John Keats, a strong "negative capability," a mind capable of staying at rest in uncertainties, mysteries, and doubts—like moonlight reflected in water trembling in a bronze bowl, as Virgil says of the mind of his poem's hero.

My translation of Virgil necessarily recalls Homer—and, quite naturally, my translations of Homer. Readers of both translations will notice that I treat Virgil's similes as I do Homer's, setting them off in italics to mark their status as semi-independent poetic events that illumine the main action. The rapidity and immediacy natural to Homer's Greek is not as pronounced in Virgil's Latin, which is more considered and distilled. The challenge in translating the

Aeneid is to capture the language's depth and at the same time keep the poem in motion as Virgil does. This is largely a matter of managing the cadences of the lines—modulating the rhythms and sound effects—and being sensitive to nuances of diction. Virgil uses the same meter—dactylic hexameter—as Homer, adapting the metrics to the exigencies of the Latin language. The rhythmic line that I have developed in response to the classical hexameter—a line that I have used for Homer and use for Virgil—is based, like much of modern English and American poetry, on natural speech cadences. This is in keeping with the performative qualities of the *Aeneid*, which although it is literary rather than oral epic was nonetheless intended to be recited, practically sung. Virgil's word music is more than mortal. The biographer Suetonius records a memorable private reading Virgil gave to Augustus and his wife, Octavia. I have continued the practices, which I began with the *Iliad*, of composing for performance as much as for the printed page and of using actual performances to shape the translation process.

In this respect I would like to thank those who convened audiences and lent willing ears: Larry Allums, Director of the Dallas Institute of Humanities and Culture; Elpida Anthan at the University of Missouri Kansas City; Peter Aicher of the University of Southern Maine; and Classics students and colleagues, particularly Tara Welch, at the University of Kansas. Joan McCool was an early and encouraging reader, as was Tony Corbeill, who also provided detailed comments on Book 12. William Levitan cast a critical eye on an early version of Book 1. Linda Frank's brief comments were timely and welcome, as was a suggestion by Anne Shaw that the four traditional introductory lines be somehow included. I am grateful to Daniel Born, editor of *The Common Review*, for publishing an excerpt and an essay. Brad Engelbert compiled the Glossary of Names.

The editorial staff at Hackett Publishing have been, as ever, a band of ministering spirits in times of need. My thanks especially to Brian Rak and Meera Dash. Readers for the press were Gail Polk, David Fredrick, and Tony Corbeill. They not only corrected my errors, supplied my omissions, and pruned my excesses, but also helped tune my ears to Virgil's music and align my words to his soul. I am deeply grateful to them for their work.

To my wife, Judy Roitman, who sustains my own soul, my heartfelt thanks for her constant support.

W. R. Johnson's book, *Darkness Visible*, remains for me the most telling study of the *Aeneid*. I am grateful to him for his Introduction to this translation.

This book is dedicated to my good and noble friend Ben Graham, a man whom Virgil would have appreciated.

Note on the Latin Text

This translation is based on the Oxford text of R. A. B. Mynors. I have consulted the commentaries of T. E. Page and R. D. Williams, and occasionally I have adopted their readings. It was once the custom to begin the *Aeneid* with four introductory lines (first quoted by Suetonius, now rejected by most editors), placing the *Aeneid* in the context of Virgil's earlier works, the *Eclogues* and *Georgics*, so that the poem opened as follows:

I am the poet who once tuned his song
On a slender reed and then leaving the woods
Compelled the fields to obey the hungry farmer,
A pleasing work. But now War's grim and savage
Arms I sing. . . .

Introduction

The *Aeneid* is an epic poem about the destruction of civilizations and their resurrections. Its insistence on the human capacity to hope, even when—especially when—that hope is tested on the brink of ruin, lends the poem what many have felt to be its universality and has enabled it to exercise its hold on the imagination of the West for just over twenty centuries. Yet Virgil's epic is no simple tale of hope and triumph. Most epics concern themselves with celebrating the defeat of the enemies who had threatened doom to the community for which the epic poet composes his victory poem, and the *Aeneid*, in this regard, resembles other specimens of its genre. But in constructing his celebration of Rome's empire, Virgil never loses sight of the huge costs of the victory he is praising and never forgets that most winners were once losers. Impressed by this steady emphasis on suffering and loss, some readers of the poem feel that its representations of imperial glory tend to be overshadowed by an opposing tragic vision. What fuels the poem, however, is neither triumphalism nor defeatism but its pervasive tension between exaltation and lament. This severe dialectic—a counterpoint of defeat and triumph, abjection and salvation, death and rebirth—is the *Aeneid's* mainspring. The steady equipoise of this double vision arms the *Aeneid* with its unique power to comfort as well as disturb readers even today.

The enduring appeal of this epic over the past two millennia is easy to appreciate. Spend an hour or so leafing through the pages of *The Times Atlas of World History* and you will quickly be reminded of how, from the earliest days to the present, the boundaries of the tribes and nations of Europe (and elsewhere) are continually and sometimes radically erased, renegotiated, redrawn—by invasion, by civil war, by “barbaric” incursions. The peoples of Europe have always understood what it means to be displaced and exiled, to be conquered, to be an immigrant or an émigré, to lose one's homeland and to search, desperately, for a new one. To such readers down the centuries, the closing verses of Book 2—where Aeneas, the epic's hero, prepares to lead the survivors of burning Troy to safety—have always spoken with an incomparable and poignant clarity:

I was surprised by the great number
 Of new arrivals I found, women and men,
 Youth gathered for exile, a wretched band
 Of refugees who had poured in from all over,
 Prepared to journey across the sea
 To whatever lands I might lead them. . . .
 There was no hope of help. I yielded
 And, lifting up my father, sought the mountains.
 (2.942–47, 951–52)

Yet it is not for the dispossessed alone that this passage has extraordinary resonance; any student of human history knows that Aeneas' speech represents an event all too familiar in human experience and captures an unhappy truth of the human condition: however secure the present may seem, our deepest intuitions—from ancestral memories to the collective consciousness—recognize our communities to be fragile, vulnerable, contingent.

Aeneas is, to be sure, a quintessentially Roman hero in a Roman epic that glorifies the rebirth of a new and better Rome. But if his being a Roman hero were more important than his being a human being, he and his poem would never have managed to transcend the collapse of the Roman Empire and then find a steady welcome in civilizations that replaced it. For diverse readers in very different times, Aeneas has functioned as a sort of epic Everyman, one who escapes by the skin of his teeth from being dispatched on what Hegel would call “the slaughter bench of history” and thereby comes to incarnate the capacity of human beings to endure existence on the brink of ruin—and then to begin again and to flourish. If the tribes and nations of Europe had not kept discovering their need for his story and its message, Aeneas and his poem would long since have joined the many other texts from ancient Rome (and Greece) that have vanished into oblivion or, even if extant, have gone from being revered to ignored—and then all but forgotten.

But for all its appeal to diverse individuals, tribes, and nations over the past two thousand years, it is no accident that the *Aeneid* had its origins in a very particular set of circumstances at a very special moment. As he set about composing his epic, Virgil seized upon a specific cluster of thoughts and feelings about triumph, salvation, and thanksgiving shared by his first readers. This shared outlook had its roots, in turn, in a series of momentous events that

took place throughout the century preceding the decade Virgil devoted to writing the *Aeneid* (29–19 B.C.E.). The stability of Rome and of its empire had been shaken by a steady series of civil wars and by the increasingly violent erosion of its political and social institutions. For many observers, eloquently spoken for by the historians Sallust and Livy, a prime cause of this incremental deterioration was the very success that crowned Rome's imperial expansions in the two centuries before the birth of Christ. From this perspective, Rome's blessings were its curse, and its prosperity seemed to generate irreparable damage to its values and its ideals by promoting, particularly among its leaders, a culture of greed and harmful competition—one that left its political, military, economic, and social traditions in shreds. These vicious tendencies spiraled to what seemed their final implosion when Julius Caesar fought his civil war with Pompey and his allies (49–45 B.C.E.); yet they degenerated even further when, after a decade of turbulence and confusion, Marc Antony (Caesar's second-in-command) and Octavian (his grandnephew) fought their own civil war (32–30 B.C.E.); they were finally extinguished only when Octavian, soon to become Augustus, vanquished his adversary and thereafter gradually constructed a throne for himself out of the ruins of what had once been a republic. As monarch of Rome and its empire, Octavian-Augustus was able to impose on his vast realm a stability that was as secure as it was welcome. The Romans and the nations they had conquered sighed with relief. The time was ripe for a monumental epic poem that memorialized their deliverance and gratitude.

Beyond any claims to universality—and centuries after the passing of the historical conditions that gave rise to the epic that celebrates him—Aeneas still enjoys his original renown as the ideal Roman hero. As such he symbolizes (scandalously to some, among them that great reader of the *Iliad*, Simone Weil) the might and right of the Roman Empire just as it was nearing its zenith around the time of Christ's birth. Not surprisingly then, in periods when rulers feel called on to assert their kinship with the Roman Empire and its divinely chosen emperors, this purely Roman Aeneas, rather than his Everyman twin, seems to offer them a powerfully iconic validation. But the figure of Aeneas finds its essential poetic truth not in its value as political propaganda but in the man's capacity to survive, to endure, to cherish good hope. His particular

greatness is rooted in his ferocious resolve to win salvation for his people, in the selfless determination that no obstacle thrown in its way can undo. Nevertheless, for all his heroism, he isn't too good to be true. What finally wins him our trust is his troubled humanity. Aeneas is no bloodless, self-righteous automaton. We see him in moments of brooding self-doubt and even near despair. Like Moses, another hero who leads his people to a promised land whose blessings he will not live to enjoy, Aeneas has enough in the way of human error to lend him a surprising verisimilitude. More so than with most epic heroes, his story of escape and struggle, of a fearsome journey's good end rings true; despite his larger-than-life virtues and all the divine guidance he receives, he is sufficiently vulnerable, sufficiently (to paraphrase Housman), "a stranger and alone in a world he never made" that we can see something of him in us and of us in him.

The Legend of Aeneas

According to the legends that grew up about the Trojan War (which took place roughly twelve centuries before the birth of Christ), a great army of Greeks laid siege to the city of Troy, determined to avenge the abduction (or seduction) of Helen, Queen of Sparta, and to restore her to her husband. Homer's *Iliad*, his monumental epic treatment of these legends, takes place toward the end of the war's tenth and final year, but it ends before the Greeks take and burn the city to the ground, slaying all but a few of its males and making slaves of most of its women. Aeneas is one warrior who survives this catastrophe, preserved by fate for a high, mysterious calling.

But despite his being thus singled out, and although in the catalogue of Trojan forces in Book 2 of the *Iliad* he is listed second only after Hector, the city's greatest champion, Aeneas plays a relatively small and somewhat ambiguous role in the epic. Aeneas makes a memorable appearance in Book 5, where, having encountered Diomedes in battle and having been wounded by him, he is rescued first by his mother, the goddess Aphrodite (Virgil's Venus), and then, when she fails in her efforts to rescue him, by the god Apollo, who pronounces him "a man . . . honored as much as Hector" (Lombardo's *Iliad* 5.505), an estimate of his value we find echoed when he next appears, in Book 13. There, when Deïphobus, seeking to take vengeance on the killer of a comrade, goes looking for Aeneas

to help him, he finds him “in the rear, the last man there, / Angry as always at Priam, / Who utterly failed to honor his worth” (Lombardo’s *Iliad* 13.477–79). When Aeneas moves against him, Idomeneus asks his comrades for help, describing Aeneas as “a hell of a fighter / And in his prime” (Lombardo’s *Iliad* 13.505–6). Soon after this, though Aeneas fights for a while with genuinely Homeric gusto, he fades into the blur of the carnage. Finally, in Book 20, Aeneas briefly shares the full spotlight with the Greeks’ fiercest warrior, Achilles himself, whom he challenges to single combat. Undeterred by Achilles’ stinging insult (“Even if you kill me / Priam’s not going to hand his kingship to you. / He has sons of his own, and he’s not senile yet,” Lombardo’s *Iliad* 20.188–90), Aeneas answers him with a long piece of bravado, but his spear fails to pierce Achilles’ shield, and he is about to suffer a fatal retaliation by Achilles when he is spirited away from death by Poseidon (Virgil’s Neptune), who justifies his intervention to other gods by describing Aeneas as “a guiltless man” who “has always / Pleased the gods in heaven with his offerings,” and who, further, is destined to get out of Troy alive in order to build a new Troy elsewhere, over which he and his progeny will rule (Lombardo’s *Iliad* 20.302–14). These verses explain why Aeneas, almost alone of the Trojan heroes, escapes Troy’s doom, and they define the qualities that will henceforth define his character: he is innocent (that is, not guilty of crimes in the eyes of the gods) and he is pious (that is, unlike most men, who sometimes forget or botch their devotion to the gods, Aeneas offers his sacrifices to them with scrupulous reverence). That such a paragon is marked for a special destiny is hardly surprising.

However, it took the figure of Aeneas centuries to find the shape of that destiny. He had some part in the short epics that came to serve as prequels or sequels to Homer’s two epics (these are no longer extant). Various historians made mention of him (again, those texts are fragmentary): he wandered about the Mediterranean in search of a new homeland for his tribe, he became especially associated with Sicily (the scene of Book 5), and then, not surprisingly, with Italy. The early writers of Roman epics made use of him (these too are now in the most meager fragments). But it was Virgil, as he cast about for a way of framing what he wanted to say about Rome’s empire and its recent tribulations and redemptions, who gave Aeneas his definitive identity and his story its final version, one in which both his piety and his innocence would be

tested in ways Homeric epic could never have tested them. The power and precision of Virgil's representation quickly displaced rival versions, ones in which Aeneas escaped from Troy's destruction because he had betrayed it to the Greeks, or, as Virgil's contemporary, the great Roman historian, Livy, relates it, because the Greeks honored him for having constantly recommended that Helen be restored to her husband. Neither of these reasons provides the stuff of heroic drama, so Virgil chooses for his hero a more violent and a more dramatic leave-taking from his burning city. In Virgil's version of Aeneas' flight from Troy, as elsewhere throughout the poem, the hero's piety, his relationship to the gods, is sorely tested by divine interventions into human affairs. More than the Homeric gods, Virgil's gods are crucial to who Aeneas is, to what he thinks and chooses and does.

The Gods, Fate, and Fortune

Like the gods in the *Aeneid*, the gods in Homer's two epics help the humans they are partial to, and they hinder or harm those humans whom for some reason they hate. But Homer's divine machinery functions in more complex ways than Virgil's: it is part plot device, part sheer entertainment, and, not least in importance, it serves as a metaphysical background against which the actions of human beings, their desires, their struggles, and their sufferings gain clarity and meaning. For the most part, Homer's gods, his "deathless ones," are as capricious, selfish, and irresponsible as they are magnificent, powerful, and amusing. The fact that they cannot die, and that their choices (or whims) cannot do them much harm or cause them to grieve for very long, throws into sharpest relief what is at stake for human beings: what Homer's humans value and what they choose because of what they value have immense, sometimes tragic consequences for them and for those whom they love (or hate). It is within the circumference of their mortality, of their lives' brief splendors and ever-threatened losses, that what they want and do takes on its meanings. Paradoxes incarnate, the great Homeric heroes, Achilles no less than Odysseus, are fate-driven but also, in a way, superbly free: within their fated limits, they are free to risk themselves for what they believe in (glory, honor); to wrest meaning, for themselves, from the vicissitudes and constraints they were born into; to become, before they must die, who they are.

This strange tension between freedom and necessity is the hallmark of a tough and brilliant individualism that characterizes much of what is best and most permanent in our heritage from ancient Greece. Because, on one level at least, the gods often seem like gorgeous, brutal, and spoiled children who are instantly mastered and then released by their inconsequential moods and changing motives, the Homeric heroes, however flawed they may be, take on by contrast a hard-won and admirable authenticity. Whether aided or thwarted by divine agencies, whether admired or reviled by the society whose conventions they dwarf, they reach out for and almost grasp something like an unchanging, highest good. This truth or excellence is not part of the divine machinery; it is beyond it, elsewhere, out of time.

Zeus, the supreme Greek deity whose Roman counterpart is the Jupiter of Virgil's poem, is linked with that truth, with a form of justice that is perfect and eternal, with things as they are. He may banter with the other deathless immortals who are his siblings or his children, he may argue with them, put a stop to their squabbles, threaten them or cajole them, but he also exists in a place apart from them, one where he communes with, or is, something mysterious, unrepresentable, almost unthinkable. At the superb first climax of the *Iliad* in Book 22, Achilles is about to complete his pursuit of Hector around the walls of Troy:

But when they reached the springs the fourth time,
 Father Zeus stretched out his golden scales
 And placed on them two agonizing deaths,
 One for Achilles and one for Hector.
 When he held the beam, Hector's doom sank down
 Toward Hades.

(Lombardo's *Iliad* 22.235–40)

This moment, of course, shows itself as a narrative marker, as a plot device: in the story, it's the time for Hector to die. In terms of the story's framework, however, these scales represent the idea of balance, of Dike, of justice. Hector must now die because all the strands, all the multiple causes that combine to create this war, this struggle, these humans' hopes and fears are now being gathered, ever more swiftly, into the inevitability that knots them up. But even as the image of the scales represents balance, justice, the way things

are and must be, it merely points to—it does not explain—the mystery of the inevitability. Of that mystery, Zeus is the steward, the minister, the guardian.

The *Aeneid*'s parallel scene resembles its Homeric model only superficially. Near the poem's ending, as Aeneas and his rival, Turnus, prepare to battle one another to the death,

Jupiter himself
 Held up his balanced scales and placed on them
 The destinies of each man to determine whom
 The battle doomed, whose weight sank down to death.
 (12.872–75)

In the Homeric scene, just before he lifted his scales, Zeus had expressed his grief at what was about to happen to Hector, and had toyed briefly with the notion of deferring the doom of a great hero whom he admires and feels sorry for, but the goddess Athena easily dissuaded him, and he quickly turned to setting Hector's doom in motion. As a symbol, or, rather, as something like the embodiment of Fate, Zeus can, whatever his feelings, only be impartial (it is for the other gods to help or harm humans whenever they can): he is, in the words of Walter Burkert (*Greek Religion*, pp. 130–31), “above all disputes, all faction.” Virgil's Jupiter, in contrast, expresses no feeling for Turnus, and there is something ironic in his meticulous care in setting his scales, since he not only knows but heartily approves of the decision the scales are about to make. Jupiter is not “the god of all alike”; he is a tribal god who has been transformed, by a slow and complicated process, first into the chief god of the city of Rome, and then into the universal, supreme god of Rome's universal empire whose capital is Rome.

Very early in the *Aeneid*, just after Aeneas and some of his ships have escaped the storm that his archenemy, the goddess Juno, has unleashed upon him, Aeneas' mother, the goddess Venus, comes complaining to her father, Jupiter, about the dangers that her son has repeatedly endured since he fled from Troy. She addresses him as the “Eternal Ruler of Gods and Men” (1.271), but it is unclear (here as elsewhere in the poem) whether he issues those rules or is, like others, subject to them. In any case, he offers her a soothing reaffirmation of the certainty and splendor of Aeneas' destiny and of the destiny of his progeny:

I have not changed my mind. Your son—
 I will speak a length, since you are so worried,
 Unrolling Fate's scroll and revealing its secrets—
 Your son will wage a great war in Italy,
 Crush barbarous nations, and set up laws
 And city walls for his own people. . . .

(1.311–16)

He then proceeds to sketch for her the long, triumphant history of Aeneas' Trojan descendants after they have merged with the native Italians and become known as Romans, for whom, he proclaims, "I set no limits / In time or space, and have given to them / Eternal empire, world without end" (1.332–34). This supreme deity clearly has no capacity for impartiality; he is the voice, or the mouthpiece, of Rome's version of World Historical Destiny as it was interpreted (and being constructed) at the time Virgil was writing his poem. Continuing his prophetic summary of Roman history, Jupiter makes Venus this promise about her son's descendants:

From this resplendent line shall be born
 Trojan Caesar, who will extend his Empire
 To the Ocean and his glory to the stars,
 A Julian in the lineage of the great Ilus.
 And you, Venus, free at last from care,
 Will someday welcome him into heaven,
 Laden with Oriental spoils of war,
 And his name too will be invoked in vows.

(1.343–50)

What Jupiter's scales decree at the epic's close is not only the doom of Turnus but also the eventual domination, as beneficent as it is rightful, of the known world by Rome (and by Augustus, who is the greatest of Aeneas' heirs). This view of the ultimate cause of the rise and fall of nations is utterly at odds with Homer's vision of an impartial Zeus, whose evenhandedness finds a memorable echo in Herodotus' introduction to his *Histories*: "Many states that were once great have now become small and those that were great in my time were small formerly. Knowing therefore that human prosperity never continues in one stay, I will make mention of both kinds" (1.5).

In contrast to the Homeric/Herodotean perspective, Virgil's fusion of the guardian of Rome's destiny with the world's fated purpose is at the core of the epic's divine machinery. It would be reasonable enough to suppose that this concept of Rome's divinely ordained mission reflects the poet's own views of divinity and empire. But that reading of the epic ignores the fact that Jupiter is a character in the poem and that what he says and what he does do not necessarily provide us with reliable evidence either of Virgil's attitudes or of his poetic intentions. More to the point here is the moment, again toward the end of the epic, when the poet intrudes into his narrative, just at the point where, thwarted in his efforts to find and close with Turnus, Aeneas slips from frustration into blind rage. In his speech to Venus in Book 1 Jupiter had foretold that someday the Trojans and their Italian opponents would merge into one (Roman) people. This promise he will later repeat in his final confrontation with his wife, Juno, when he forces (or persuades) her to desist from her attempts to destroy Aeneas' settlement in Italy. But at this moment in his poem, as Aeneas and Turnus are about to meet in the fatal encounter that will bring the war and the poem to their bloody finish, Virgil remembers and invites his readers to remember that only very recently, after a dreadful civil war (91–87 B.C.E.), has that union between Rome and its Italian allies been finally effected. Angered and saddened by that war no less than by the war between Aeneas and Turnus, Virgil cries out to Jupiter in a bitter questioning of his divine means and his divine ends:

What god could now unfold for me
 So many bitter deaths, which poet could tell
 Of all the captains who met their many dooms
 Driven over the plain now by Turnus,
 Now by the Trojan hero? Did it please you,
 Jupiter, that nations destined to live
 In everlasting peace should clash so harshly?
 (12.612–18)

What poetic god, what resource of Homeric epic convention, can help him describe this peculiarly Roman horror, this unrepresentable nightmare? And why did Jupiter not put a stop to it? How could Rome's presiding deity allow it to happen? Virgil's questions

here are not rhetorical. They echo the repugnance at violence and pity for its victims that pervade the poem, and they remain unanswered when the poem ends.

This question about divine justice, moreover, echoes another question that the poet voices at his poem's very beginning. There as here, it is with an emphatic Euripidean irony that he links his plea for poetic inspiration to a request for some explanation of divine intervention in human affairs. As he begins his poem, what he wants to know is why Juno was so angry with Aeneas:

Muse, tell me why the Queen of Heaven
 Was so aggrieved, her godhead so offended,
 That she forced a man of faultless devotion
 To endure so much hardship. Can there be
 Anger so great in the hearts of gods on high?
 (1.12–16)

The school of philosophy that left its deepest imprint on Virgil's mind and heart was that of Epicurus, particularly as it had been recently interpreted by the great poet Lucretius in his *On the Nature of Things*. Epicurus believed that the remote and mysterious gods (if they truly exist) spend their serene existences in the contemplation of the realities of nature; they enjoy their being in perfect tranquillity, and they have no interest whatever in human beings and what they want and do. There obtains, then, an irremediable tension between Virgil's Epicurean sensibility and the conventions, specifically the divine machinery, of the epic genre he had undertaken to write in. Though what ultimately matters is the product of this fertile mismatch, one may speculate (however vainly) on the motivations that led Virgil to invest himself so deeply in a form whose conventions were so alien to his own worldview—and on how he came to view that choice in retrospect: blessed with and conflicted by a hybrid identity—Italian and Roman—Virgil wants to believe that Roman Italy's bloody past has ended in a better present. He sets out to write a poem that can help him believe, and perhaps help others to believe, that the nightmare of Roman/Italian history has ended—and he begins, naturally enough, by adopting the only form ready at hand for his purpose. But as he writes in this form and continues writing in it, he has at times the sinking feeling that he is producing what Plato had called “a noble lie.” (It was

said, after all, that when he died he ordered that his manuscript be destroyed). Seen from this perspective, questioning his poem's divine machinery as to why peace and brotherhood usually emerge only from the killing fields seems all but inevitable.

What usually disrupts the workings of the poem's divine providence (and so furnishes it with much of its tragic power) is, as its opening invocation to the Muse makes clear, the anger of Juno. In the *Iliad* her Greek counterpart Hera hates the Trojans as much as she loves the Greeks, so it is only to be expected that she will continue persecuting Aeneas in his own epic. She is also the patroness of Carthage, Rome's arch-rival in the race for empire after the death of Alexander the Great. And, of course, she tends to dislike heroes in general (see, for example, her vindictive torment of Hercules in Euripides' play of that name, lines 815–85). Her hatred, then, of Aeneas and his Trojans is multiply determined (see her wonderful opening tirade with its laundry list of grievances), and it is not merely a catalyst of epic action (like Apollo's in the *Iliad*; Lombardo's *Iliad* 1.10–15), nor is it temporary (like Poseidon's in the *Odyssey*; Lombardo's *Odyssey* 5.282–92, 380ff.; 9.522–30; 13.129–70): Juno's insatiable wrath is so pervasive that it comes to seem the poem's spine, its very plot.

Juno opens the poem, and she all but closes it. After her angry speech in Book 1, she immediately arranges for the storm at sea in which Aeneas and his Trojans almost drown; in Book 2, she is prominent among the gods who participate, in person and gleefully, in the destruction of Troy; Book 4 finds her colluding with her enemy, Aeneas' mother, Venus, to keep Aeneas with Dido in Carthage, thus preventing him from sailing off to Italy and founding there a new Troy (Venus wants only to assure him temporary safety in Carthage). In Book 5, as he nears his goal, Juno tries in vain to engineer the burning of his ships. But it is in Book 7, when Aeneas has completed his wanderings and has begun to establish himself, that, acknowledging that all her efforts have proved futile, her celestial rage turns hellish:

But if my powers
Are not great enough, why should I hesitate
To seek help from any source whatever?
If I cannot sway Heaven, I will awaken Hell!
I concede Aeneas the rule of Latium,

And Lavinia is his bride by iron fate,
 But to draw it out and delay the issue,
 That I may do, and destroy both nations.
 (7.378–85)

She understands well enough that she cannot truly alter fate, but she knows she can still cause countless deaths among the Trojans and Latins who are destined to be united, which means that she is in effect fomenting a civil war (a pattern that will endure through the centuries until, under Augustus, Rome and the Italians are, in Virgil's lifetime, united once and for all). Her vindictiveness has now grown so great that, thwarted from achieving any genuine goal, she is committed to doing evil for the sake of evil. For this purpose she summons Allecto, one of the Furies, from hell and commands her to start a war between the Latins and the Trojans: this Allecto proceeds to do with a joyful, demonic efficiency. It is this perverted divinity and her handmaid from hell who are ultimately responsible for what happens throughout the rest of the poem, and it is she who, having dismissed Allecto and sent her back to hell, becomes Discord incarnate as she flings open the gates of war. Having set her gratuitously evil project in motion, Juno is relatively quiet in Books 8 through 11, but she makes a spectacular reappearance in Book 12, where she once again manages to disrupt a new treaty between the opposing sides and to reactivate the (internecine) slaughter.

At last Jupiter persuades Juno to cease and desist her lethal meddlings. He appeals to her vanity, he promises her that the Romans will come to accord her extraordinary worship. In short, he buys her off. She quickly concedes, letting her resentments go (12.996–1008). Or so it seems. Roman readers would have no trouble remembering that, despite her nominal capitulation, in the centuries to come she would side with Carthage against Rome in three wars. Her seeming conversion arises less from Jupiter's powers of persuasion than from narrative expediency: it is time for the story to end, for Aeneas to win, and for Turnus to die. But Juno's submission and Jupiter's success in achieving it in no way answer the questions that Virgil had asked Jupiter a few hundred verses back or at the very beginning of his poem. At this scene's end and at the poem's end, its presentation of theodicy remains clouded in a sinister uncertainty.

One thing Juno clearly represents in the *Aeneid* is fortune (a word often connected with her). As a poetic concept she stands for—and in the poem’s narrative she produces—accidents, contingencies, bad luck. She utterly opposes the ordinances of providential fate and contrives whenever possible to derail them—the more violently the better. In contrast, Jupiter represents, in an ambiguous, not wholly satisfying fashion, the power of providential fate, the justice and benevolence that supply the foundations for whatever is decent in the human condition. (Tribal god that Jupiter is, he also represents, of course, an incontestable validation of the Roman Empire.) The power of Juno’s fortune cannot triumph over the power of Jupiter’s fate, but (as Virgil’s anguished question in Book 12 insinuates) Jupiter’s fate cannot truly restrain the powers of darkness that Juno and her tamperings with fortune can unleash. One can argue, as the poem’s denouement yearns to do, that all the accidents and contingencies, all the rotten, wretched luck that she invents, are, to recall the formulation of Alexander Pope, no more than “partial evils” that contribute to and are eventually gathered into a “universal good.” But it is equally plausible that the bad contingencies are as real as they are prevalent and powerful, and that the providential wisdom that claims to transform them into itself is as likely as not to be yet another “noble lie,” an illusion, a fiction useful when the tribe comes to (re)write its history, its victor’s version of “how it happened.” Seen in this latter way, Juno and Jupiter are evenly matched, and what Virgil’s divine machine reveals is a tragic dialectic at the heart of history, one that has room both for glory and for the voices of the vanquished and the oppressed.

Aeneas the Wanderer

In the first six books of the *Aeneid*, its hero replicates, in highly condensed form, the travels of the *Odyssey*’s cunning, adventure-some, seriocomic hero. During the welcoming feast given him by Queen Dido of Carthage, Aeneas reluctantly yields to her request to hear about the fall of Troy and his search for the new homeland that numerous omens and prophecies have promised him. In Book 2 he recounts how the treacherous Greeks captured Troy, then indulged themselves in a savage spree of murder, looting, and burning. Troubled by these painful memories, he yet manages to tell of

how he was barely able to rescue his son, his aged father, and his household gods and to lead them, together with the rest of the survivors, away from Troy into what turned out to be seven years of dangerous, baffling, and futile voyages. What most characterizes these self-narratives is their extraordinary self-effacement, a style of speech that is exactly counter to the fertile, energetic self-promotion that marks the stories effortlessly spun by Odysseus (that peerless confidence-man) whenever he finds it necessary or possible to recount or embellish or fabricate his adventures. The reader who remembers and expects here the swaggering brio of Aeneas' model in this section of the poem may be surprised and even disappointed by Aeneas as storyteller and hero of his own tale (in his *ABC of Reading*, Ezra Pound sketches a disgruntled reader who cries out in his exasperation: "Aach, a hero, him a hero? Bigod, I t'ought he waz a priest."). But however unheroic they may first strike us as being, Aeneas' laconic utterance and genuine humility are qualities of style and character that Aeneas manifests throughout his epic: here, precisely, the style is the man.

Our first impression of Aeneas in Book 1, when he is terrified that his ships are about to be sunk in the storm Juno has arranged for his destruction, is hardly auspicious. But he quickly recovers his self-possession and his courage once the storm has ended, and what sticks with us from the ensuing scenes are qualities that he will manifest hereafter throughout the poem: his humility (glory is not at all his highest priority), his remarkable instinct for self-sacrifice, and, most unexpected and most attractive of his virtues, his deep concern for the well-being of others. Some readers feel that he grows in discipline and in maturity as the poem progresses, but the degree of his composure and self-assurance seems more nearly a function of the situations he finds himself in. In Book 2, with his city in flames and falling to ruin all around him, he is at times all but hysterical with fear and rage—and too honest to try to conceal it. In Book 3, as he himself recounts it, the frustrations, the sinister people and places he meets with on his journeyings, and, finally, the sudden death of his father, Anchises, all combine to render him, for the most part, morose and querulous. In Book 4, Aeneas surprisingly and briefly imitates, in a somewhat pallid fashion, the robust and protracted philandering of Odysseus. Finally, in Book 6, he repeats his model's descent into the Underworld, but he manifests nothing of Odysseus' curiosity about the afterlife when he

questions the newly dead or, after he recovers from his initial terror, his remarkable composure in dealing with the business of making his way through his gruesome ordeal and back out of it to the upper world. Aeneas, unlike Odysseus, behaves in the Underworld like a quiet spectator, or almost like a dutiful tourist, as he passes through the sights and sounds, familiar from Greek poetry, of the worst that hell has to offer. When he comes to the brighter spots in the afterlife and is briefly reunited with his father, Anchises, who has revealed to him, in a sort of splendid pageant, the outlines of his progeny's glory and of Rome's triumphant history, his responses to this amazing spectacle seem rather subdued: though we essentially see the glorious procession of Roman heroes through his eyes, our sense of what he thinks and feels about it is dim.

In Book 5, however, when, after successfully fleeing Dido and Carthage, he has reached Sicily, in imitation of Achilles in *Iliad* 23, he holds belated funeral games for his father, as the greatest of the Greek heroes had held them for his comrade Patroclus. This book shows Virgil's most faithful re-creation of Homer's matter and manner (it was Montaigne's favorite book of the *Aeneid*), and the sudden substitution here of Achilles as heroic model works flawlessly: with his father gone and his mission resumed in earnest he is in a position to behave in a more (conventionally) heroic manner than, for the most part, we have previously seen him behave. Here we find an Aeneas who is, for the first time, relaxed and gentle but clearly in command. In this setting, on this occasion, he has become, finally and fully, the leader of his troops and the father of his people, not so much because he has achieved moral growth as because the condition in which he finds himself has altered.

It is his utter submission of himself to those duties that explains why the adjective *pius* most frequently qualifies his name, and why he automatically chooses it when introducing himself to his mother, Venus (who has wittily disguised herself as her arch-rival, the goddess Diana, a chaste huntress); "I am Aeneas, devoted to my city's gods" (1.461). The English word "pious" fails to address the range of the Latin word's connotations, which center on the purity of an individual's devotion to the performance of the obligations he has to members of his family, to his fellow citizens, and to the gods of his tribe. The word is peculiar because it combines, from a modern point of view, a state of mind that is almost legalistic in its concern with the ties that bind a person to his kin and his

comrades and the supernatural powers that can help or harm the place he inhabits with kin and comrades; it also suggests, more subtly, the affection or sympathy (we get “pity” as well as “pious” from *pius*) that a person is likely to have for those, whether mortal or immortal, with whom his life is linked. This complex of feelings, at once familial, patriotic, and religious, may at first seem strange to us (though the closer we regard it the more familiar it may come to seem), yet it lies at the core of the Roman identity. The pious son or father or husband or brother, the pious citizen, the pious worshiper, in sacrificing his individual self to this widening collectivity of needs and duties and emotions becomes more than himself: he becomes the incarnation of his family, his tribe, and his nation; he becomes one with what was for a Roman the real absolute, the real eternity, the real good, namely, the Roman State in all its power and glory and hoped-for permanence.

In the tribulations he suffers in the first half of his epic, in his waverings and his vulnerability, Aeneas shows how hard is the process of accepting the irreversible commitment that Roman piety enjoins on Rome’s citizens. Readers in the Middle Ages tended to read the first six books of the poem (it looks as though they were not much interested in the last six) as an allegory in which Aeneas as prototype of a Christian Everyman trudged wearily through temptation and spiritual peril until, at the moment when he plucked the golden bough before venturing down into hell, he was granted moral enlightenment and complete wisdom. But Aeneas does not pluck the golden bough and descend into hell in order to become wise. When the Sibyl of Cumae offers new prophecies of the ordeals that await him in Italy, he cuts her short (6.133–48). He has heard elsewhere about his destiny in Italy, and he is intent on obeying the order that Anchises had given him in a dream (5.820–39): he was to come down into the Underworld and learn what his father’s shade had to tell him about his mission and its meaning. And when he meets with his father, his father greets him with these words: “You have come at last! I knew your devotion [*pietas*] / Would see you through the long, hard road” (6.813–14). Here begins the solemn scene in which the father of the family transfers his duties to the son who now becomes the new father of the family. The ghost of the father, in the scenes that follow, relinquishes his powers (and obligations) to his living son who, on his return to life on earth in the upper world, will be the present incarnation of the

family's past and of its future. And Aeneas, ancestor of Julius and Augustus Caesar, this particular and fated man, now becomes the incarnation of Rome's future, the sire of its destiny and triumph, the paradigm of its pious sons for as long as Rome itself will endure. This is the place and moment where the wanderer ends his wanderings. In just a few pages, when he ascends to the upper world, he will be ready to assume his role as Rome's warrior, the supreme model of those who, in the coming centuries, will win its empire and whose spirits had paraded past him and Anchises in the final, haunting scene of Book 6.

Aeneas the Warrior

The second half of the *Aeneid* is often described as Iliadic, thus distinguishing it from the first half, where Odysseus was Aeneas' chief model. Books 7 through 12 are primarily concerned with the war between Aeneas, together with the new allies he finds in Italy, and the native Italians, led by Turnus, who regard Aeneas as an invader. One might therefore reasonably expect that Aeneas' heroic model will now become Achilles, but, paradoxically, this does not quite happen. As the invader of Italy, Aeneas seems to take on certain of Achilles' traits in specific situations, but as *pius* defender of hearth and family, he nevertheless often resembles Achilles' enemy, Hector. In contrast, it is Turnus, like Hector the champion of his invaded homeland, who frequently resembles Achilles. But whatever his similarities to Hector or to Achilles, Aeneas differs from conventional Homeric (or Roman) heroes in his seemingly fundamental aversion to warfare.

This quality of Aeneas must not be misunderstood: in no way is he to be thought of as some variety of pacifist (a concept bizarre in the extreme to the Roman mind) or as in any way lacking in bravery or martial excellence. Rather, efficient warrior that he is, he is essentially a man of peace. The day after his arrival in Latium, before he has begun to build a temporary settlement, he sends an embassy to the country's ruler, King Latinus, asking for peace. When this embassy has been warmly welcomed by Latinus, its spokesman asks only for "a safe strip of shore, / A little land for the gods of our country, / And water and air that are common to all" (7.276–78). Latinus happily grants this request, and the embassy returns to Aeneas bringing an offer of the peaceful outcome he had

hoped for. We are not, and need not be, told how Aeneas receives this news. Instead, we immediately see and hear Juno's expected reaction to these events: she summons Allecto to incite hostilities, and once Allecto has completed her task, Juno opens the gates of war and hurls Aeneas into a war he did not want.

Desperate for help, Aeneas goes to King Evander, an émigré from Greece who has founded a new city-state on the site where Rome itself will later stand. No sooner has Evander agreed to send his soldiers off under Aeneas' command than Venus signals him with thunder and lightning that she will soon be bringing the divine armor that she has prevailed on her husband, Vulcan, to create for him. Venus' signal shakes Aeneas from the gloomy ruminations that had taken hold of him as soon as Evander promised him the soldiers he had come for: he does not look forward to the carnage that is now close at hand and says to Evander:

Ask not what the portents forebode,
 My dear host; in truth, do not ask. It is I
 Who am summoned by heaven. . . .
 Ah, the slaughter in store for the poor Laurentines!
 What a price you will pay me, Turnus! How many
 Shields and helmets and bodies of the brave
 Will you, Father Tiber, roll beneath your waves?
 Let them call for battle and break their treaty!
 (8.605–7, 611–15)

These lines recall Aeneas' very first speech in the poem, his cry of anguish when he thinks that he and his ships are about to be destroyed in the storm and remembers the countless deaths that his comrades had suffered years before when Troy fell to the Greeks. In this passage, he seems to be making no distinction between the imminent Trojan deaths and those of his enemies. It is not only the brutality of the coming battles that sickens and grieves him here; he is also saddened by and angered at the futility, the needlessness, of a war that he had tried to avoid by the careful diplomacy of his first overtures to Latinus. He does not yet, and never will, know that Turnus is innocent of the outbreak of a war that Juno and her henchwoman are guilty of having ignited; instead, even when he blames Turnus, he manifests a touch of compassion for the man he thinks guilty of causing the carnage he despises: "What a price you

will pay me, Turnus!” (8.612). This is an utterance shaped by an angry pity; it almost a cry of despair.

Aeneas figures only briefly in Book 9. When in Book 10 he returns to Latium with his allies, before he and Turnus manage to encounter one another, the action shifts to Evander’s son, Pallas. This young prince is enjoying enormous success in his debut as a warrior when he meets up with Lausus, son of the ferocious Etruscan king, Mezentius. But before they can square off against each other, Turnus rushes forward to save Lausus, challenges Pallas, and quickly dispatches him. Having slain the young warrior, Turnus strips the sword-belt from his corpse. Upon learning of Pallas’ death, Aeneas rushes off to avenge him:

He mowed down everything before him
 With his sword, burning a broad path
 Through the enemy, seeking you, Turnus,
 Flush with slaughter. Pallas, Evander,
 Everything swam in Aeneas’ eyes—the table
 He came to as a stranger, the right hands pledged.
 (10.619–24)

This brief flash of picture-memory in Aeneas’ mind’s eye marks a crucial moment in the poem. Immediately after it, echoing Achilles in one of his most savage moments, Aeneas grabs eight young enemies whom he will later offer as human sacrifices at the funeral of Pallas. He then charges off after Turnus, slaughtering any Italian he meets in a killing frenzy worthy of Achilles at his most ferocious. But Juno has snatched Turnus out of battle before Aeneas can get to him; cheated of the champion he wants to slay, Aeneas attempts to appease his vengeful wrath by killing any enemy he finds in his path.

It is Mezentius, Turnus’ most formidable ally, whom he finally chances on. When Aeneas wounds Mezentius, Lausus rushes bravely to his father’s defense, and Aeneas, just before he is forced to kill the young man, cries out to him:

You’re headed for death, Lausus! Why rush it
 By daring what’s beyond your strength?
 Your filial devotion is blinding you.
 (10.968–70)

As a son who loves his father and a father who loves his son, Aeneas, even as he threatens him, instantly recognizes his own best virtue in the young man who is about to die at his hands. And when, while driving his sword through Lausus' body,

Anchises' son looked on his dying face,
So strangely pale, he groaned in pity
And stretched out his hand. There shone in that face
The image of his own devotion to Anchises. . . .

“What now, poor boy,
Can Aeneas give you for such glorious deeds?
What is worthy of so great a heart?”

(10.982–88)

Moved by a curious sense of kinship with this enemy, shaken by compassion and admiration, Aeneas refuses to strip the corpse and lifts it tenderly from the ground. This peculiar mix of emotions, wherein *pietas* all but finds itself divided against itself, goes against both the epic and the Roman grain. It bespeaks both the poem's underground Epicurean current and a new kind of hero that it helps produce. It is this sensitivity, this paradoxical, emergent bias against violence, that makes Aeneas the strange kind of warrior he is and that, as we shall presently see, defines the poem's harrowing final scene where, his emotions again in powerful conflict, he chooses, or is compelled, to disobey his better instincts.

This peaceable warrior makes one last and powerful appearance in the poem's final book where once again a treaty has been arranged between Aeneas and Latinus. This treaty stipulates that Aeneas and Turnus meet in single combat to decide which of them will have the king's daughter as his bride and, on the King's death, his crown. Juno, naturally, has no intention of allowing this solution to come to its fruition. She summons a new helper, Turnus' own sister, the fountain-nymph Juturna, to incite Turnus' army to disrupt the ritual that will ratify the treaty. Then, when Juturna has obeyed Juno's command and the treaty is in ruins and the bloodletting begun in earnest, Aeneas rushes forward and shouts to his soldiers:

Where are you going?
What is this sudden surge of strife? Hold in your rage!
The truce has already been struck, its terms set.

I alone have the right to fight. Let me do it,
 Forget your fears; this hand will make the treaty true.
 These rites have already given Turnus to me!

(12.381–86)

His *pietas* shines forth here in perfect clarity. He is upset by the disruption of the ritual that would have sanctified his treaty with Latinus (hostilities have broken out before Turnus could reach the altar and complete the ritual). But he is also concerned for the lives of his men, and, as was the case in his similar speech in Book 8, he is probably also concerned for the lives of the enemy soldiers. This brave attempt to end violence and restore the rule of law is suddenly cut short by a mysterious arrow:

As Aeneas was saying these things an arrow
 Whistled through the air toward him
 In a long falling arc, shot by whose hand
 No one knows, nor whether it was pure chance
 Or some god who brought the Rutulians
 This glory. Credit for the deed is hidden,
 And no one boasted of wounding Aeneas.

(12.387–93)

In their last exchange, a few hundred verses later, Jupiter will tease Juno about this mysterious wound that brought so much death to Trojans and Italians alike, asking her if it was right for an immortal to be wounded by a mortal. Juno indignantly insists that in persuading Juturna to help her brother she never intended that such help would include the wounding of Aeneas by a mortal. She hints that Juturna herself may have shot the impious arrow, then suddenly announces her capitulation to Jupiter and to Fate. This amazing about-face is perhaps intended to conceal her own guilt: the angry goddess who opened the Gate of War would hardly shrink, when she senses herself about to be defeated at last, from loosing an arrow at the man whose mission she has moved heaven and hell to destroy. But, whoever shot it (“pure chance” or “some god”—the poet here is brilliantly equivocal), the arrow does its work, and Aeneas’ passionate hope for bringing the slaughter to an end, for securing a just peace, is once again destroyed.

Very soon, Aeneas will kill Turnus and the peace he worked for will thereby have been achieved. But, as we will presently see, it is a wrathful not a peaceable warrior who secures that peace, and the poem closes neither with a triumphalist vision of historical necessity nor with a quieter celebration of the coming of a peaceable kingdom. We last see Aeneas in a state of conflicted emotion, and we see him from the perspective of the man he kills. This abrupt and chilling finale does little to brighten our last glimpse of the poem's hero. Which is why, fourteen centuries later, in 1428, Maffeo Vegio decided to add a thirteenth book to the poem, one written in an impeccably correct imitation of the master's style, and one that provided the poem with both a properly triumphalist uplift and (to shore up that triumphalism) a subtle vilification of Aeneas' enemy, the dastardly Turnus.

Turnus

Aeneas' victory over Turnus and the native Italians he led is incontrovertibly fated: Aeneas must establish his people in their new homeland and that settlement, that fusion of Trojans and Italians, must be the origin of the city that will in time come to rule the (known) world. Which means that, as Hector must die in his epic, so Turnus must die in his. But the poetic and the historical necessities that insist on Rome's destiny and Turnus' doom do not require that Turnus die as he does or mean that he merits the death he receives. For some readers, to be sure, Turnus, the villain of the piece, gets no more and no less than he deserves on the poem's final page; however, that response, that judgment, has its roots not so much in Turnus' actions or character as these are presented in the narrative as it does in feelings of the readers in question that for the poem to be successful (for these readers to be content with it) Turnus must be punished by the death that Aeneas inflicts on him. This view of Turnus' death, however, foists on the poem two burdens it doesn't need: by denigrating Turnus it provides Aeneas with an adversary who is unworthy of him, thus cheapening his victory, and it converts a genuine tragedy, one that grapples uniquely with the ambiguities that confront the historical imagination, into a melodrama as cheap as it is predictable.

In the eyes of Turnus, Aeneas is a dangerous immigrant, the leader of a swarm of nasty foreigners wearing funny clothes and

speaking gibberish; for Turnus, he is a lying interloper who seeks to hide his real intention, the conquest of Latinus' kingdom, behind preposterous claims that numerous portents and oracles have promised him the possession of a new homeland in Latium. Turnus is entirely ignorant of the truth of Aeneas' claim, and he has some reason to doubt Latinus when, basing his opinion on omens and oracles of his own, he offers confirmation of the truth of Aeneas' claims. Before the arrival of the Trojans, Turnus had given Latinus valuable military assistance, and he feels that he had every reason to believe that Latinus had preferred him to his daughter's other suitors and had in fact betrothed Lavinia to him. He believed, in short, that he would be the king's successor. But Latinus, just before he becomes aware of the Trojans' arrival, consults his father, the rustic deity Faunus, who warns him:

Seek not, my son, to marry your daughter
 Into a Latin family. Trust not a wedding
 Already prepared. A stranger will come
 To be your son-in-law. His blood will exalt
 Our name to the stars, and his children's children
 Will see the world turn under their feet,
 And their rule will stretch over all that the Sun
 Looks down upon, from sea to shining sea.

(7.115–22)

His father's promise, another of the prophecies of Rome's unbounded empire that echo throughout the poem, naturally changes Latinus' mind about his choice of son-in-law and heir. But, apparently, he does not bother to tell Turnus about this sudden and crucial alteration in their relationship. Perhaps he assumed that rumors of the newcomers and of the broken betrothal would soon enough reach Turnus' ears. Or perhaps he was too ashamed of himself to approach Turnus directly. In any case, when Aeneas' embassy has explained who the Trojans are and what Aeneas wants, Latinus' response, echoing and inspired by his father's prophecies of empire, is quick and certain:

“This,” he thought, “must be the foreigner
 Whom the Fates have destined to be

My son in marriage and to share my power
 Equally. His descendants will excel
 In virtue, and rule the world with might."
 (7.307–11)

Latinus is characteristically timid and indecisive. His haste here and his failure to consult with Turnus and with his queen, Amata, to make them understand what compels him to act as he does sets just the stage that Juno needs for her fatal reentry into the poem. Bidden by Juno to stir things up, the first thing the Fury Allecto does is to infect Amata with madness, and the second thing she does is to cause Turnus' derangement. It can be and has been argued that both these characters are quite disposed to the behavior she induces in them before she maddens them, but the fact remains that without the violent transformations that Allecto effects in them they might have accepted, however reluctantly, Latinus' changed intentions.

Amata is not yet entirely under the influence of the Fury's poison when she attempts to remind her husband of what she (Turnus' aunt) regards as his firm commitments to her and to her nephew:

What of your solemn promise?
 What of your old love for your own, what of
 Your hand so often pledged to Turnus,
 Your kinsman?
 (7.446–49)

When Latinus refuses to give way, she rushes out from the palace, and, the effect of Allecto's poison now fully mastering her, she sets about stirring up war-frenzy in the female population of her city.

Once Allecto has "undone Latinus and all his house" (7.498), she flies off to Turnus' city, Ardea. There, disguised as an ancient priestess of Juno (Turnus' patron goddess), she mocks him viciously as he sleeps: "The king / Denies you the bride you won with your blood, / And a stranger is sought as heir to your throne" (7.516–18). She assures him that Juno has sent her to rouse him to arms (which is in fact true):

Up then, smile,
 Arm your lads, march them through the gates

Into the fields, and burn the painted Phrygian ships
 Lying at anchor in our beautiful river!
 Heaven commands it. And unless King Latinus
 Honors his word and gives you your bride,
 Let him feel the full force of Turnus as foe.

(7.523–29)

The dreamer answers her scornfully: he has heard the rumors about the Trojans' coming, but he isn't worried about losing Lavinia since Juno is on his side. This response irritates the Fury, who then flings a torch into his stomach. He wakes in terror, crazed and ready for war, and, "peace be damned" (7.562), he rushes off to collect his troops and march against Aeneas and, if need be, against Latinus. (Note that the peace he damns is one secured by a treaty to which he was not a party and which, in fact, was not fully in force since hostilities between Trojans and Latins broke out before Aeneas and Latinus could formally meet to ratify it.)

While Turnus is gathering his army, Allecto returns to Latium and contrives to set the Trojans and Latins at one another's throats. Just as Turnus arrives on the scene with his army, Latinus looks out from his palace on his people: "Defying the omens and the sacred oracles, / Their minds twisted, they all clamored / For an unholy war" (7.700–2). Responding to the destruction of his plans, he feels himself "powerless / To change their blind resolve" and sees that "all was going / As cruel Juno wished" (7.709–11). Turnus and the Latins have no good reason to think of this war as being "unholy," and Latinus himself has no knowledge whatever of Juno's role in fomenting the chaos that now overwhelms him. But overwhelmed he is, and he calls "the gods and the empty air to witness" (7.712) as he curses Turnus and his people for their wicked disobedience, then shuts himself away inside his palace and all but abdicates his throne.

As we've seen, Aeneas also blames Turnus for the broken treaty in his speech (8.607) when he is "summoned by heaven" and the war is about to begin in earnest. But Latinus and Aeneas are wrong in their condemnation. As we're about to see, Turnus cannot be described as being innocent, but he is not guilty of this particular charge. And only pure prejudice will be unwilling to try looking from his perspective at the situation that confronts him when

Aeneas threatens to take from him Lavinia and the dowry that comes with her—or will persist in regarding the machinations of Juno and Allecto as being nearly ornamental explanations of Turnus' (and Amata's) motives and actions. Whatever his failings, Turnus is not treacherous, and he is hardly in the wrong when refusing to give way to what he regards as Aeneas' invasion of Italy or to countenance Latinus' injustice toward him.

Turnus is a ferocious warrior, and his affinities with Achilles are striking, particularly in the closing scenes of Book 9 where his martial prowess and assured individualism take on a superhuman brilliance. Also like Achilles, Turnus is born of a minor deity: Amata's sister is the nymph Venilia, daughter of a venerable Italian deity. (This aspect of the poem reflects the slow, almost imperceptible displacement of Italy's archaic, rural deities by the Hellenized deities of Rome as it expands its empire.) He also resembles Achilles in being specially marked by his rage, and like Achilles' his killings can be accompanied by what seems gratuitous malice: just before he kills Pallas he expresses the wish that the young man's father, Evander, might be present to witness his son's death. But both the bitterness of this ugly wish and the intensity of rage that he manifests elsewhere in the poem find some explanation in what he says to Pallas' fellow soldiers as he bestrides the young man's corpse:

Remember, Arcadians, to bring my words
 To Evander. I send him the Pallas he deserves.
 The honor of a tomb, the solace of burial
 I freely grant, but he will pay dearly
 For welcoming Aeneas.

(10.592–96)

His anger here (and elsewhere) is not “a character flaw.” Heroes, and epic heroes in particular, are supposed to be angry. The quality and degree of Turnus' anger has its origins in what he sees as Aeneas' invasion of Italy; in his eyes, furthermore, the outrage of that invasion has been compounded by salt in the wound—Latinus' cowardice and duplicity. As for the vindictive message to Evander, Turnus regards him and his son as traitors, for, though they may be Greek émigrés, they are, so to speak, naturalized Italians and ought to help defend their adopted homeland.

These arguments are not offered to make Turnus seem like a nice person or to condone what seem to some his excesses; they are intended only to place his behavior inside the expectations that the genre of epic provide us with and that we should use in arriving at any judgment we may make of him. Thus, however nastily he returns the body to the father, he does return it. And if he first despoils it of its sword-belt and glories in doing so, his action is quite conventional. When the poet intrudes into this scene with a comment on Turnus' despoilment,

the mind of man
 Knows neither fate nor future doom
 Nor moderation when elated by fortune.
 The hour will come when Turnus will wish
 He had paid handsomely for an unharmed Pallas
 And will curse the day he won those spoils,
 (10.603–8)

he does so not to rebuke him for acting as epic heroes ordinarily act on the field of battle but to comment (it would be futile to warn him) on the tragic consequences of this particular despoilment; it is a grieving adumbration of the poem's tragic closing scene.

The extraordinary power of the poem's last scene derives from the poet's skillful gathering of his major themes throughout Book 12 into the discordant harmony of its final verses, from his careful husbanding of suspense, and from the superb momentum he sustains until he lets the inevitable happen. Back in Book 11, addressing Latinus and his court, Turnus had ended his magnificent refutation of the slanders heaped upon him by the quisling Drances with an offer to put an end to the war by engaging in single combat with Aeneas:

To all of you and to Latinus,
 Father of my bride, I, Turnus, second
 In valor to none of my ancestors,
 Dedicate my life. Aeneas calls me out?
 I pray that he does, and that it is not Drances
 But I who appease the gods with death,
 If they are angry, or win glory for valor.
 (11.523–29)

True hero that he is, with a solemn vow (the ritual is called *devotio*), he devotes himself to the infernal gods, offering his life in exchange for a Trojan defeat. So, at the beginning of Book 12, when Latinus, feckless as usual, suggests that Turnus can avoid single combat (and with it the need for *devotio*) by withdrawing his claim to Lavinia, marrying some other Latin lady of noble birth, and going home to his father, Latinus only succeeds in angering Turnus more. That rising anger is heightened by Amata's tearful plea for him not to risk himself and by the sight of Lavinia's blush (which he rightly takes as a sign of her love for him). Propelled by this complex of emotions, he rushes off to prepare himself for the holy ritual that will sanctify a new treaty, one that will commit him to single combat with Aeneas.

The ratification of this (second) treaty is, as we've seen, disrupted by Juno and her new helper, Juturna. And Book 12 is in fact remarkable (it was a source of huge irritation for the poem's most famous English translator, John Dryden) for the steady intrusions by female representatives of the divine machinery into the resolution of this heroic conflict. In addition to Juno and Juturna, Venus and one of the Furies (Dirae) also get into the action. Divine interventions are commonplace in the *Iliad*, but, aside from Juno's, they are relatively infrequent in this poem. Condensed as they are in Book 12, they take on peculiar prominence, and, in its closing scene, the intervention is peculiarly sinister.

After Juturna provokes hostilities and someone shoots the arrow that wounds Aeneas, Venus comes down to see to his quick healing and recuperation. Thereafter, she returns to help him when he needs it, while Juturna, having carried out the orders of Juno, concerns herself with efforts to help her brother and finally to save him from death. But when Juturna has done all that she can for Turnus and he knows that the tide of battle has turned against his army, realizing that his doom is near, he prepares himself for his fatal encounter and goes off to find Aeneas, like a gladiator entering the arena:

Now every last man turned and stared—
 Every Rutulian, Trojan, and Italian soldier,
 Both those high on the walls and those below
 Who were battering the walls—and they all
 Took off their armor. Latinus himself
 Was lost in wonder that these two great men,

Born in different parts of the world, had met
 And now would settle the issue with steel.

(12.848–55)

Their initial engagement produces no victor. Then comes the conversation between Jupiter and Juno that signals her abandonment of Turnus (previously, Jupiter had held up his ironic scales just as Turnus and Aeneas first encountered one another). Next, having dealt with Juno, Jupiter decides to frighten Juturna away from her brother and soften him up for Aeneas by sending down a Fury (this time unnamed, and Virgil's deliberate imprecision here renders her all the more sinister). Juno's Fury had to be summoned from the depths of hell where she and her sisters are customarily to be found in Greek and Latin poetry. Now, with another touch of Euripidean irony, Virgil shapes a terrifying anomaly: we learn that two of the Furies—apparently they can be at two places at the same time—also sit by the throne of heaven's "grim monarch" (12.1018), ready to be unleashed as divine justice requires. One of these Furies Jupiter sends down to pay a visit on Juturna and her brother. The description of the Fury's descent, of Juturna's retreat, and of the bird-fiend's assault on Turnus are among the most horrific passages in ancient (or any) poetry. The intrusion of Athena in *Iliad* 22 and her cruel deception of Hector bring shivers up and down the spine, but Virgil's celestial demon evokes pure horror. Turnus claims to have recovered from the terror the fiend had instilled in him when Aeneas challenges him (presumably Aeneas is unaware of the ugly help he's getting). With superhuman strength, Turnus hoists an immense stone and flings it at Aeneas, but when he fails to hit him, his nerve suddenly fails him, and he turns to flight. Then follows a simile, borrowed from Homer and here brilliantly expanded, in which the dread and impotence we feel when being pursued in nightmares evokes Turnus' terror and despair:

*In dreams,
 When night's weariness weighs on our eyes,
 We are desperate to run farther and farther
 But collapse weakly in the middle of our efforts.
 Our tongue doesn't work, our usual strength
 Fails our body, and words will not come.*

(12.1100–5)

From its very first lines, as we read Book 12, we become gradually ever more aware that we are seeing much of its action through the eyes of Turnus (much as was the case with Dido in Book 4). In this closing scene everything is filtered through his perspective and his feelings. And that is why, when he admits being in the wrong and begs Aeneas to show some mercy (“Give me, or if you prefer, / Give my dead body back to my people,” 12.1134–35), some readers feel only horror when the last thing they see is the last thing Turnus sees: his killer’s face.

What contributes to that horror, of course, is another, final glimpse, before the wrathful deathblow, of the humane Aeneas, the Epicurean human being who is not much at home in his poem:

Aeneas stood there, lethal in his bronze.
 His eyes searched the distance, and his hand
 Paused on the hilt of his sword. Turnus’ words
 Were winning him over, but then his gaze shifted
 To the fateful baldric on his enemy’s shoulder,
 And the belt glittered with its familiar metalwork. . . .
 (12.1139–44)

Aeneas doesn’t kill Turnus because Turnus took Pallas’ sword-belt or even because Turnus killed Pallas. Aeneas kills Turnus because he, Aeneas, had failed to keep his bargain with Evander, had not protected and guided his son, the novice warrior, and had allowed him to perish on his first battlefield. Aeneas is not angry with Turnus (whose looted sword-belt tells the story, by the way, of how young bridegrooms are sometimes murdered); Aeneas is angry with himself and with war itself and, though he doesn’t know it, with Juno and even, or especially, with the Jupiter whom the poem’s poet himself had bitterly cried out against. This poem is crowded with victims, and among them are both Turnus and his despairing, reluctant killer.

Dido

In her way as much a threat to Aeneas’ mission as Turnus, and far more famous than he, is the woman Aeneas encounters in the first half of his poem. Few women destroyed by their passion can vie with Dido in the duration of their fame or the intensity of the

sympathy or condemnation they inspire. In part her eminence here depends solely on her having found a role in a major, enduring epic poem, but her success as an iconic fictional character also arises from the generous imagination and flawless artistry that her creator lavished on her. Two of her ancient readers, Ovid and Augustine, despite the chasm that divides both their literary tastes and their ethical values, agree in making her the center of their experience of the poem. She tends to dominate the first half of the poem, and subtle echoes of her drift through its second half. She is a commanding, unforgettable, tragic figure not only in her own right but also because her tragedy does much to illumine the tragedy of the man whose love destroys her.

But she is hardly tragic when we first see her through the eyes of Aeneas. Like him, she has had to flee her homeland, and like him again she was destined to find a new homeland for herself and for those Phoenicians who escaped with her from her wicked brother. So, a widow and alone in a strange, forbidding place, she is busily engaged in building her new city when Aeneas, just escaped from the sea-storm, comes to her, asking for her help. When Dido first graciously welcomes Aeneas, she proves to be as compassionate as she is wise and effective a ruler. She is a great, good queen. But when he abandons her in obedience to Jupiter's commands and resumes his search for his new Troy in Italy, she becomes a helpless, crazed, vindictive woman who, having forsaken her responsibilities to her city, and having risked everything for her departed lover, now curses him and his progeny and kills herself.

The models for this character, for the forms and feelings that suit it, come not from Homer (Dido is not Calypso or Circe) but from Apollonius of Rhodes' *Medea* and from Euripidean tragedy (primarily Phaedra in the *Hippolytus*). In Apollonius' charming, truncated epic about callow Jason and his quest for the Golden Fleece, the origins and evolution of young Medea's passion for the handsome Greek stranger emerge from an intricate, exquisite depiction of the young woman's psyche, from the transformations that take place in her heart and her head when she collides with the new, intense erotic experience that Jason, with some divine assistance, inflicts on her. These narrative representations of erotic dynamics depend heavily on the monologues and dialogues that Euripides perfected when he was attempting to solve the problem

of how a dramatist can represent inwardness onstage, how he can show what happens in the psyche by representing the hopeless conflicts that Phaedra, for example, ponders and struggles with before she makes her fatal erotic mistake and announces the passion she feels for her stepson. Taking up these Greek models, transporting them into his heroic epic (Apollonius' epic, whatever it is, is not heroic), Virgil fashions the figure of Dido into a powerful obstacle to Aeneas' mission. She is a woman whose qualities of mind and heart, whose splendid passion, could and almost did deflect him from his destiny. Because we have witnessed the growth and workings of her passion (as surely as we witness those of Anna Karenina or Emma Bovary), because we understand the complex causes of her desperation, we care about her, and her death matters to us. As it did to Aeneas.

Or so it seems to me. The precise nature of his feelings for Dido have been the subject of considerable debate over the centuries, female readers often writing him off as worse than a cad, male readers quite frequently defending him by heaping on her the entire wealth of the misogynist's dictionary. This argument will doubtless never find resolution because Virgil's penchant both for delicate shading and for outright ambiguity finds here its fullest freedom. In any case, even more than Book 12 belongs to Turnus, Book 4 belongs to Dido. When we are not listening to her speak, we see most of what happens through her eyes or from her perspective. Which means that, particularly at crucial moments, we know relatively little about what Aeneas is thinking and feeling.

Take, for example, the moment when Dido and Aeneas, driven from their regal hunt, happen to seek shelter from the rain in the same cave. They do not get there by accident.

Earth herself and bridal Juno
 Give the signal. Fires flash in the Sky,
 Witness to their nuptials, and the Nymphs
 Wail high on the mountaintop. That day
 Was the first cause of calamity and of death
 To come. For no longer is Dido swayed
 By appearances or her good name. No more
 Does she contemplate a secret love. She calls it
 Marriage, and with that word she cloaks her sin.
 (4.189–97)

Juno, goddess of marriage, is there in the cave already, waiting with the Earth Mother, for the not-to-be-so happy bride and groom. It's possible that Dido might have fallen in love with Aeneas without divine assistance, but, for very different reasons, first Venus, and then, colluding with her, Juno, have made sure that Dido will become *madly* enamored of Aeneas. Is this a wedding or not? Juno apparently thinks so, and who, if not she, goddess of weddings, should know? Dido thinks of it as a marriage (though her subconscious mind condemns her use of the word and reproves her for betraying her vows to her dead husband), and later she will insist to Aeneas that they are in fact married. Aeneas will deny this (4.386–87) when she confronts him on discovering his plans to leave Carthage and abandon her; yet he has, up to this point, been behaving rather in the manner of her prince consort, which is precisely why Jupiter sends Mercury to scare him into abandoning her and then resuming his quest for the promised homeland. When Aeneas tells his captains to prepare in secret for their departure from Carthage,

He explains that—since good Dido knows nothing
 And would never dream that a love so strong
 Could ever be destroyed—he himself will find
 A way to approach her, the right occasion
 To break the news to her gently.

(4.326–30)

Is the “love so strong” in question hers or his or theirs? Apparently it is theirs. In his conclusion to the laconic, clumsy defense he tries to offer to her devastating accusations, he states (too) simply: “It is not my own will—this quest for Italy” (4.415). That brief (sincere) summation echoes what he had earlier affirmed (“If the Fates would allow me to lead my own life . . .,” 4.388): his fate is his country’s, his country’s is his, and there is no choice for him, pious Aeneas, to make. She, naturally, is not persuaded by these arguments, and in her second speech she curses him and hints at the suicide she will in fact commit:

And when cold death has cloven body from soul,
 My ghost will be everywhere. You will pay,
 You despicable liar, and I will hear the news;

Word will reach me in the deeps of hell.
(4.445–48)

Saying this, she runs off, “leaving him there / Hesitant with fear, and with so much more to say” (4.451–52). Then,

Aeneas, loyal and true, yearns to comfort her,
Soothe her grief, and say the words that will
Turn aside her sorrow. He sighs heavily,
And although great love has shaken his soul,
He obeys the gods’ will and returns to the fleet.
(4.455–59)

Aeneas, loyal and true: *pius Aeneas*. Fearful, with much to say, compassionate, shaken in his soul by great love, and, of course, obedient to the gods. Much feeling and meaning is packed into these few verses, which violently compress what he would have said had Dido (and Virgil) let him say it.

That brief evocation of his true feelings slips from our memories. Whereas Dido’s passions persist, vivid and indelible, we recall only the hero’s obedience, and we tend to forget the lover’s consternation and, above all, his *great love*. And we forget too the split, the division, in his soul’s essence, his *pietas*: for if he obeys his duty piously, he feels equal obligation (and pity and compassion) where his beloved Dido is concerned. We forget these few lines (and the passions that are radically condensed in them, that they have been distilled into) because Dido’s two tirades have dazzled us, have all but blinded us to his presence in the scene. If Homer had written this scene, Dido and Aeneas would have argued their positions with equal force and at equal length: that is to say, this scene would have been built out of a dramatic confrontation because Homer’s poems, particularly the *Iliad*, owe their essential formal structure to passionate, conflicting dialogue. Virgil, by contrast, lets his characters argue with each other briefly and much more rarely; instead, he tends to evoke their emotions (or moods) before or after conflict through monologue and descriptions of his characters’ mental landscapes. (Virgil’s fondness for imagining inwardness is but one of the ways in which his art contrasts with Homer’s: deep affinities between the two poets notwithstanding—Homer never had a better reader—and contrary to misconceptions of the *Aeneid* as a pale

imitation of its model, Virgil's psychological sharpness points to a genius that is not merely new, but something unique, something equally incomparable.)

This tendency to replace conflict with psychological description works nowhere to better advantage than here. So sympathetic and so cunning is the artistry that fashions Dido and her erotic rhetoric that we see and judge her nearly taciturn lover as she does; then, condemning him, and letting that condemnation stain, however faintly, what we later see of him, we erase from our memories of him his violently conflicted feelings in this crucial scene, his grief and his great love. (Unless, of course, we take a leaf from *A Streetcar Named Desire* and read Book 4 as Stanley Kowalski would have us read it, thus dismissing Dido as just another crazy lady doing crazy lady things.) Forgetting how this scene really ends (*not* with her dramatic exit) and how Aeneas really feels, we may mark him (unconsciously perhaps) as weak, craven, passionless, a patriotic robot.

That prejudice may cause us to misread him when he encounters Dido in the Underworld, in the Fields of Lamentation, in the company of others whose love has doomed them. When he sees her she seems to him

*As faint as the new moon a man sees,
Or thinks he sees, through the evening's haze.*

He broke into tears and spoke to her
With tender love. . . .

(6.545–48)

Here, as often in Virgil, feelings are evoked with a delicate, lyrical simile. Aeneas is not sure of what he sees, is not sure he wants to see what he sees. In his confusion and grief, he weeps. Then he tries to absolve himself of her death, desperately swearing "by the stars, by the powers above" (6.551), that he left her (but he fumbles here, saying not her but "her land") only when forced to leave at heaven's orders. "I could not believe that I would cause you / Such grief by leaving" (6.557–58). Hearing this, she starts to go despite his plea to her to stay and hear his excuses. "With such words Aeneas tried to soothe / Her burning soul. Tears came to his eyes, / But Dido kept her own eyes fixed on the ground" (6.561–63), and she hurried off, hostile and cold, to the "darkling grove" and the

comforting embrace of her husband. And “Aeneas, struck by the injustice / Of her fate, wept as he watched her / Disappear, and pitied her as she went” (6.569–71). The complex of tensions that shape this scene are easily resolved if we ignore his copious (and genuine) tears and then take his words at face value; if, that is to say, we regard him here as a not much older but much wiser warrior who has “gotten over” a passion that meant much less to him than it did to the doomed lady for whose demise (for which he feels, he says, no responsibility) he now expresses sympathy.

Aeneas, in such a reading of this scene, is a man who, after a final, unfortunate distraction, is now certain of his mission and fully ready to shoulder it. He feels pity for the lost lady, and he sheds a tear or two over her fate, but he then turns back to resume his journey through hell. He is indeed eager to meet his father, and he is in fact more nearly a man with a mission—he knows that he is now on the verge of undertaking it in earnest at last—than he was when he first met Dido in the upper world. But his despairing last words to her (“Fate will never / Let us speak with each other again,” 6.559–60) remind us of his final earthly meeting with her, when she also left him before he could say to her what he really wanted to say: not that he had to fulfill his duty but that he loved her. His tears, then, and what he thinks of as his pity for her unjust fate are as much for himself as they are for her. The same fate that took her love from her took his from him.

This had happened to him before, toward the end of Book 2, when in the confusion of his escape from Troy he somehow lost his beloved wife, Creüsa (“Some malignant spirit / Robbed me of my wits. . . . My wife, Creüsa, was taken from me / By some evil fortune” (2.864–68). Virgil is one of the great poets of lost loves, and these moments with Dido and Creüsa echo the superb pathos of the scene near the end of Book 4 of Virgil’s short “epic” on farming, the *Georgics*, where the poet Orpheus loses Eurydice, the wife whom he had risked going down into hell to recover. Like Orpheus, like himself toward the end of Book 2, the Aeneas who stumbles into Dido in Book 6 is a man who feels things deeply, as we learned early on in the poem when, in Book 1, we saw him weeping as he looked at representations of the Trojan War (“Here are the tears of the ages, and minds touched / By human suffering” (1.567–68). This hero and lover is a man of feelings that are at once complex and intense: deep sympathies, generous impulses, humane instincts.

For some readers, Aeneas grows ever more stoic, ever more able to control, even to extinguish, his emotions as he moves through the poem. Perhaps it would be closer to the mark to say that, in response to the increasingly harsh demands his mission places upon him, he learns the habit of repressing emotions that hinder him in the performance of his duties. There is a poignant instance of that need to stifle emotion in the interest of duty in the scene in Book 12 when Aeneas arms himself for what may be his last battle and says what may be his final farewell to his son:

As soon as his breastplate was strapped on
 And his shield was fitted to his side,
 He put his arms around Ascanius, kissed him
 Lightly through his helmet, and said:
 “Learn how to be a man from me, my son;
 Learn good fortune from others.”

(12.532–37)

This moment looks like, and almost is, a perfect depiction of the stoic ideal in action. But, for all his stern resolve, here as elsewhere, the hero is conflicted. His need to instill into his son a last, forceful reminder of the warrior’s code competes with an equal need to express a father’s tenderness. His armor thwarts his embrace; his helmet, his iron mask, deflects his kiss. The hero accomplishes what he needs to, but he does so at the expense of the father.

In recent years, readers of the *Aeneid* have spoken more and more of the cost of Aeneas’ victory, the price paid by others for his glory, or rather, for Rome’s. But the price Aeneas himself pays should not be ignored. In losing Dido, he loses not a little of himself. That huge loss for the lover foreshadows what his steady pattern of total submission to his nation’s demands will finally inflict on him, the diminution of his humanity.

Anthems for Doomed Youth

Among war’s worst evils is its appetite for its younger warriors. Homer’s *Iliad* doesn’t ignore this category of war’s victims, but its glimpses at the lost lives of the young are scattered over twenty-four books, whereas the *Aeneid* telescopes most of such carnage

into six, and that condensation provides the theme of doomed youth in his poem with its powerful, angry emphasis. In Homer, the pathos of young life blotted out finds its supreme moment in Book 21 when, unarmed, the young prince Lycaon begs for his life and hears Achilles tell him, in “a voice without a trace of softness” (Lombardo’s *Iliad* 21.104), that since the death of Patroclus he is no longer in the mood to spare Trojans and sell them into slavery. Then Achilles kills him and, with a sardonic curse, tosses him into the river. What stirs our pity here is all but hidden beneath the pitiless ferocity that consumes Achilles in this scene. At this point in his poem, Achilles wants to murder everything—even, perhaps especially, innocence.

In contrast, the newcomers to Virgil’s battlefields are given special prominence and an ample share of the narrative. In Book 10 the actions of Pallas and Lausus serve to shape the plot at one of its most crucial turns, and, at the same time, they illustrate one of the poem’s central themes, the quintessentially Roman obsession with the bonds between fathers and their sons. But effective as they are both as engines of plot and as thematic emblems, what most interests Virgil about Pallas and Lausus is their inexperience, their vulnerability, their youth. Just at Book 10’s midpoint, when the frenzied violence that will completely overwhelm it is about to be set in motion, the poet affirms their likeness to one another and mourns their shared doom:

On one side Pallas presses forward, strains,
 Confronted by Lausus, the young heroes
 Nearly equal in age, handsome beyond all,
 Neither destined to return to his homeland.
 But the Lord of Olympus did not permit them
 To meet face to face. Each was fated
 To fall soon to a greater adversary.

(10.525–31)

Pallas had gone off to war with Aeneas in place of his father, Evander, who was too old to lead his contingent into battle. But Pallas was not yet fully ready to perform this function, as Evander well knew when he solemnly entrusted his son to Aeneas’ care and tutelage (8.585–88; 11.186–93). Although Pallas, with a sort of beginner’s luck, acquits himself superbly in his first (and final)

entry into battle, he quickly proves himself in no way a match for Turnus, whom he imprudently attacks and by whose spear he falls dead. It is this death that sets in motion the series of events that will issue in Turnus' end and the poem's.

On learning of Pallas' death, a wrathful Aeneas searches vainly for Turnus, killing as he goes with a savagery that recalls Achilles before and after his slaying of Lycaon. When Juno tricks Turnus into leaving the battlefield, frustrated and beside himself with rage, Aeneas meets up with Mezentius. This banished Etruscan king is, after Turnus, the most formidable adversary that Aeneas has to face. He has just been cutting a bloody swath through the Trojan lines when Aeneas catches sight of him. Undaunted, this scorner of heaven, whose only gods are his right hand and his spear, challenges Aeneas, promising to his son, Lausus, the armor he will strip from "that robber's corpse" (10.925) as spoils. His spear misses its mark, but Aeneas is more skillful or luckier in his throw, and, severely wounded, Mezentius sinks to the ground.

Aeneas was glad to see the Tuscan's blood
 And, drawing his sword, moved in eagerly
 On an anxious Mezentius. Lausus, watching,
 Groaned deeply for love of his father,
 And tears rolled down his face.

(10.939–43)

As Lausus moves to rescue his father, the poet cannot help from intruding himself into his poem, not to warn Lausus but to offer him high, heartfelt praise:

Neither your death,
 Nor your heroic deeds—if antiquity
 Can confer belief in prowess so great—
 Nor you yourself, noble young man,
 So worthy of memory, will I leave in silence.

(10.943–47)

Aeneas, of course, advances against Lausus and, as we've seen, easily dispatches him. As a warrior, like Pallas, Lausus is brave and initially lucky, but, also like Pallas, he is unseasoned and, in his last fight, much overmatched. Finally, he shares with Pallas a filial

devotion that impels him to die in his father's place. Mezentius, no less than Evander, feels both grief and guilt for the sacrifice his son makes for him; with a characteristic twist of convention, Virgil provides Mezentius with superb expression of remorse that, lending his demise an unexpected touch of grace, both ennobles him and adds to the pathos of his son's death. This pair of youthful warriors is crucial to Virgil's plot, and they serve also to vividly embody the father-son thematic that is so close to the *Aeneid's* core. But it is their youth and the waste and injustice of their slaughter that move him, their poet, to lavish on them so much narrative space and so much artistry. Their destruction points not to the splendors of war but to its miseries, its mindless, meaningless expenditure of life and of promise.

Our second pair of doomed youths are not enemies but comrades-in-arms. The celebration of Turnus' patriotism and prowess takes up much of Book 9, but it is interrupted by the story of Nisus and Euryalus. These young Trojans volunteer to take an urgent message to Aeneas, warning him of the desperate situation that arose when he left to search for allies and that Turnus is vigorously exploiting. Their mission receives the blessings of Ascanius and his counselors, and they sally forth into the night, eager, excited, in high hopes—to their destruction.

In the Homeric model for this story (*Iliad* 10), it is two very formidable soldiers, Odysseus and Diomedes, who undertake a successful counterintelligence mission and manage to combine it with some zestful slaughter of the enemy, which they top off (the tempo is scherzo) with a dash of spectacular horse thievery. In contrast, the mood of Virgil's version is steadily more somber from the moment the pair leave the Trojan camp behind them and become quickly tangled in a fatal web of their own making. They are young and foolish, and their blind stumbling into the poem disrupts—exactly as Virgil intends—both its momentum and its uncertain purchase on epic verisimilitude. But Virgil cares about them, and he wants us to care about them, both because he is (as we've seen) much drawn to pondering the trajectories of unhappy loves and because he seems to have considerable interest in masculine beauty. We have met Nisus and Euryalus briefly before (in Book 5) when they competed in the footraces during the funeral games for Anchises. In Book 9 we see Euryalus with the eyes of his (slightly) older lover, Nisus:

No one
 More beautiful followed Aeneas
 Or wore Trojan armor. Still a boy,
 His face showed the first hint of a beard.
 One love united them. Side by side
 They would charge into battle. . . .

(9.217–22)

It is probably to impress his beloved that Nisus wants to volunteer for the dangerous mission, and he initially refuses Euryalus' wish to join him. But he gives way to his beloved's wish, and they set forth together into the nightmare that will swallow them up. Fool-hardy and untested in battle, their imprudence and vainglory quickly trap them, and, killed by the enemies who surprise them, they end their lives not with Homeric grandeur but with a sort of ambiguous poignancy, vanishing as they do into a gently lyrical *Liebestod*. When he was killed,

Euryalus rolled over, dead. Dark blood
 Ran over his beautiful limbs, and his head
 Sank down onto one shoulder,

*As a purple flower cut by a plow
 Droops in death, or as a poppy bows
 Its weary head, heavy with spring rain.*

(9.517–22)

Rushing to save his beloved and, failing in that, to kill his killer, Nisus also dies, “pierced and slashed, he threw himself / Upon his lifeless friend and there finally / Rested quietly in easeful death” (9.530–32).

Fusing two of the central themes of classical Greek homosexuality (the fashionable pederasty of classical Athens, the loving comrades-in-arms of Thebes), Virgil has here shaped a delicate, dreamlike, and finally terrifying echo of his Homeric model, one that functions almost as a sort of serious parody of it, and one that exposes war's insanities and brutalities even as it deconstructs the conventions of epic by superimposing on epic warfare this pair of attractive and, in this setting, incongruous warriors. Homosexual lovers of harder mettle than Virgil's could be made to find a

place in epic poetry (by Plato's time, Achilles and Patroclus were being misread in this fashion), but Virgil sees to it that his tender young men are mismatched with their poem. Nevertheless, perhaps to underscore this discord, clearly to emphasize this deliberate incongruity, he eulogizes his young lovers, sad in their soldiering but blissful in their shared doom, and he links them, directly and with ironic indecorum, to the grandeur of his poem's imperial theme:

Happy pair,
 If my poetry has any power
 Never shall you be blotted from memory,
 As long as the house of Aeneas still stands
 On the Capitol's unmoving rock,
 And the Roman Father rules supreme.
 (9.532–37)

No less surprising than his loving and luckless comrades is Virgil's maiden warrior, Camilla. Like them, she appropriates a surprising amount of the poet's time and attention, and like them too she alters, if she does not in fact subvert, the conventions of a genre that is essentially masculine. (Penthesilea, queen of the Amazons, had a major role in one of the minor, now vanished epics that trailed after Homer's masterpieces, but Homer himself had ignored her.) Camilla is used by her creator, again like Nisus and Euryalus, to retard the action of Book 11, whose closure he allows her (almost) to usurp, thereby heightening the suspense that has been steadily building as Turnus heads for his inevitable encounter with Aeneas. But in fashioning this complex figure, what Virgil emphasizes are her naïveté, her fundamental innocence (hence, with her as with Dido and others, the injustice of her death), and her youth.

We first meet Camilla at the end of Book 7, where she is given pride of place, concluding the catalog of all the warriors who have joined with Turnus against Aeneas. The description of her there is lyrical, surreal. She could

outrun the wind.
 She could sprint over a field of wheat
 And not even bruise the tender ears,

Could cruise above the open sea's waves
 And never wet the soles of her feet.
 (7.963–67)

So remarkable is she that young men and women rush from their homes to gaze in astonishment “At how the royal purple draped / Her smooth shoulders, how her hair / Was bound in gold, and how she carried / A Lycian quiver and an iron-tipped spear” (7.971–74). The amazement of young men and women arises in part from their surprise (which we share) at actually seeing a woman warrior (of whom they had perhaps only heard rumors) and in part from the pleasure they take (male and female alike) in her loveliness. That complex beauty depends for its effect on the pure incongruity between Camilla’s male weaponry and her fresh loveliness: the grace of her movements, her superb skin set off by her military cloak, her bright hair and its golden clip.

This golden clip foreshadows the love of gold ornamentation that will prove fatal to her toward the end of Book 11. Just near the finish of the sequence that represents her in her glory as a warrior, she catches sight of a Trojan soldier who is decked out in spectacular panoply, golden all over, from head to foot.

Camilla wanted either to hang these weapons
 As spoils in a temple or to wear the gold herself.
 In any case she singled out Chloereus
 And chased him down like a huntress,
 Oblivious to all else and raging recklessly
 Through the ranks of men with a woman’s passion
 For booty and spoils.

(11.928–34)

Virgil’s deliberately ambiguous explanation of her motives in wanting the gaudy plunder reflects the ambiguity of her character as a whole. Either she wants, as a warrior would, to dedicate the spoils as a memorial to her prowess or she wants to parade around in them (that he resolves the ambiguity by opting for sexist slander is perhaps the poet’s ironic deference to the generic demands he keeps honoring and abusing). More serious is another conflict: Camilla is a warrior, but she is also a virgin huntress, at home in the forests and mountains of Italy, in untamed nature. She has been the special

favorite of Diana, goddess of the unspoiled natural world and its creatures, since her exiled father took her with him into the wilderness when she was still a baby. On the one hand, then, she is an Amazonian leader of female warriors (a character drawn from minor Greek epic), but, on the other, she is also an Italian girl, a creature born and reared in rural peace, a devotee of Diana and the good, green world that she governs, a maiden, uncorrupted and utterly alien to civilization, to the concerns of men, their cities, their wars, and their empires. (It is entirely unclear where she and her fellow huntresses gained their anomalous military experience, but, as with Pallas and Lausus and as with Nisus and Euryalus, the discrepancy between Camilla's inexperience in warfare and her assured military prowess, though it tampers a bit with her verisimilitude, in no way diminishes her poetic efficacy.)

Oblivious to any danger, driven by her need to get the golden plunder, Camilla fails to notice an Etruscan who has been stalking her, and she dies, pierced by his javelin. Her death inspires Virgil's lyricism at its purest:

Camilla's dying hand pulled at the spear,
 But the iron point was stuck deep in her ribs.
 Drained of blood, she sank back; the chill light
 Sank in her eyes; and her face, formerly
 So radiant, turned pale in death.

(11.975–79)

Her last words are those of a warrior (she sends a message to Turnus, offering him some strategy), but her death is that of a maiden cut off in the midst of life:

As her body grew cold
 She slowly freed herself from all its bonds,
 Relaxing her neck and letting her head fall
 Into the grip of Death. Finally,
 She released her weapons, and with a moan
 Her soul fled resentfully down to the shades.

(11.992–97)

This last verse returns as the poem's final verse, the one that describes the dying moment of Turnus. Like his, Camilla's angry

resentment burst from her sense of having been wronged. Turnus, however, is a seasoned, mature warrior whereas Camilla, like the poem's other doomed young people who have been shoved too early onto the fields of battle, has been cheated of her young life.

Turnus' sister, Juturna, after having obeyed Juno and incited hostilities between Latins and Trojans, spends most of the rest of Book 12 trying to help her brother. It might seem paradoxical to speak of her youth since she is immortal, but she was not always so. Her identity as a fountain-nymph who is deathless and eternally young came to her as a recompense from Jupiter, who had ravished her when she was a mortal, a mere girl. Juno snidely reminds her of that rape and its reward when she is enlisting her to ruin the impending treaty between the Latins and the Trojans: "You know how I have given you preference / Over all the Latin girls who have climbed / Into Jove's thankless bed" (12.168–70). In her final, anguished speech to her brother, when she recognizes the monster that is attacking him and realizes that she can no longer help him, she screams at the Fury, bitterly echoing what Juno had said about Rome's patron deity, Father of Gods and Men, Fate's Minister, her spouse, and Juturna's rapist:

I know the beating of your wings,
 The sound of death, and I do not mistake
 The haughty commands of Jupiter.
 Is this how he compensated me
 For my lost virginity? Why did he give me
 Life everlasting? If I could only die
 I could end this sorrow, go through the shadows
 At my poor brother's side. I, immortal!
 Nothing can be sweet without you, Brother.
 What ground can gape deep enough
 To send a goddess to the deepest shades?

(12.1061–71)

Much of the poem's sorrow is condensed into this despairing lamentation. If one has had no sympathy for Turnus up to now, if this cry of pain from his innocent sister cannot win it for him, nothing can. The immortal grief of Juturna recalls that of another minor deity, Thetis, Achilles' mother. But to the incurable, unending suffering of the Homeric figure, Juturna adds the weight of historical

destiny. She and her brother are Italians who, along with their country, are being absorbed by, are being swallowed up into, an alien and unforgiving kingdom. Cursed now by her deathlessness, Juturna tries in vain to drown herself and her tears in the depths of the immortal fountain that she is. But she and the bitter accusations she shouts at Jupiter and the grief that drives them are not able to perish. Eternally young and eternally in mourning for her brother and for her vanquished country, hers is a never-ending wrong.

The Shield of Aeneas: Virgil and History

By and large the characters in the *Aeneid* know little or nothing of the historical forces that are shaping the events in which they find themselves making the choices they make, performing the actions they perform. Aeneas himself never gets a real grasp of the extent of Juno's enmity toward him, and the teasing, ambiguous omens, dreams, and prophecies that he encounters before he reaches Italy serve mostly to baffle him. During his visit to the Underworld, however, his father's shade provides him with an elaborate sketch of the glorious history of the nation he will soon found in Italy when his war with its native population has ended:

Now I will set forth the glory that awaits
 The Trojan race, the illustrious souls
 Of the Italian heirs to our name.
 I will teach you your destiny.

(6.896–99)

That said, a patriotic pageant, made up of souls destined to be reborn as great Romans in future ages, passes in review before Anchises, the Sibyl, and Aeneas. The procession begins with Aeneas' own as yet unborn son, Silvius, whose mother will be Aeneas' future wife, Lavinia; Silvius is followed by the early kings of Alba Longa who are followed in turn by Romulus, Rome's founder and first king: "Under his auspices, / . . . Rome will extend her renowned empire / To earth's horizons, her glory to the stars" (6.924–26). So far the procession is ordered according to a strict chronology, but at this point Anchises suddenly introduces the Julian clan, all of whom are descended from Aeneas' son, Ascanius

(whose second name is Iulus), and from all the clan he singles out only two figures, Julius Caesar and

the man promised to you,
 Augustus Caesar, born of the gods,
 Who will establish again a Golden Age
 In the fields of Latium once ruled by Saturn
 And will expand his dominion
 Beyond the Indus and the Garamantes,
 Beyond our familiar stars, beyond the yearly
 Path of the sun, to the land where Atlas
 Turns the star-studded sphere on his shoulders.
 (6.939–47)

Anchises continues his prophecies of the role Augustus will play in extending Rome's boundaries throughout the known world, boasting that neither Hercules nor Bacchus in their wide and triumphant journeyings will surpass the breadth of Augustus' dominions. Anchises ends this segment of his revelations with a subtle rebuke to what he apparently takes to be his son's hesitations about the war in Latium he is about to undertake. Given the worldwide empire that Aeneas' greatest heir will rule over, should Aeneas have qualms about gaining a foothold in Italy? "And still we shrink from extending our virtue, / And fear to take our stand in Ausonia?" (6.956–57).

Augustus is at once the centerpiece of Anchises' pageant and the zenith of Rome's destiny. Although Rome and its emperors will know greatness after Augustus is gone (like his adoptive father, Julius, to his heavenly reward), it is Augustus who will rescue Rome in its decadence from its enemies and from itself, it is he who will both restore it to former glories and set it on its new and firmer foundations. Having made this leap forward in time from Romulus and Rome's beginnings to Virgil's (and Augustus') present, Anchises then doubles back to his pageant and to the unborn souls who will someday become the successors of Romulus, the kings who will come after him. He then deftly skirts the expulsion of the last (bad) king of Rome (6.970–73) to focus on the founding of the Republic, the evolution of its "sweet liberty" (6.977), its slow, patient conquest of Italy through a series of "defensive" wars, and its steady string of victories over the Greeks and Carthaginians

who challenged its expansion throughout the Mediterranean. These descriptions of the progress of the Republic's transformation from small (agrarian) city-state into the center of its cosmopolitan world empire are presented through a series of vivid, elliptical images of great moments in Roman history.

It is hard to estimate how much Anchises expects his son to understand and take away from the achronological, swirling succession of events, the blur of unknown names and faces, that Anchises offers to his gaze. But whatever he does or doesn't understand, Aeneas doubtless gets the gist of the fabulous, confusing spectacle his father presents him with because Anchises sums it up with unforgettable clarity:

Others will, no doubt, hammer out bronze
 That breathes more softly, and draw living faces
 Out of stone. They will plead cases better
 And chart the rising of every star in the sky.
 Your mission, Roman, is to rule the world.
 These will be your arts: to establish peace,
 To spare the humbled, and to conquer the proud.
 (6.1012–18)

Aeneas, since he is and will remain a Trojan, may be surprised to find his father calling him a Roman. But he has perhaps heard the name enough by now to guess what his father is driving at: Aeneas himself is now Rome incarnate, and it is him and, through him, all true Romans and most especially the man-god, Augustus, greatest of them all, that Anchises is addressing as he explains to his son the nature of Roman identity and of Rome's mission in the world.

If Aeneas' instruction had ended there, we might feel that he had deciphered enough of the pageant's mysteries to grasp something of the meaning of the Roman Empire and his place in it. But it doesn't end there. Coming next to last in the pageant (again out of chronological order) is the great general Marcellus, The Sword of Rome. And following him, the procession's final figure, is the young man who will be the Sword's ancestor, another Marcellus, the son of Augustus' own sister and his prospective heir. Aeneas is much taken by this phantasm ("Beautiful in his gleaming armor / But with downcast eyes and troubled brow," 6.1028–29) and asks his father who he is. Anchises answers him tearfully. In verses that are

among the epic's most haunting, Anchises pronounces what is in effect an elegy for the heir apparent, another doomed youth: "Fate will permit him on earth a brief while, / But not for long" (6.1037–38). If Marcellus had not been fated to die just on the brink of his early manhood, he was to have been, could have been, should have been, a great warrior:

If only you could shatter Fate, poor boy.
 You will be Marcellus! Let me strew
 Armfuls of lilies and scatter purple blossoms,
 Hollow rites to honor my descendant's shade.
 (6.1052–55)

As usual, we are not told what Aeneas feels about the extraordinary conclusion to this splendid vision of Rome's brightest and best. When the pageant vanishes with Marcellus, Anchises fills his son "with longing for the glory that was to come" (6.1060) by describing in detail the war he is about to embark on and by telling him "how to face or flee each waiting peril" (6.1063). Enflamed he may now be with a Homeric "longing for glory" (instead of his usual passion for duty), but by the time Aeneas finds himself embroiled in the war with Turnus and the Latins he seems to have forgotten most of what his father told him. In any case, when Anchises sends him and the Sybil through the Gate of Ivory back to the upper world we don't know what mood he is in or what he has understood about the world that he lives and fights and suffers in. There are numerous opinions about why he returns through the Gate of Ivory. Whatever Virgil's intention (it is well to remember that he has a special fondness for ambiguity), by placing the doomed Marcellus so near the Gate of Dreams (whether they are illusory or improperly interpreted) he shapes a mood that tints the close of Book 6 with an uncanny, ambivalent dissonance, one that clouds our sense of Aeneas' mission and perhaps his own sense as well.

In Aeneas' next and final vision of Roman history, uncertainty seems at first to have no place. Toward the end of Book 8, after Aeneas has concluded his alliance with Evander and is ready to battle the Latins, Venus brings Aeneas the new, divine armor that she has persuaded Vulcan to make for him. He receives these gifts from her hand with much of the gusto that Achilles shows when

Thetis hands him his new armor (“he turned / The polished weapons the god had given him / Over and over in his hands, and felt / Pangs of joy at all its intricate beauty,” Lombardo’s *Iliad* 19.26–29). On taking up his weapons,

Aeneas gloried
 In the gifts from heaven, in this high honor,
 And he could not satisfy his eyes as they moved
 From one part to another. He was lost in wonder
 As he turned each piece over in his hands
 And cradled it in his arms. . . .

(8.704–9)

But here the similarities between Virgil’s scene and its model end. On the shield of Achilles, the god Hephaestus has engraved the entire world: earth, ocean, the heavens, and their stars. Then, representing the human world, “he made two cities, peopled / And beautiful” (Lombardo’s *Iliad* 18.528–29), one at peace and one at war. Up to this point, it looks as if Achilles’ shield might be symbolizing the *Iliad* itself, which also shows peoples and their cities at peace and at war (but with a decided emphasis on war). But the rest of the shield, a little more than half of it, is devoted to the arts and pleasures of peace: fields being plowed and harvested, vineyards, farms and livestock, the business of living; it ends, rapturously, with young men and women in a joyful dance that portends matrimony and the renewal of the fertile world. There are various plausible ways of reading Achilles’ shield, but a not unreasonable interpretation might be that the design on the shield of this best, most fearsome of Greek warriors explains what soldiers (him included, for all his glamorous individualism and obsession with glory) are supposed to be fighting to secure, namely, peace and its blessings for their compatriots and their children’s children.

Vulcan’s design is rather different. On the shield of Aeneas

the Fire God had prophetically wrought
 The future of Italy, and Roman triumphs
 In the coming ages, every generation,
 In order, still to be born from the stock
 Of Ascanius, and all the wars they would fight.

(8.716–20)

What the shield will offer Aeneas (and us), then, is a reprise of the parade of phantoms in Book 6. However, instead of being limited to memorializing military glory, it, like the shield of Achilles, will culminate in the blessings of peace. But this peace is not at all the peace that Homer imagined: the absence of war as the ideal condition that all humans yearn for. Instead, what Vulcan portrays at the center of Aeneas' shield is the imperial, universal peace (the *pax Augustana*) that Augustus established when he defeated Antony and Cleopatra and thereby put an end to Rome's hundred years of civic strife.

Vulcan's pictures begin, much as Anchises' pageant had begun, with early Roman history, but he skips quickly from Ascanius to Romulus, devotes much of his space to Romulus' successors and to the great (dim) heroes of the early Republic, ending this segment with the fateful day when the Gauls actually sacked Rome (387 B.C.E.). Abruptly, he then includes a snippet of the Underworld:

Far below he set the hells of Tartarus,
 The high gates of Dis, and the wages of sin.
 You, Catiline, were hung from the frowning
 Face of a cliff and trembled at the Furies
 While Cato, set apart, gave laws to the good.
 (8.762–66)

Between them, Catiline, one of Rome's worst traitors, and Cato the Younger, one of its greatest moral champions, summon up so briefly that they function only to extinguish the ugly story of the disintegration of the Republic in its last years, the turmoil and violence that both produced Augustus and was ended by him. It is this sleight of hand that allows Vulcan (and Virgil), in another sudden shift of mood and topic, to begin their depiction of the triumph of Augustus, which will take up more than half of the rest of the shield.

The sea-battle that made Augustus ruler of the world and bringer of the peace it had longed for begins with a deceptive, lyrical loveliness:

These scenes were lapped by the swelling sea,
 Pure gold, yet the water was blue, and flecked
 With whitecaps. Circling dolphins picked out in silver
 Cut through the waves and their tails flicked the spume.
 (8.767–70)

At the fateful Battle of Actium, engraved on one side, stands Caesar Augustus, leading a united Italy along with Rome and its people, its senate and its gods, against Antony and his Egyptian wife, who are figured on the opposite side, with all their maddened Oriental hordes. Cleopatra has summoned the monstrous, bestial gods of her kingdom to aid her, but, “chiseled in iron at the eye of the battle” (8.802), ranged against them are Neptune, Minerva, Venus, Mars, the Furies, Discord, and the war goddess Bellona. It is Apollo, however, the god with whom Augustus most identified himself, the god who would come to best symbolize the style of his governance and his incontestable right to power, it is Apollo who bends his bow, it is his arrow that puts an end to the Battle of Actium. (Virgil’s contemporary, the poet Propertius, provides us with a delicious parody of this moment in his poem on Actium, *Elegies* 4.6.) Terrified, the wicked Queen deserts Antony along with her motley squadrons and is gathered up (like Dido before her, whom she echoes in other ways) into a pretty, lyrical demise. “Pale as death,” completing her flight to Egypt, she sails into the Nile where “The great rivergod had opened all the folds / Of his copious robe and welcomed the vanquished / Into the sheltering waters of his azure lap” (8.815–17).

Unlike the pageant of Book 6, the shield of Aeneas is carefully directed toward and ends vividly in pure narrative. This heavily stylized, condensed, elliptical representation of the Battle of Actium and its aftermath may be all that is left of the germ of an epic about Augustus that Virgil seems to have considered composing before he hit upon the (subtler, more artistic) idea of framing the story of Augustus, like a jewel in its setting, by the story of Aeneas. The picture of Augustus in triumph after his return to Egypt, benevolent and wise, graciously welcoming a grateful humankind as it throngs from all over the known world to do him homage (or rather to worship him) is possessed of a poetic beauty as splendid as it is delicate and concise. It is an astonishing, unforgettable portrait of the Augustan Peace.

But it is far from clear that Aeneas understands the meaning of Actium any better than he understands the rest of his shield (or any better than he had understood the Underworld pageant). He rejoices in the beauty of his armor when he first receives it, but we are told (8.715), even as he delights in it, that its design is “ineffable [*non enarrabile*],” beyond description or explanation. It is, of

course, the perfection of the shield's craftsmanship, the beauty of the artifact, that is "ineffable," but what it represents is also beyond the power of art (both Vulcan's and poetry's) to imitate, to order, to clarify. And even it were not, even if the uncertainties and anomalies of history could be distilled through art to clarity, Aeneas still could not understand them:

Such was the design of the shield Vulcan made,
 Venus' gift to her son. Aeneas was moved
 To wonder and joy by the images of things
 He could not fathom, and he lifted to his shoulder
 The destiny of his children's children.

(8.840–44)

So different from the feelings he had back in Carthage when he gazed at the pictures of the Trojan War, it is an ironic sort of joy he feels in the pictures of wars and triumphs that he does not understand and that he does not and cannot connect with the procession he saw in the Underworld. As he once lifted his father on his shoulders in their flight from Troy to a new homeland, so also he now hoists onto his shoulders these pictures (puzzling to him, clear to Augustus and to us) of a glorious future that he comprehends dimly if at all, one that his actions will ensure but that he will not live to partake of. At this moment, though he is near his goal, he is still what he was when we first glimpsed him, "exiled by Fate" (1.3), "a man battered / On land and sea" (1.4–5). Courageous, dutiful, compassionate, in proud possession of his beautiful and baffling shield, he is as much an existential Everyman as an epic hero when he departs from Evander's city to resume his struggles in a world whose workings and meanings he cannot grasp.

Virgil's first readers, of course, could read the shield expertly, and among them who more expertly than Augustus himself, the center of the shield, its real meaning, the man-god emperor who was to Aeneas little more than one of the more splendid of the ghostly creatures in the Underworld parade—that, and a mere name? As he read the shield, he, the real purpose of Aeneas' mission, Augustus would have seen nothing disconcerting in Aeneas' failure to understand the significance of the actions that he was, as an instrument of Fate, required to perform. Some of his

contemporaries, however, probably did notice that fissure, and some of them may have sensed that it pointed to other places in the poem—among them, the poet's cry to Jupiter in Book 12, Anchises' elegy for Marcellus, Juturna's lament, Aeneas' encounter with Dido in the Underworld, his anguished speech over the corpse of Lausus—where the poem's patriotic grandeur conflicts with its more private, human face, moments in it when its sense of suffering outweighs its sense of imperial imperative, where Aeneas the human being and Aeneas the progenitor of all-conquering Rome split apart.

But there were probably more readers among Virgil's first readers (and there have been many more since) for whom, as for Augustus, such ambiguities were of no real importance. For these readers, any doubt about the centrality of Augustus on Aeneas' shield, and what they took to be his centrality in the poem, was unthinkable. Like any reader of Appian's *Civil Wars* (his terrifying history of Rome in the hundred years before the Battle of Actium), these readers knew in their blood and their bones why Augustus deserved to be, needed to be, at the center of a poem that celebrated Rome and its destiny. It was not hard to persuade them that his birth was a miracle, that his sudden intervention in Rome's self-destruction, just at the moment of what seemed its complete destruction, was providential. They understood why some Greeks hailed him as "savior" and were prepared to call him a god and to worship him as a god. For these readers, what might appear to be the poem's fissures or gaps or ambiguities, if they could not be explained (away), could be safely and easily ignored (after all, Virgil had not had a chance to put his finishing touches to his epic). So, for these readers, Augustus was at the center of Aeneas' shield because he became and remained and would remain the still center of Rome and its world, which was at the center of the universe and of history; he was the actuality toward which all the world's potentialities had always been moving.

Exactly what Virgil intended by the shield and by the poem that accords it such prominence we will never know. (One of its very best modern readers, the wonderful W. F. Jackson Knight, was so eager to learn what the poet really meant that he asked a friend to hold seances with a view to finding the answers to his questions "in the beyond.") We can assume that Virgil had some sympathy with those of his readers who would be pleased with

the grandeur of his shield, who felt comfort in the world that Augustus had (as he claimed) rescued from ruin and remade, who felt unable to express their gratitude sufficiently and welcomed a poet and a poem that would say what they themselves were incapable of saying in praise of the return of law and order and the blessings of peace. But he may very well have shared some of the thoughts and feelings of those who paused to ponder those places in his poem where its tensions reveal themselves, where there glimmer, under the surfaces of the poem, worries about the fate of empires, about what happens when delight in prosperity turns into the dangerous notion that greed is good, and when joy in victory morphs into mere hubris. We cannot know whether he deliberately crafted those tensions, thus setting the truth of human misery against the truth of human achievement, or whether he was merely reflecting, merely recording (almost unconsciously) the tensions and uncertainties that continued to haunt Rome in the first decade of Augustus' reign, before it began to seem likely that he would *not* join his predecessors in being swept away in the chaos of Rome's recent history, before it began to seem possible, even probable, that the settlement he was planning would be successful and permanent.

Whether by his own design or as a reflection of anxieties in Rome's collective consciousness (whether he shared them or didn't), interwoven in the poem's epic texture, countervailing its celebration of the warrior in triumph, is the persistent memory of the outcast, the exile, who speaks with the voice of the dispossessed, of Trojan, not Roman, Aeneas. In recent years, some readers, this reader among them, have been struck with what they take to be Virgil's Epicurean strain and the deep, unyielding imprint on his mind and art by Lucretius' *On the Nature of Things*. One line from that poem could serve as a useful motto for this aspect of Virgil's vision of the human condition: "*imbecillorum est aequum miserarier omnes*" (5.1023), "it is just for all of us to feel compassion for those who are weak." The *Aeneid* imagines how the world, how any society, any time, anywhere, can be saved by depicting (and celebrating) how Rome, Virgil's own (adopted) city, was once saved. Though ambiguous about the nature of victory, it is hardly contemptuous of prosperity and ordinary happiness. But it is never forgetful of the prevalence of human suffering, it never ignores the pain and the loss of the defeated or the huge cost of

victory, to the victor no less than to the vanquished. Aeneas is the right hero for this strange, almost unepical epic, an odd and improbable hero, perhaps, but more credible than many and more admirable than most.

W. R. Johnson
University of Chicago

AENEID ONE

Arms I sing—and a man,
The first to come from the shores
Of Troy, exiled by Fate, to Italy
And the Lavinian coast; a man battered
On land and sea by the powers above 5
In the face of Juno's relentless wrath;
A man who also suffered greatly in war
Until he could found his city and bring his gods
Into Latium, from which arose
The Latin people, our Alban forefathers, 10
And the high walls of everlasting Rome.

Muse, tell me why the Queen of Heaven
Was so aggrieved, her godhead so offended,
That she forced a man of faultless devotion
To endure so much hardship. Can there be 15
Anger so great in the hearts of gods on high?

There was an ancient city, Carthage,
Colonized by Tyrians, facing Italy
And the Tiber's mouth far across the sea;
A city rich in resources, fierce in war, 20
And favored by Juno more than any other
Place on earth, even more than Samos. Here
Were her arms, her chariot; this was the city
The goddess cherished and strove to make
Capital of the world, if the Fates permitted. 25
But she had heard that a scion of Trojan blood

Would someday level Carthage's citadel;
 That a Trojan people, an imperial power,
 Would destroy Libya: so the Parcae
 Were spinning out Fate. The Goddess 30
 Brooded on this and on the Trojan War,
 Which she herself, Saturnian Juno,
 Had waged on behalf of her beloved Greeks,
 Ever mindful of the Judgment of Paris—
 The cause of the war—and her savage grief 35
 Over her beauty scorned by that hateful race.
 Nor could she forget the spiteful honor given
 To ravaged Ganymede.

Incensed with these memories,
 The Goddess kept the Trojan remnant
 That had escaped the Greeks—and Achilles' rage— 40
 Tossed all over the sea's expanse,
 Far from Latium, doomed to wander
 The circling waters year after year.

So massive was the labor of founding Rome.

Sicily had scarcely dropped out of sight, 45
 And they were sailing joyfully on the open sea,
 Bronze prows shearing the seaspume,
 When Juno, nursing her heart's eternal wound,
 Said to herself:

“Am I to admit defeat,
 Unable to keep these Trojans and their king 50
 From Italy? Forbidden by the Fates, am I?
 Pallas could burn the Argives' fleet
 And drown all hands for one man's offense—
 Oilean Ajax's fit of passion.
 She herself hurled Jupiter's fire from heaven, 55
 Splintered the ships, churned up the sea,
 And whirled up Ajax, exhaling flames
 From his pierced lungs, and impaled him on a crag.
 But I, who walk among the gods as their queen,
 Sister of Jupiter and Jupiter's wife—I 60

Have to wage war for years on end
 Against this one race. Who will worship Juno
 After this, or bow down before her holy altars?"

Her heart inflamed, the Goddess went
 To Aeolia, a country of clouds 65
 And raging winds. Here in a vast cave
 Aeolus rules the squalls and gales,
 Keeping them chained in vaulted cells.
 The indignant winds roar at their prison doors,
 Rumbling deep in the mountain. But Aeolus 70
 Sits on high and with his scepter calms
 Their frenzied souls. If he did not,
 They would swoop over land and sea
 And through the deep sky, sweeping
 Everything before them. Fearing just this, 75
 The Father Almighty hid them away
 In dark caves and piled above them
 A mountain massif. And he gave them a king,
 One who would know by chartered agreement
 When to restrain and when to unleash them. 80
 It was to Aeolus that Juno came as a suppliant:

"Aeolus, by order of the Father of Gods and Men
 You calm the waves or provoke them with wind.
 A race I despise sails the Tyrrhenian Sea,
 Bringing Ilium's conquered gods to Italy. 85
 Hit them hard with a storm and sink their ships,
 Or scatter the fleet and litter the sea with corpses.
 I have fourteen Nymphs with lovely bodies,
 The most radiant of which, Deiopeia,
 I will pronounce your wife, to have and to hold, 90
 In return for this favor. She will live with you
 All her years and bear you beautiful children."

And Aeolus:

"It is yours to consider what you want,
 My Queen, and mine to fulfill your commands.
 To you I owe this modest realm and Jove's good will. 95

You grant me a seat at the table of the gods,
And you make me master of cloud and storm.”

With that, he drove the butt of his spear
Against the cavernous mountainside, and the winds,
In battle formation, rushed out of all ports 100
And whirled over the earth. Swooping down,
They fell on the sea. Eurus and Notus
Churned up the depths, and with them Africus,
Whose dark squall line rolled huge waves shoreward.
The crews began to shout, the rigging creaked, 105
And then, in an instant, clouds stole the daylight
From the Trojans’ eyes. Night lay black on the sea.
The sky’s roof thundered and flashed with lightning,
And everywhere men saw the presence of death.

Aeneas’ limbs suddenly went numb with cold. 110
He groaned and, lifting both palms to heaven, said:

“Three times, four times luckier were those
Who died before their parents’ eyes
Under Troy’s high walls! O Diomedes,
Bravest of the Greeks, if only I had been killed 115
By your right hand on Ilium’s plain,
Where Hector went down under Achilles’ spear,
Where huge Sarpedon lies, where the Simois rolls
So many shields and helmets caught in its current
And the bodies of so many brave heroes!” 120

As he was speaking a howling wind from the North
Struck against the sail. Waves shot to the stars.
The oars shattered. The prow swung around,
Exposing the side to the waves, and then
A mountain of water broke over the fleet. 125
The crews of some ships bobbed high on the crest,
While the wave’s deep trough revealed to others
The deep seafloor churning with sand.
The South Wind twirled a trio of ships
Onto the Altars—the Italians’ grim name 130
For the hulk of reef lurking under the sea.

The East Wind pushed another three ships
 Into the shallows and ground them onto
 The Syrtes' shoals, bedding them down
 In pockets of sand. Another ship, 135
 Which carried the Lycians and trusted Orontes,
 Sank before Aeneas' own eyes. A wall of water
 Crashed onto the deck, and the pilot flew headfirst
 Into the sea. The ship spun around twice, three times,
 Caught in a whirlpool that sucked it down quickly. 140
 You could see men swimming here and there
 In the vast gulf. Wicker shields, plaques,
 And Trojan finery floated on the waves.
 And now Ilioneus' strong ship, now Achates',
 Now the ships that carried Abas and old Aletes 145
 Were battered by the storm. Their joints sagged,
 And they took on water through their splitting seams.

Meanwhile, the news filtered down to Neptune
 Of the turmoil above. He heard the murmur
 From the churning surface, and he felt 150
 The still, bottom water rise in upheaval.
 Lifting his serene face above the waves,
 He peered out and saw Aeneas' fleet
 Scattered, and the Trojans overwhelmed
 By rough seas and the sky's downpour. 155
 His sister's treachery was all too obvious.
 Calling Eurus and Zephyrus, he said to them:

"Do you have so much confidence, Winds,
 In your family connections? Do you dare
 Overturn heaven and earth and raise tons of water 160
 Up to the sky—without my divine sanction?
 Why, I ought to . . . ! But settling the waves comes first.
 You won't get off so lightly next time.
 Now clear out of here! And tell your king this:
 The sea and the trident were allotted to me, 165
 Not to him. His domain is the outsized rock
 That you and yours, Eurus, call home. Aeolus
 Can puff himself up there, in his own hall,
 And lord it over the prison of the winds."

Thus Neptune, and—no sooner said than done—
 He calmed the sea, chased off the massed clouds,
 And brought back the sun. Cymothöe and Triton,
 Working together, pushed the ships off the jagged reef.
 Neptune himself levered them up with his trident,
 Cut channels through the shoals, and eased the swells,
 His chariot's wheels skimming the whitecaps.

*Riots will often break out in a crowded assembly
 When the rabble are roused. Torches and stones
 Are soon flying—Fury always finds weapons—
 But then all eyes light upon a loyal citizen,
 A man of respect. The crowd stands still
 In hushed expectation. And with grave words
 He masters their tempers and calms their hearts.*

So too the crashing sea fell silent, as its sire,
 Surveying the watery expanse, drove his chariot
 Under a clear sky, giving the horses free rein.

Aeneas' men, numb with fatigue,
 Made for the nearest land, the coast of Libya.

They found a deep bay, across whose mouth
 An island stands and makes a good port:
 The waves that roll in from the open sea
 Break on its sides and ripple on to shore.
 The bay is flanked by high cliffs. Twin crags
 Rise like threats toward the sky, but the water below
 Is sheltered and silent. Above, shimmering woods,
 And, rising higher, a dark grove with sinister shadows.
 Opposite the looming crags is a cave,
 With sweet-water springs and stone seats inside,
 A haunt of the Nymphs. Sea-weary ships
 Need not be tied in this harbor, nor moored
 By hooked anchors that bite the seafloor.

Aeneas puts in here with the seven ships
 That are left of his fleet. Lusting for dry land,
 The Trojans disembark on the welcome beach,

Laying their brine-soaked bodies on the sand. 205
 Achates strikes a flint and catches a spark
 In leaves, then feeds the flames with dry tinder.
 The men bring out whatever grain they can salvage
 From the spoiled stores and, weary of it all,
 Parch the kernels and grind grain on stones. 210

Aeneas now climbed up to an isolated point
 With a view of the sea spread out below,
 Hoping to see where the storm might have left
 The Phrygian galleys of Antheus
 Or of Capys, or to glimpse Caicus' armor 215
 Mounted high on the stern. There was no ship in sight,
 But he did see three stags browsing on the shore
 And behind them an entire herd, feeding
 In a long line down through the valley. Aeneas
 Stood still, as did faithful Achates, 220
 Who passed over feathered arrows and bow.
 He brought down the leaders, each standing tall
 With a thicket of antlers, and then he shot
 At the herd itself, scattering them with his arrows
 Into the woods. He did not stop shooting 225
 Until he had triumphantly brought down
 Seven good-sized animals, one for each ship.
 Back at the port, Aeneas divided the meat
 Among all of his men and distributed wine
 That the hero Acestes had stored in jars 230
 And given to them at their departure
 From Sicily's shores. And then Aeneas
 Spoke to his men to ease their hearts:

“Trojans! This is not our first taste of trouble.
 You have suffered worse than this, my friends, 235
 And God will grant an end to this also.
 You faced Scylla's fury in her thundering crags
 And braved the Cyclops' rocks. Recall your courage
 And put aside your fear and grief. Someday, perhaps,
 It will help to remember these troubles as well. 240
 Through all sorts of perils, through countless dangers,
 We are headed for Latium, where the Fates promise us

A peaceful home, and where Troy will rise again.
Endure, and save yourselves for happier times.”

Aeneas said this, and though he was sick 245
With worry, he put on a good face
And pushed his anguish deep into his heart.
They set about preparing a feast from the kill.
Some did the skinning and butchering
And skewered the still quivering flesh on spits. 250
Others set cauldrons on the shore and tended fires.
The meal revived their strength. Spread out
Along the grass, they took their fill of old wine
And fat venison. When the feast was finished,
They talked long about their lost companions, 255
Hoping they were still alive, but fearing
They had met their end and would hear no more
When their names were called.
Loyal Aeneas grieved especially
For bold Orontes, and lamented in silence 260
The bitter loss of Amycus and Lycus,
Of brave Gyas and brave Cloanthus.

The day was at an end, and Jupiter
Was looking down from heaven’s zenith
At the sail-winged sea and at the shores 265
Of all the peopled lands spread far and wide,
And as he looked he paused at the sky’s pinnacle
And turned his luminous eyes toward Libya,
Pondering the world’s woes. And Venus, sad,
Her eyes shining with tears, said to him: 270

“Lord of Lightning, eternal Ruler of Gods and Men,
What has my Aeneas done to offend you?
What have my Trojans done? They have suffered
One disaster after another, and still the whole world
Is barred to them to keep them out of Italy. 275
Surely someday, in the turning of time,
The Romans are to arise from this race.
They will continue Teucer’s bloodline

And give birth to rulers who will hold
 Earth and sea under their dominion. 280
 You promised. What has changed your mind,
 Father? That promise was what consoled me
 At Troy's heartrending downfall. I balanced one fate
 Against another. But the fortunes of these men,
 After all their mishaps, have still not changed. 285
 What end, O Lord, will you grant to their toils?
 Antenor was able to escape the Greeks,
 Cross safely over the Illyrian gulfs,
 Pass the Liburnians' inmost realms,
 And skirt the springs of the Timavus 290
 Where it bursts through nine roaring mouths
 And floods the fields under a sounding sea.
 There he founded the town of Padua,
 Settled his Teucrians, named his race,
 And fixed the arms of Troy on a temple wall. 295
 Now he is at rest and enjoys peaceful ease.
 But we, your own flesh and blood,
 To whom you have opened the heights of heaven,
 Have lost our ships—O the infamy!—
 And because of one deity's anger are betrayed 300
 And disbarred from the shores of Italy.
 Is this the reward for devotion? Is this
 How you restore our ancestral power?"

Smiling at her with the look that calms storms
 And clears the sky, the Father of Gods and Men 305
 Kissed his daughter lightly and said:

"Spare your fears, Cytherean. Your people's destiny
 Remains unmoved. You will see Lavinium
 And its promised walls, and you will raise
 Great-souled Aeneas to the stars on high. 310
 I have not changed my mind. Your son—
 I will speak at length, since you are so worried,
 Unrolling Fate's scroll and revealing its secrets—
 Your son will wage a great war in Italy,
 Crush barbarous nations, and set up laws 315
 And city walls for his own people, reigning

In Latium until three summers have passed
 And three winters since the Rutulians' defeat.
 But the boy Ascanius, surnamed Iulus—
 His name was Ilus while Ilium still stood— 320
 Will be in power for thirty great cycles
 Of the rolling months, will move his throne
 From Lavinium, and build the mighty walls
 Of Alba Longa. This kingdom will endure
 For three hundred years under Hector's race, 325
 Until Ilia, Vesta's royal priestess,
 Pregnant by Mars, shall give birth to twins.
 Then Romulus, proud in the tawny hide
 Of the wolf who nursed him, will continue
 The lineage, build the walls of Mars, 330
 And call the people, after his own name,
 Romans. For these I set no limits
 In time or space, and have given to them
 Eternal empire, world without end.
 Even Juno, who in her spite and fear 335
 Now vexes earth, sea, and sky, shall adopt
 A better view, and with me cherish the Romans,
 Lords of the world, the people of the toga.
 That is my pleasure. And there will come a time
 As the years glide on, when the descendants 340
 Of Trojan Assaracus shall subdue
 Glorious Mycenae, Phthia, and Argos.
 From this resplendent line shall be born
 Trojan Caesar, who will extend his Empire
 To the Ocean and his glory to the stars, 345
 A Julian in the lineage of great Ilus.
 And you, Venus, free at last from care,
 Will someday welcome him into heaven,
 Laden with Oriental spoils of war,
 And his name too will be invoked in vows. 350
 Then war shall be no more, and the ages
 Will grow mild. Grey-haired Faith, and Vesta,
 And Quirinus with his brother Remus
 Will make laws. The Gates of War,
 Iron upon bolted iron, shall be closed, 355
 And inside, impious Fury will squat enthroned

On the savage weapons of war, hands bound tight
 Behind his back with a hundred brazed knots,
 Howling horrible curses from his blood-filled mouth.”

Thus Jupiter, and from heaven he dispatched 360
 Mercury, Maia’s winged son, so that Carthage,
 With its newly built towers, would lie open
 To welcome the Trojans, and that Dido,
 In her ignorance of Fate, would not ban them
 From her land. The god wings his way 365
 Through the vast sky, quickly touches down
 On Libya’s shore, and just as quickly
 Accomplishes his mission. At the god’s will
 The Phoenicians put aside their fighting spirit,
 And, above all, the Queen conceived 370
 A great benevolence toward the Trojans.

Aeneas, meanwhile, aware of his duty,
 Was up thinking the whole night through.
 When Dawn kissed his face with light, he resolved
 To set forth and explore the strange coastline 375
 To see which way the wind had blown him
 And to see who lived there, man or beast,
 In the untilled land that lay before him.
 Then, he would report back to his men.
 He hid the fleet under a rocky overhang 380
 Steeped in a forest’s shimmering shade.
 Then he strode forth, with Achates
 His only companion, gripping in his hand
 A pair of javelins tipped with flared iron.

And there, in the middle of the forest, 385
 Was his mother, coming toward him.
 She looked and dressed like a young woman
 And bore a huntress’s weapons. She could have been
 A Spartan girl, or Harpalyce of Thrace,
 Who outruns horses and the Hebrus’ rapids. 390
 A supple bow was slung over her shoulders
 In the style of a huntress, and she let her hair

Fly loose in the wind. Her flowing robe was cinched up
 In a knot, offering a glimpse of her knees.
 She spoke first:

“Have either of you seen 395
 Any of my sisters? They’re sporting quivers
 And lynx hides. They may have wandered here,
 Or are hot on the trail of a frothing boar.”

Thus Venus, and the son of Venus responded:

“I’ve neither heard nor seen any of your sisters. 400
 But how should I address you, Maiden? Your face
 Is hardly mortal, and your voice does not sound human.
 Surely you are a goddess. Apollo’s sister?
 One of the Nymphs? Whoever you are, Goddess,
 Be gracious to us, lighten our burden, 405
 And tell us, under what sky are we now?
 Into what part of the world have we been tossed?
 We are strangers in a strange land, lost,
 Driven here by the wind and immense seas.
 Many victims will fall by my hand at your altars.” 410

And Venus:

“I am hardly worthy of such honor.
 It is customary among Tyrian girls
 To carry quivers and lace on high scarlet boots.
 What you see around you is Tyrian country
 And a Punic city from Agenor’s bloodline, 415
 But it borders on Libya, a warlike nation.
 Dido rules here, having left her city, Tyre,
 To escape from her brother. It’s a long story,
 Full of intrigue, but I will sum it up for you.
 Dido’s husband, Sychaeus, was the richest man 420
 In Phoenicia, and loved dearly
 By ill-starred Dido. Her father, with good omens,
 Had given her to him untouched and virgin.
 But her brother, Pygmalion, who ruled the land,
 Was a most wicked man. A feud rose up 425

Between the two men, and impious Pygmalion,
 Blind with gold-lust and contemptuous
 Of his sister's love, secretly cut down Sychaeus
 Before the altars, alone and off guard.
 The villain hid his crime for a long time 430
 And with many pretenses cruelly kept alive
 Poor Dido's vain hopes. But the actual ghost
 Of her unburied husband visited her dreams,
 Lifting his pale face in wondrous ways.
 He showed her the bloodstained altars, 435
 Bared his pierced chest, and revealed the crime
 At the dark heart of the noble house.
 Then he urged her to flee the country,
 And, to aid her journey, he showed her where
 An ancient, secret treasure was buried, 440
 Untold tons of silver and gold. Roused by all this,
 Dido prepared for flight, joined by others
 Who either feared or hated the cruel tyrant.
 They commandeered ships, loaded them with gold,
 And all the wealth of avaricious Pygmalion 445
 Was shipped out to sea. A woman did this.
 They arrived at the place where now you see
 The soaring walls of a new city—Carthage.
 They bought as much land as they could surround
 With the hide of an ox, and so its name Byrsa. 450
 But who are you? From what shores did you sail,
 And where are you going?"

Faced with such questions,
 Aeneas sighed and drew his voice from deep within:

"Goddess, if I were to start from the beginning
 And tell you the whole tale of our suffering, 455
 Dusk would gather over the dying day.
 We are from Troy. Perhaps the name
 Of that ancient city means something to you.
 We have wandered the seas, and a storm
 Has driven us to the coast of Libya. 460
 I am Aeneas, devoted to my city's gods,
 Refugees I rescued from enemy hands,

And my ship's most precious cargo. My fame
 Has reached the heavens above. My quest
 Is for Italy to be our fatherland, and to found 465
 A race descended from Jove most high.
 I embarked on the Phrygian sea with twenty ships,
 My mother charting my course
 As I pursued my destiny. Scarcely seven
 Have survived the winds and the waves. 470
 Lost, destitute, I wander the Libyan desert,
 A man expelled from both Europe and Asia."

Venus would not endure any further self-pity
 And interrupted him in mid-complaint:

"Whoever you are, I can hardly believe 475
 You draw your breath cursed by the gods.
 After all, here you are at our Tyrian town.
 Just get yourself to the Queen's doorstep.
 I foretell that your ships and comrades are safe,
 Driven to shore by winds from the North— 480
 Unless I've learned nothing about reading birds.
 Observe the serenity of those twelve gliding swans.
 An eagle, Jove's bird, swooped down from above
 And disturbed their flight in the open sky,
 But now they are flying in a long line again. 485
 Some have landed, and you can see the others
 Looking down for a good place to alight.
 Just as those birds, in formation again,
 Sport with wings whirring, rimming the sky
 And issuing their song, so too your ships, 490
 With their hearty crews, are either in port
 Or entering the harbor under full sail.
 Well, go on. Just let your feet follow the road."

She spoke, and as she turned, her neck
 Shone with roselight. An immortal fragrance 495
 From her ambrosial locks perfumed the air,
 Her robes flowed down to cover her feet,
 And every step revealed her divinity.

Aeneas knew his own mother, and his voice
Fell away from her as she disappeared: 500

“You! Do you have to cheat your son
With empty appearances? Why can’t we
At least embrace and talk to each other
In our own true voices?”

With this rebuke,
Aeneas turned toward the city. 505
Venus, for her part, enclosed both her son
And his companion in a dark cloud,
Cloaking them in mist so that none would see them
As they walked along and so detain them
With questions about their reasons for coming. 510
And then she was gone, aloft to Paphus,
Happy to see her temple again, where Arabian
Incense curls up from one hundred altars
And fresh wreaths of flowers sweeten the air.

The two heroes, meanwhile, followed the path 515
And ascended a hill high above the city.
Looking down, Aeneas was amazed
At the sheer size of the place—once a few hovels—
The city gates, the bustle on the paved streets.
The Tyrians were hard at work, building walls, 520
Fortifying the citadel, rolling boulders by hand,
Marking out sites for houses with trenches.
As Aeneas watched, they made laws, chose officials,
Installed a senate. Some were dredging
The harbor, others laying the foundation 525
For a theater, carving huge columns out of a cliff
To grace the stage that was yet to be built—

*Like bees under an early summer sun
Leading a new swarm out to the wildflowers,
Or stuffing honey into the comb, 530
Swelling the cells with nectar, or unloading
The pollen other bees bring to the stall,
Or warding off the worthless brood of drones:*

*The busy hive seethes with all their activity
And the fragrant honey is redolent of thyme.* 535

“Happy are they whose walls are rising.”

Thus Aeneas, as he surveyed the city’s heights.
And then, hidden in the miraculous cloud
He mingled with the citizens, invisible to all.

At the city’s center there was a shady grove. 540
It was here the Phoenicians when they made land,
Refugees from the surge and storms of the sea,
Had dug up the token foretold by Juno,
The head of a spirited horse, an augury
Of success in war and a prosperous people. 545
Here Sidonian Dido had dedicated
A huge temple to Juno, rich with offerings
And the goddess’s presence. A bronze threshold
Surmounted the steps; the joints and beams glowed
With bronze, and bronze doors slowly groaned open 550
On heavy hinges. It was in this grove that Aeneas
Could finally relax; here he first dared
To hope for safe harbor and have confidence,
After all his trials, in a turn for the better.
For while he was waiting for the Queen, 555
Touring the temple, marveling at the city’s
Great good fortune and at the work
Of various artisans blended together,
He saw pictured on the walls the whole Trojan War,
Whose fame had already spread through the world. 560
There were the sons of Atreus, there Priam,
And there Achilles, raging at each of them.
Aeneas stopped and said with tears in his eyes:

“Is there any place on earth, Achates,
Not filled with our sorrows? Look, 565
There is Priam! Here, too, honor matters;
Here are the tears of the ages, and minds touched
By human suffering. Breathe easy, my friend.
Troy’s renown will yet be your salvation.”

Thus Aeneas,

And he fed his soul on empty pictures,
Sighing, weeping, his face a flood of tears
As he scanned the murals of the Trojan War. 570

On one panel the Greeks are in full retreat,
With the Trojan youth hard on their heels.
In the other direction crested Achilles 575
Bears down on the Trojans with his chariot.

A little farther on he sees through his tears
The snowy canvas of Rhesus' tents,
His camp betrayed in their first night at Troy
And savaged by the blood-soaked son of Tydeus, 580
Who then drove the fiery steeds of Rhesus
To the Greek camp, before they ever tasted
Trojan fodder or drank from the Xanthus.

On another panel Troilus, just a boy
And no match for Achilles in combat, 585
Has lost his armor and is being dragged
By his stampeding horses. Fallen backward
From his empty chariot, he still holds the reins
While his neck and hair trail in the dust
And the plain is scored by the tip of his spear. 590

Meanwhile, Trojan women, their hair streaming,
Are going to the temple of implacable Pallas,
Bearing a robe and beating their breasts
In supplication. The goddess's head is turned away,
And she keeps her eyes fixed on the ground. 595

And now Achilles has dragged Hector
Three times around the walls of Troy
And is selling the lifeless body for gold.
Aeneas is choked with grief when he sees the spoils,
The chariot, the corpse of his friend, 600
And Priam stretching out weaponless hands.

And now Aeneas recognizes himself
In close combat with the foremost Achaeans

And sees the eastern ranks, dark Memnon's armor,
 And Penthesilea among her thousands of Amazons 605
 With their crescent shields. Burning with fury,
 She binds a golden belt below one naked breast,
 A warrior queen daring to do battle with men.

While Aeneas' gaze was fixed on these marvels,
 The Queen was making her way to the temple, 610
 The most beautiful Dido, and as she walked
 A throng of youths crowded around her.

*On the Eurotas' banks or the ridges of Cynthus
 Diana leads the dances, and a thousand Oreads
 Circle around her this way and that. A quiver
 Hangs from her shoulder, and as she treads 615
 She towers above the other goddesses,
 And Latona's heart beats with secret joy.*

So too Dido, moving through their midst,
 Urged on the work of building a kingdom. 620
 Then, under the temple's vaulted entrance
 And flanked by guards, she ascended her throne.
 She was making laws for her people,
 Distributing duties or assigning them by lot,
 When suddenly Aeneas saw, coming toward him 625
 In a crowd, Antheus, Sergestus, and brave Cloanthus
 Along with other Trojans whom the black storm
 Had scattered and driven to distant shores.
 Aeneas was stunned, Achates too, with joy and fear.
 They burned with desire to clasp hands with them 630
 But were confused and uncertain of the situation.
 They kept themselves hidden inside the cloud
 And watched. What has happened to their comrades?
 On what shore did they leave their ships?
 Why have they come here? These are chosen men 635
 From all the ships, making for the temple
 With loud cries and prayers for indulgence.

When they had entered and were allowed to speak,
 The eldest, Ilioneus, calmly began:

“Queen, whom Jupiter has permitted
 To found a new city and to curb with justice 640
 The arrogance of the surrounding tribes,
 We are Trojans, blown by winds over the sea.
 In our misery we pray you to prohibit
 The burning of our ships. Spare a pious race,
 And look with grace upon our fortunes, 645
 We have not come to pillage your homes
 And carry the booty down to the shore.
 There is no such violence in our hearts
 And no such arrogance in a conquered race. 650
 There is a place the Greeks call Hesperia,
 An ancient land, strong in war and rich in soil.
 Oenotrians once lived there. Now, it is said,
 A younger race has named it Italy
 After their leader. We were on course 655
 For that land, when a sudden squall
 Rose up—Orion behind it—and drove us
 Onto blind shoals, scattering our ships
 Amid trackless rocks and overwhelming waves.
 We few drifted along and came to your shores. 660
 But what race of men is this? What land
 Is so barbarous that it allows this conduct?
 We are denied access to the very shore!
 These warmongers forbid us to set foot
 On the border of their land. You may scorn 665
 Our common humanity and mortal arms,
 But the gods will remember good and evil.
 We had a king, Aeneas, no one more just
 Or devoted, no one greater in battle.
 If Fate still preserves him, if he still breathes 670
 The sky’s pure air and does not yet lie with the shades,
 We have no fear, nor would you regret
 Being first to contend with him in courtesy.
 There are cities in Sicily too, and arms,
 And a hero of Trojan blood, Acestes. 675
 Allow us to beach our storm-battered fleet,
 To mill planks and trim oars from your woods,
 So that if we find our comrades and leader,
 And we are destined to go to Italy, to Italy

And to Latium we may gladly set forth. 680
 But if all is lost, and you, noble father
 Of the Trojan people, have gone down
 In the Libyan sea, and Iulus
 Is our hope no more, then at least we can seek
 The straits of Sicily—whence we came here— 685
 And our homes there, with Acestes as our king.”

Thus Ilioneus, and all the Trojans
 Murmured in approval.

Dido, eyes lowered, responded briefly:

“Fear no more, Teucrians, ease your hearts. 690
 Stern necessity and my kingdom’s newness
 Force me to such measures to protect our frontier.
 Who does not know of Aeneas and Troy,
 Of that city’s warriors and its exploits,
 Of the conflagrations of that great war? 695
 Punic hearts are not so dull and unfeeling,
 Nor is Tyre so far from the course of the sun.
 Whether you choose great Hesperia, land of Saturn,
 Or Sicily, the realm of Acestes,
 I will speed you safely on your journey. 700
 Or would you like to settle here, share my kingdom?
 The city I am founding is yours. Draw up your ships.
 Trojan and Tyrian I will treat the same.
 I only wish that Aeneas himself were here,
 Driven in by the same South Wind. Be sure 705
 I will dispatch our best men to scour the coast
 And search every corner of Libya.
 He may have been cast ashore and
 May be wandering now in some wood or town.”

Aeneas and Achates, alert to every word, 710
 Had long been burning to burst from the cloud,
 And now Achates turned to Aeneas and said:

“What do you think, Goddess-born? You see
 That all is safe, our ships and men restored.

Only one is missing, and he went down in the gulf
 Before our own eyes. Everything else agrees
 With your mother's words." 715

 He had scarcely finished
 When the enveloping cloud parted
 And dissolved into thin air. There stood Aeneas,
 Gleaming in the clear light, his face and shoulders 720
 Like a god's. His mother breathed upon him
 The radiance of youth, breathed glory on his hair,
 And she gave his eyes an exultant luster
 Like the sheen of hand-rubbed ivory,
 Or Parian marble, or silver set in gold. 725
 Unforeseen, unexpected, he addressed the Queen:

"The man you seek is before you. I am
 Aeneas, of Troy, saved from Libyan seas.
 Dido, you alone have pitied Ilium's
 Unutterable woes, and now you offer us— 730
 The remnant left by the Greeks, outworn
 By every misfortune on land and sea,
 A destitute band—you offer us
 A share of your city and your home.
 We do not have the means to render worthy thanks, 735
 Nor do any Trojan survivors anywhere
 In the wide world. May the gods—
 If any powers above look down on the pious,
 If there is any justice anywhere—may the gods
 And your good conscience reward you 740
 As you deserve. What happy age bore you?
 What noble parents gave birth to such a child?
 While rivers run to the sea, while shadows
 Move over mountainsides, while the sky
 Pastures the stars, ever shall your honor, 745
 Your name, and your praises endure,
 Whatever the lands that summon me."

Aeneas spoke, and he reached out
 For dear Ilioneus with his right hand,

Serestus with his left, and then the others,
His brave Gyas and brave Cloanthus. 750

Dido, stunned by his sudden appearance
And his great ill fortune, responded:

“Goddess-born, what misfortune has plagued you,
What force has driven you onto savage coasts? 755
You, then, are Aeneas, whom Venus bore to Anchises
Near the waters of the Simois river in Troy?
I remember well when Teucer came to Sidon,
Exiled by his father and seeking new realms
With the aid of Belus, my own father, 760
Who was waging war in Cyprus then,
Establishing his power in that rich land.
Since that time I have known about Troy,
Known you by name, and the Pelasgian leaders.
The Trojans’ enemy sang Troy’s praises 765
And wanted it known that he was of Trojan stock.
And so, young men, come under my roof.
My fortune too has long been adverse
But at last has allowed me to rest in this land.
My own acquaintance with suffering 770
Has taught me to aid others in need.”

Thus Dido, and as she led Aeneas into her palace
She proclaimed sacrifices in his honor
In all the temples. Meanwhile, she sent
To his comrades on the shore twenty bulls, 775
A hundred boars with great, bristling backs,
And as many fat lambs with their dams,
The day’s joyful gifts.

The palace gleamed
With luxurious furnishings as the great hall
Was being prepared for a banquet: 780
Coverlets embroidered with royal purple,
Heavy silver on the tables, gold cups engraved
With the heroic deeds of a long lineage
Stretching back to the origin of the race.

But Aeneas' love for his son, Ascanius,
 Would not allow his mind to rest. He sent
 Achates, on the run, to the ships
 To report the news and to bring the boy
 Back to the city. Ascanius was all Aeneas' care.
 He also told Achates to bring presents
 Snatched from ruined Ilium: a mantle
 Stiff with gold-stitched figures, and a veil
 Fringed with saffron acanthus, both worn
 By Helen, who brought them from Mycenae—
 Wondrous gifts from her mother, Leda—
 When she sailed for Troy and her illicit wedding;
 The scepter, too, of Priam's eldest daughter,
 Ilione; and a pearl necklace; and a coronet
 With a double band of jewels and gold.
 And so Achates hurried off to the ships.

Venus, meanwhile, was busily concocting
 Another scheme. She would send Cupid—
 Transformed to look just like Ascanius—
 To come in the place of that sweet boy
 And with his gifts enflame the Queen's heart
 And infiltrate her bones with fire.
 The Cytherean feared this dubious union,
 Tyrians speaking two tongues. She chafed
 Under Juno's arrogance, and at nightfall
 Her anxiety mounted. She turned, therefore,
 To the winged God of Love and spoke to him:

"My son, my strength and my power, you alone
 Scorn your father's Typhoean lightning blasts,
 And so to your godhead I come on bended knee.
 You know how your brother, Aeneas,
 Is beaten about the sea by Juno's wrath,
 And you have often grieved at my grief for him.
 Phoenician Dido now has him, and detains him
 With soft words. I dread the outcome
 Of Juno's hospitality. She will not be idle
 During this great turn of events. And so,
 I plan to catch the Queen off guard and by guile

Encircle her with passion, so that no power
 Can change her, and she will be bound to me,
 By her great love for my Aeneas. 825
 Now here is how I think you can do this.
 The young prince, my pride and joy and all my care,
 Is preparing to go, at his father's summons,
 To the Sidonian city, bearing such gifts
 As have survived the sea and the flames of Troy. 830
 I will wrap him in slumber and tuck him away
 In my sacred shrine, either high on Cythera
 Or on Idalium, so that he will never know
 Of my trickery or get in the way.
 For a single night, no more, feign his looks. 835
 Boy that you are, wear the boy's familiar face.
 And when amid the royal feast and flowing wine
 Dido, her joy knowing no bounds, takes you
 Onto her lap, embraces you and plants
 Sweet kisses on your mouth, breathe into her 840
 Your secret fire and poison her unobserved."

Love obeyed his dear mother, donned his wings,
 And walked off joyously with Iulus' gait.
 Iulus himself Venus bathed in the waters
 Of calm repose and, holding him to her breast, 845
 Lifted him up to Idalia's high groves,
 Where soft marjoram breathed upon him,
 Nestled in blossoms sweet in the shade.

And so Cupid, obedient to his mother's word,
 And delighting in the company of Achates, 850
 Carried the royal gifts to the palace.
 When he arrived, the Queen had already
 Taken her place amid gorgeous tapestries,
 Reclining on a golden couch in the great hall.
 Father Aeneas and the Trojan youth gathered 855
 And were made to recline on purple coverlets.
 Servants poured water on their hands, served bread
 From baskets, and brought them soft napkins.
 There were fifty maids working in the kitchen
 To prepare all the banquet's dishes in order 860

And to keep the hearth-fire for the Penates.
 Another hundred, and as many male servants,
 All the same age, laid the food on the table
 And set out the cups.

The Tyrians too

Crowded the festive hall and were told to recline 865
 On embroidered couches. They marveled
 At Aeneas' gifts, and they marveled at Iulus,
 At the god's glowing complexion, at the words
 He feigned, and at the robe and the veil
 Elaborately stitched with saffron acanthus. 870
 Dido especially, doomed to a wretched end,
 Could not satisfy her soul. The ill-fated Phoenician
 Burned with desire when she gazed at the boy
 And was equally moved at the sight of the gifts.
 The boy, when he had hung on Aeneas' neck 875
 And satisfied the deluded father's love,
 Went to the Queen. And she clung to him
 With all her heart, her eyes were riveted on him,
 And she cuddled him on her lap. Poor Dido.
 She had no idea how great a god had settled there. 880
 Mindful of his Acidalian mother,
 Little by little he began to blot out Sychaeus
 And tried to captivate with a living passion
 Her slumbering soul and her heart long unused.

At the first lull in the feast the tables were cleared. 885
 Great bowls were set out and crowned with wine.
 The palace grew loud, and the guests' voices
 Echoed through the halls. Glowing lamps
 Hung down from the fretted gold ceiling,
 And flaming torches vanquished the night. 890
 Dido called for a heavy gold drinking bowl
 Crusted with jewels and filled it with wine—
 A bowl used by Belus and Belus' descendants.
 Then silence reigned in the great hall again.

“Jupiter, Lord of Hospitality, 895
 Grant that this day be a happy one
 For Tyrians and Trojan travelers alike,

And may our children remember it!
 May Bacchus, giver of joy, be near,
 May Juno bless us, and may all Tyrians 900
 Favor our gathering with grace and good cheer.”

Dido prayed and then poured a drop
 Onto the table. After this libation,
 Her lips were the first to touch the bowl’s rim.
 Then she passed it to Bitias with a challenge, 905
 And he promptly drained the foaming bowl,
 Soaking himself in the brimming gold.
 Then the other lords drank.

Long-haired Iopas,
 A bard taught by mighty Atlas,
 Now sounded his golden lyre.

He sang 910
 Of the wandering moon and the sun’s toils,
 Of the origin of human and animal kind,
 Of how rain falls and why lightning flashes,
 Of Arcturus, the Bears, and the misty Hyades,
 Of why the winter sun rushes down to Ocean, 915
 And why long winter nights are so slow to end.

The Tyrians applauded again and again,
 And the Trojans joined in. And Dido,
 Unhappy woman, prolonged the night
 With varied conversation 920
 And drank deeply the long draught of love.
 She asked about Priam over and over,
 Asked much about Hector, wanted to know
 What armor Memnon wore when he arrived,
 What the horses of Diomedes were like, 925
 And how great was Achilles.

“Still better,”
 She cries, “Tell us, my dear guest,
 The whole story from the beginning—
 The treachery of the Greeks, the downfall
 Of your people, and your own wanderings. 930
 Seven summers have now seen you roving
 Through every land and over all the seas.”

AENEID TWO

The room fell silent, all eyes on Aeneas,
Who from his high couch now began to speak:

“My Queen, you are asking me to relive
Unspeakable sorrow, to recall how the Greeks
Pulled down Troy, that tragic realm 5
With all its riches. I saw those horrors myself
And played no small part in them. What Myrmidon
Or Dolopian, what brutal soldier of Ulysses
Could tell such a tale and refrain from tears?
And now dewy night is rushing from the sky, 10
And the setting stars make sleep seem sweet.
But if you are so passionate to learn
Of our misfortunes, to hear a brief account
Of Troy’s last struggle—although my mind
Shudders to remember and recoils in pain, 15
I will begin.

Broken by war and rebuffed by the Fates
For so many years, the Greek warlords
Built a horse, aided by the divine art
Of Pallas, a horse the size of a mountain, 20
Weaving its ribs out of beams of fir.
They pretended it was a votive offering
For their safe return home. So the story went.
But deep within the Horse’s cavernous dark
They concealed an elite band, all their best, 25
Stuffing its huge womb with men at arms.

Within sight of Troy lies a famous island,
 Tenedos, prosperous while Priam's kingdom stood,
 Now just a bay with poor anchorage for ships.
 The Greeks sailed there and hid on the desolate shore; 30
 They were gone, we thought, sailed off to Mycenae.
 And so all of Troy shook off its long sorrow.
 The gates were opened. It was a joy to visit
 The Doric camp, the abandoned beachhead,
 The deserted sites. Here the Dolopians 35
 Pitched their tents, here fierce Achilles,
 Here lay the ships, here were the battle-lines.
 Some of us gaped at the virgin Minerva's
 Fatal gift, amazed at the massive Horse.
 Thymoetes wanted it dragged inside the walls 40
 And installed in the citadel. Treason perhaps,
 Or Troy's doom was already in motion.
 But Capys, and other wiser heads, urged us
 To either pitch this insidious Greek gift
 Into the sea, or burn it on the spot, or else 45
 Pierce and probe the belly's hidden hollows.
 The crowd took sides, uncertain what to do.

And now Laocoön comes running down
 From the citadel at the head of a great throng
 And in his burning haste he cries from afar: 50

'Are you out of your minds, you poor fools?
 Are you so easily convinced that the enemy
 Has sailed away? Do you honestly think
 That any Greek gift comes without treachery?
 What is Ulysses known for? Either this lumber 55
 Is hiding Achaeans inside, or it has been built
 As an engine of war to attack our walls,
 To spy on our homes and come down on the city
 From above. Or some other evil lurks inside.
 Do not trust the Horse, Trojans! Whatever it is, 60
 I fear the Greeks, even when they bring gifts.'

With that, he hurled his spear with enormous force
 Into the vaulting belly of the beast. The shaft

Stood quivering, and the hollow insides
 Reverberated with a cavernous moan. 65
 If we had not been on the gods' wrong side,
 If we had been thinking right, Laocoön
 Would have driven us to hack our way into
 The Greek lair, and Troy would still stand,
 And you, high rock of Priam, would remain. 70

But at that moment a band of Dardan shepherds
 Came up with loud shouts, dragging to the king
 A prisoner with his hands bound behind his back.
 This man had deliberately gotten himself captured
 With one purpose in mind, to open Troy to the Greeks, 75
 Ready to either work his deceits or face certain death.
 The Trojan youths streamed in from all sides
 To see the captive and jeer at him.

Hear now

The treachery of the Greeks, and from one offense
 Learn all their evil.

The man stood in full sight 80

Of the crowd, dismayed, unarmed, and glancing
 Around at the ranks of men he cried out:

'Ah, what land, what sea, can receive me now,
 What will be my final wretched fate?
 I have no place among the Greeks, 85
 And the Trojans are clamoring for my blood.'

At this our mood changed, and we prodded him
 To tell us what he meant. Who were his people,
 And what was he counting on to save him
 Now that he was our prisoner? Finally, 90
 He stopped trembling and began to speak:

'Come what may, King, I will tell you all
 And not deny, first, that I am a Danaan.
 Fortune may have damned Sinon to misery,
 But she will not make him a liar as well. 95
 You may have heard the name Palamedes,
 Belus' glorious son, whom the Greeks

Condemned to death, under false charges,
 Because he opposed the war. He was innocent.
 Now they mourn him, now that he is dead. 100
 He was my kinsman, and my father,
 A poor man, sent me here in his company
 When I was just a boy. While Palamedes
 Was still in good standing, still thrived in council,
 I too had somewhat of a name, some honor. 105
 But when through the malice of cunning Ulysses
 (Everyone knows this) he passed from this world,
 I was a ruined man and dragged on my life
 In darkness and grief, eating my heart out
 Over the fate of my innocent friend. 110
 Nor was I silent, but I raved
 That if I ever had the chance, ever returned
 As victor to Argos, I would have my vengeance.
 My words aroused resentment, and my life
 Was now infected. Ulysses made it his mission 115
 To terrorize me with countless new charges,
 Sowing rumors in everyone's ears, searching
 In his guilt for weapons against me. In the end
 He found Fortune's tool, Calchas the soothsayer—
 But you don't want to hear all this. And why 120
 Should I stall? If you paint all Greeks
 With the same stripe, if "he's Achaean"
 Is all you need to hear, take your vengeance
 At once. This is what the Ithacan would want,
 And what Atreus' sons would pay dearly for.' 125

Now indeed we burned to know more,
 Strangers as we were to infamy so great
 And to Greek guile. Trembling, he went on:

'Weary with the long war, the Greeks
 Often wanted to quit Troy and sail home. 130
 If only they had! But stormy weather
 And rough seas would scare them from leaving.
 And when they'd hammered together
 The maple horse, the sky rumbled even more.
 Anxious, we sent Eurypylos to consult 135

The oracle of Phoebus Apollo,
 And he brought back these dismal words:
You placated the winds with a virgin's blood
To come, O Danaans, to the shores of Troy.
Your return must be won with an Argive life. 140
 When the god's words reached the army's ears
 Everyone was dazed, and an icy fear
 Seeped into their bones. Which man was doomed,
 Whom would Apollo claim? The Ithacan
 Dragged Calchas out into the roaring crowd 145
 And demanded to know what heaven portended.
 Many divined that this despicable ploy
 Was aimed at me and saw what was coming.
 Five days and five more the seer sat in his hut,
 Silent, refusing to sentence anyone to death. 150
 Finally, forced by the Ithacan's cries,
 Calchas broke his silence and, as agreed,
 Doomed me to the altar. Everyone approved,
 And the ruin each had feared for himself
 They bore well when it devolved upon one. 155

'And now the dark day dawned. The salted grain,
 The sacral headbands were being prepared
 For my ritual slaughter, when, I confess,
 I broke my bonds and snatched myself from death.
 I skulked all night in a muddy swamp, 160
 Hidden in the sedge, holding my breath
 Until they sailed. Now I have no hope
 Of seeing my homeland, my sweet children,
 The father I long for. And the Greeks
 May make them pay for my escape, poor things, 165
 And by their death expiate my sin.
 And so I pray, by whatever powers above
 Still witness Truth, and by any Faith we men
 Still have uncorrupted, show mercy
 To a suffering soul, guiltless and wronged.' 170

We spared him for his tears and pitied him
 Of our own accord. Priam himself ordered
 His shackles removed and spoke to him kindly:

‘Whoever you are, take no further thought
 Of the Greeks. You are one of us now. 175
 But tell me, and speak the whole truth:
 Why did they erect this monstrous horse?
 Who devised it, and to what purpose?
 Is it a religious offering or an engine of war?’

Thus Priam. And Sinon, the consummate liar, 180
 Lifting his unchained hands to the stars:

‘Eternal fires of heaven, I summon you
 And your inviolable Power to witness,
 And you altars and nefarious blades
 Which I escaped, and you consecrated fillets 185
 Which as victim I wore: it is just for me
 To break the sacred oaths of the Greeks,
 Just to abhor those men, and to lay bare to the sky
 Every secret they would conceal. I am bound
 By no law of my country. But you, Troy, 190
 Stand by your word and keep your faith,
 If what I say proves to be your salvation.

‘From the war’s beginning, Pallas Athena
 Was the Greeks’ entire hope. But when
 Wicked Diomedes and Ulysses, 195
 With his criminal mind, entered
 Her high temple, murdered the guards,
 And stole the fateful Palladium,
 Daring to handle her virgin fillets
 With bloodstained fingers—then 200
 The Danaans’ fortunes began to falter,
 Their strength was broken, and the goddess
 Turned her back on them. Tritonia
 Gave us clear portents of her displeasure.
 As soon as her statue was set up in camp, 205
 Flames glittered from her upturned eyes,
 Sweat poured down her limbs, and three times
 She flashed up from the ground, miraculous,
 Holding her shield and quivering spear.
 Calchas at once began to prophesy: 210

“The Greeks must attempt a retreat by sea.
Troy cannot be taken by Argive weapons
Until they seek new omens in Argos
And return the godhead carried away
In curved keels over open water.” 215

‘They are sailing over to Mycenae now,
And when they have recruited soldiers and gods
They will recross the water all unforeseen.
So Calchas sifted the omens and counseled the Greeks
To erect this Horse, in expiation 220
Of the Palladium’s theft and the godhead wronged.
And he ordered them to build its oaken bulk
Up to the sky, so it could not be brought
Through the city’s gates or walls and there protect
The Trojan people under the old religion. 225
For if you lay violent hands
Upon this offering to Minerva,
Destruction will fall—may the gods turn this omen
Against the Greeks—upon Priam’s realm.
But if your hands bring it into the city, 230
Asia will wage war upon Pelops’ walls,
And this fate awaits our children’s children.’

And so through Sinon’s treacherous art
His story was believed, and we were taken
With cunning, captured with forced tears, 235
We whom neither great Diomedes
Nor Achilles of Larissa could subdue,
Nor ten years of war, nor a thousand ships.

What happened next was more horrible still
And threw us into deepening chaos. 240
Laocoön, serving by lot as Neptune’s priest,
Was sacrificing a great bull at the god’s altar,
When we saw, coming from Tenedos
Over the calm water, a pair of serpents—
I shudder to recall them—making for shore. 245
Trailing huge coils they sheared through the sea,
And their bloody crests arched over the waves

As they writhed and twisted in the seething surf.
 They were almost ashore. Their eyes
 Were shot with blood and fire, and their tongues 250
 Hissed and flickered in their open mouths.
 We scattered, pale with fear, as the sea-snakes
 Glided through the sand straight for Laocoön.
 First, they entwined the priest's two sons
 In great looping spirals, and then they sank their fangs 255
 Into the boys' wretched bodies and began to feed.
 Then they seized Laocoön as he ran to their aid,
 Weapon in hand, and lashed their scaly bodies
 Twice around his waist and twice around his neck,
 Their heads reared high. As the priest struggled 260
 To wrench himself free from the knotted coils,
 His headbands were soaked with venom and gore,
 And his horrible cries reached up to the stars.

*Wounded by an ill-aimed blow, a bull will bellow
 As it flees the altar and shakes the axe from his neck.* 265

So too Laocoön. But the twin serpents
 Slithered off to the high temple of Pallas
 And took refuge at the grim goddess's feet,
 Vanished behind the disk of her shield.

An inhuman terror coiled through our hearts. 270
 Shuddering with horror, everyone said Laocoön
 Had received the punishment he deserved
 For wounding the sacred wood of the Horse
 With his accursed spear. All proclaimed
 The Horse should be drawn to Minerva's temple 275
 And her godhead appeased. We breached the walls,
 Everyone girding themselves for the work,
 And set wheels beneath the feet of the Horse.
 A noose was made taut around its neck
 And the fateful contraption inched up the battlements, 280
 Pregnant with arms. Boys and unwed girls
 Circled around it, singing hymns
 And touching the rope with glee. On it moved,

Gliding like a threat into the city.
 O my country! O Ilium, home of the gods! 285
 O walls of Troy famed in war! Four times
 At the very threshold of the city gate
 The Horse halted, and four times
 Weapons clattered in its belly. Yet we pressed on
 Mindlessly, blind with passion, and installed 290
 The ill-starred monster on our high holy rock.
 Even then Cassandra opened her lips
 Against the coming doom, lips cursed by a god
 Never to be believed by the Teucrians,
 And we pitiful Trojans, on our last day, 295
 Wreathed the shrines of the gods with flowers.

The sky turned, and night swept up from Ocean,
 Enfolding in its great shadow earth and heaven—
 And the Myrmidons' treachery. The Trojans
 Spread out along the wall were dead silent now, 300
 Slumber entwining their weary limbs,
 And the Argive fleet started to sail from Tenedos
 Through the silent, complicit moonlight,
 Making for the shore they knew all too well.
 The flagship raised a beacon, and at this signal 305
 Sinon, cloaked by the gods' unjust decrees,
 Stealthily unlocked the pine trapdoor,
 And the Horse released from its open womb
 The enclosed Danaans, glad to push themselves out
 Of the hollow oak into the cool night air, 310
 Thessandrus and Sthenelus and grim Ulysses—
 Sliding down the rope—Acamas and Thoas,
 Achilles' son, Neoptolemus, great Machaon,
 Menelaus, and Epeos himself,
 The fabricator of the insidious horse. 315
 They fanned out through a city drowned in sleep,
 Slit the guards' throats, opened all the gates,
 And joined as planned the invading Greeks.

At that late hour, when sleep begins to drift
 Upon fretful humanity as grace from the gods, 320
 Hector appeared to me in my dreams,

Pitiful spirit, weeping, black with blood
 And dust from the ruts of Achilles' chariot,
 Thongs piercing his swollen ankles. Ah,
 How he looked, how different from that Hector 325
 Who returned to Troy wearing Achilles' armor,
 The Hector who threw fire on the Danaan ships!
 His beard was matted, his hair clotted with gore,
 And he bore all the wounds he had received
 Fighting before his country's walls. In my dream 330
 I blurted out to him these tearful words:

'Light of Dardania, Troy's finest hope,
 What has delayed you? From what shores have you come
 To answer our prayers? We have suffered
 Many losses since you left us, Hector. 335
 Yet, we have labored on, and now we see you
 At the end of our strength. Why has your face
 Been defiled, and what are these wounds I see?'

My empty questions meant nothing to him.
 With a heavy sigh from deep within, he said: 340

'Run, child of the goddess, save yourself
 From these flames! The enemy holds the walls.
 Great Troy is falling. Enough has been given
 To Priam and his country. If Pergamum's height
 Could be defended by a hero's hand, 345
 Its defense would have been this hand of mine.
 Troy commends to you the gods of the city.
 Accept them as companions of your destiny
 And seek for them the great walls you will found
 After you have wandered across the sea.' 350

He spoke, and brought out from the sanctuary
 Great Vesta, her chaplets, and her eternal fire.

By now the lamentation in the city
 Had grown to such proportions that it reached
 My father Anchises' house, secluded though it was 355
 Among the pines. The sickening sound of battle

Startled me from sleep, and I climbed to the roof
And stood at the very top, upright and listening.

*It was as if the South Wind were fanning fire
Through the fields, or a mountain torrent had leveled* 360
*The farmlands and swept away the oxen's tillage,
Flattening the hedgerows, and I was a shepherd
Listening in the dark from some towering rock.*

Then the truth was revealed. The Danaans' treachery
Lay open before me. Deiphobus' great house 365
Was collapsing in flames, as was Ucalegon's
Next door. The Sigeon straits burned
With the inferno's reflected light.

Men's shouts rose with the shrill sound of horns.
Out of my mind, I took up arms—no battle plan, 370
But my soul burned to gather a war party
And storm the citadel. Rage and fury
Sent my mind reeling, and my only thought
Was how glorious it is to die in combat.

At that moment Panthus, priest of Apollo, 375
Ran up to my door, dragging his grandson
Away from Greek swords, the sacred images
Of our vanquished gods clutched in his arms.

'Where is the fighting thickest, Panthus?
What position should we try to hold?'

My words 380
Were scarcely out when he answered, groaning:

'Troy's last day and final hour have come.
We are Trojans no more. Ilium is no more.
The great glory of the Teucrians is gone.
Jupiter in his rage has given all to Argos, 385
And Greeks are lords of our burning city.
High stands the Horse, pouring forth armed men,
And Sinon, insolent in victory,
Sets fires everywhere. Thousands of troops,

As many as ever came from Mycenae, 390
 Are at the wide-open gates. Others patrol the streets.
 A line of unsheathed, glistening steel
 Stands ready for slaughter. Our night guard
 Is barely resisting and fighting blind.’

Panthus’ words and will of the gods 395
 Drove me through the inferno of battle
 Wherever the grim Fury called, wherever
 The roars and shouts rose to the sky.
 Falling in with me in the moonlight
 Were Rhipeus and Epytus, one of Troy’s best, 400
 Hypanis and Dymas, a little throng now,
 And young Coroebus, son of Mygdon.
 He had come to Troy in those last days,
 Madly in love with Cassandra, and brought
 Aid to Priam, a sturdy son-in-law. Poor boy, 405
 If only he had listened to the warnings
 Of his raving bride.
 When I saw them close ranks, eager for battle,
 I began:

‘Brave hearts—brave in vain
 If you are committed to follow me to the end— 410
 You see how we stand. All the gods
 Who sustained this realm are gone, leaving
 Altar and shrine. You are fighting to save
 A city in flames. All that is left for us
 Is to rush onto swords and die. The only chance 415
 For the conquered is to hope for none.’

This added fury to the young men’s courage.
 Like wolves in a black mist, blind with hunger,
 Their whelps waiting with dry throats, we passed 420
 Through the enemy’s swords to certain death
 And held our course to the city’s center.
 Ebony night swirled around us. Who could tell
 That night’s carnage, or match it with tears?
 The ancient city fell, that had for many years
 Been queen. Corpses lay piled everywhere, 425

In the streets, the houses, the hallowed thresholds
 Of the temples. And it was not only Trojans
 Who paid in blood. At times the vanquished
 Felt their valor pulse through their hearts,
 And the conquering Greeks fell. Raw fear 430
 Was everywhere, grief was everywhere,
 Everywhere the many masks of death.

Androgeos offered himself to us first.
 Heading up a large company of Greeks,
 He mistook us for an allied band and called: 435

‘On the double, men! What took you so long?
 We’re burning and looting Pergamum here,
 And you’re just arriving from the ships?’

He realized at once from our tentative reply
 That we were the enemy. He froze, choked 440
 On his own words, and then tried to backpedal,

*Like a man who has stepped on a snake
 Hidden in briars and in sudden terror cringes
 When it rears and puffs out its purple hood.*

Androgeos was shaking and backing away 445
 When we charged and hedged them in.
 Unfamiliar with the terrain, they panicked.
 And we cut them down, Fortune smiling
 On our first effort. Flushed with success,
 Coroebus cried:

‘Let’s follow Fortune’s lead 450
 And exchange our armor for Danaan gear.
 Who cares if this is deceit or valor?
 The enemy will supply us with weapons.’

With that he put on Androgeos’ plumed helmet,
 Hefted his emblazoned shield, and hung 455
 An Argive sword by his side. So too Rhipheus,
 Dymas, and my other boys, their spirits high

As they armed themselves in new-won spoils.
 We moved out, mingling with the Greeks
 And with gods not ours. In the blind night 460
 We engaged in many skirmishes, and sent
 Many a Greek into the jaws of Orcus.
 Some scattered to the safety of the shore
 And the ships. Others, like terrified children,
 Climbed back up into the belly of the Horse. 465

Never rely on the gods for anything
 Against their will. The next thing we saw
 Was Cassandra, Priam's daughter,
 Being dragged, hair streaming, from the shrine
 Of Minerva's temple, lifting to heaven 470
 Her burning eyes—her eyes only,
 For her tender hands were bound. Coroebus
 Could not endure this. He threw himself
 Into the midst of the band, determined to die.
 We closed ranks and charged, but were overwhelmed. 475
 First, our countrymen targeted our uniforms,
 The misleading crests on our Greek helmets,
 Picking us off from the roof, a piteous slaughter.
 Then the Greeks themselves, grunting with anger
 At the attempted rescue of Cassandra, 480
 Came at us from all sides, Ajax most viciously,
 Then the two sons of Atreus and Ulysses' men.

*It was like a hurricane when winds clash
 From every direction, Winds West and South
 And the East proud with his colts of Dawn. 485
 The forests groan, and Nereus foams with rage
 As he stirs with his trident the lowest depths.*

The men we had routed with our stratagem
 In the dim of night rematerialized, the first
 To recognize our mendacious shields 490
 And discordant accents. We were outnumbered.
 Coroebus fell first, killed by Peneleos
 At the war goddess's altar. Then Rhipeus,
 Of all Teucrians the most righteous (but the gods

Saw otherwise) went down. Hypanis
 And Dymas were run through by friends; 495
 And you, Panthus, neither your piety
 Nor Apollo's fillet protected you
 When you fell. O ashes of Ilium!
 O last flames of my people! Be witness 500
 That in your fall I shunned neither fight nor chance,
 And had my fate been to die by Greek hands
 I had earned that fate. We were torn from there,
 Iphitus, Pelias, and myself, we three,
 Iphitus heavy with years, Pelias slowed 505
 By a wound from Ulysses. Without pause
 We were called by the clamor to Priam's house.

Here was an enormous battle, so intense
 It was as if there was no fighting anywhere else,
 And men were not dying throughout the city. 510
 Here we saw the War God unchained. Greeks
 Scrambled to the roof, and the threshold
 Was besieged by a bulge of shields. Ladders
 Hugged the walls, and men inched their way
 Upward on the rungs, left hands holding up shields 515
 Against projectiles, right hands clutching
 Posts and battlements. Above, the Trojans
 Tore down the towers and all the rooftop
 To use as missiles—they saw the end was near—
 Defending themselves to the death, rolling down 520
 Gilded rafters, their fathers' splendors of old.
 Other troops, swords drawn, massed around the doors,
 Blocking the entrances. Our pulses quickened
 With new energy to protect the palace
 And come to the aid of our vanquished men. 525

There was a secret entry in the rear,
 A passageway through Priam's palace
 By which Andromache, poor soul,
 Would come unattended to her husband's parents
 While Troy still stood and lead her boy, 530
 Astyanax, to see his grandfather.
 I scaled the roof, where the Teucrians

Were lobbing their useless missiles to little effect.
 Rising to the sky from the roof's sheer edge
 Stood a tower from which all Troy 535
 Could once be seen, and in the distance
 A thousand Greek ships and their beachhead camp.
 We pried at its upper stories with our swords
 Until the joints gave way, wrenched it loose,
 And sent it crashing down like rolling thunder 540
 Onto the ranks of the Greeks. But more Greeks
 Kept coming, and more stones kept falling.

Framed by the portal to the entrance court
 Pyrrhus stood in his glory, haloed in bronze,

As a snake raised on poison basks in the light 545
After a cold winter has kept him underground,
Venomous and swollen. Now, having sloughed
His old skin, glistening with youth, he puffs out
His breast and slides his lubricious coils
Toward the sun, flicking his three-forked tongue. 550

At his side loomed Periphas, and Automedon,
 Once Achilles' charioteer, now the armor-bearer
 Of Achilles' son. Massed around them
 Were all the tough troops from Scyros,
 Hurling torches onto the roof as they closed in 555
 On Priam's palace. Pyrrhus led the charge,
 Cleaving through the solid threshold
 With a battle-axe, tearing the brass-bound doors
 From their hinges, and hatcheting a hole
 The size of a window in a huge oaken panel, 560
 Revealing all the house in a grim tableau.
 Open to view were the long halls; laid bare
 Was the inner sanctum of Priam
 And the kings of old, who now saw
 Armed men standing on their very threshold. 565

A tumultuous roar tore through the house;
 Its vaulted halls echoed with women's wails,
 And the din reverberated to the golden stars.

Trembling matrons roamed lost through the rooms,
 Clinging to the doors, lips pressed against them. 570
 Pyrrhus moved on with all his father's might,
 And nothing could stop him. The gate gave way
 Before the battering ram, and the doors,
 Wrenched from their sockets, fell to the floor.
 The Greeks forced their way in, butchered 575
 The Trojans who stood up against them,
 And filled the whole space with their soldiery,

*Worse than a river bursting through its banks,
 The water churning in overwhelming fury,
 Flooding the fields and sweeping herds and folds 580
 Over the plain.*

I saw with my own eyes
 Neoptolemus, lusting for slaughter,
 And Atreus' two sons, there on the threshold.
 I saw Hecuba, with her hundred daughters,
 And Priam, polluting with his blood 585
 The very altars he had consecrated himself.
 Those fifty bedchambers, that promise of offspring,
 The doorposts proud with barbarian gold—
 All lost. The Greeks held what the fire spared.

And what, you may ask, was Priam's fate? 590
 When he saw that his city had fallen,
 The doors of his palace shattered,
 And the enemy at his very hearth,
 The old man slung his long-unused armor
 Over his trembling shoulders, strapped on 595
 His useless sword, and, bound to die,
 Charged the enemy.

In the middle of the palace,
 Under heaven's naked wheel, an enormous altar
 Lay beneath the branches of an ancient laurel
 Whose shade embraced the household gods. 600
 In this sacred place Hecuba and her daughters
 Huddled like doves driven by a black storm,
 Clutching the gods' images. But when she saw

Priam himself clad in the armor of his youth,
She cried out:

‘My poor husband, 605
What insanity has driven you
To take up these weapons? Where
Are you rushing to? The hour is past
For defense like this, even if my Hector
Were still here. Come to this altar, please. 610
It will protect us all, or you will die with us.’

Hecuba said these things, took the aged man
In her arms, and placed him on the holy seat.

And now Polites, one of Priam’s sons,
Pursued by Pyrrhus, came running 615
Through the colonnades, wounded.
When he reached the vast atrium
Pyrrhus was breathing down his neck,
And yet he slipped away to face his parents’ eyes.

There he fell, Pyrrhus’ spear in his back, 620
And poured out his life in a pool of blood.
Then Priam, in death’s grip as he was,
Did not hold back his anger or spare his voice.

‘For this heinous crime,’ he cried, ‘this outrage,
May the gods in heaven—if there is in heaven 625
Any spirit that cares for what is just and good—
May the gods treat you as you deserve
For making me watch my own son’s murder
And defiling with death a father’s face.
Not so was Achilles, whom you falsely claim 630
To be your father, in the face of Priam his foe,
But honored a suppliant’s rights and trust,
And allowed the bloodless corpse of Hector
Burial, and sent me back to my own realm.’

And the old man threw his feeble spear. Its tip 635
Clanged against the bronze of Pyrrhus’ shield

And dangled uselessly from its boss. And Pyrrhus:

‘Then you can take this news to my father,
The son of Peleus. Be sure to tell him
About my sad behavior and how degenerate 640
His son has become. Now die.’

So saying,
He dragged Priam, trembling and slipping
In his son’s blood, up to the altar. Winding
His left hand in the old man’s hair, with his right
He lifted his flashing sword and buried it 645
Up to its hilt in his side. So ended Priam,
Such was his fated doom, as Troy burned
Before his eyes and Pergamum fell.
Once the lord of so many peoples,
The sovereign of Asia, he lies now 650
A huge trunk upon the shore, head severed
From his neck, a corpse without a name.

Then an awful sense of dread enveloped me.
I stood in a daze, and there rose before me
The image of my dear father, the same age 655
As the wounded king whom I was watching
Gasp out his life. Before me rose Creüsa,
Abandoned, the pillaged house, and the plight
Of little Iulus. I looked around
For my troops. They had all deserted me. 660
Too fatigued to fight, they had either jumped
To a welcome death or dropped limply into the flames.

Now I alone was left, when I saw,
Hiding in the shadows of Vesta’s shrine,
Helen, daughter of Tyndareus. The bright fires 665
Gave me light as I wandered here and there
Casting my eyes over everything.
Fearing the Trojans’ anger for Troy’s fall,
The vengeance of the Greeks, and the wrath
Of her deserted husband, Helen, destroyer 670

Alike of her own country and ours,
 This detestable woman, crouched by the altars.
 My soul flared with a burning desire
 To avenge Troy and make her pay for her sins.

‘So she will look upon Sparta unscathed 675
 And enter Mycenae as a triumphant queen?
 She will get to see her husband and home,
 Her parents and children, attended
 By Trojan women and Phrygian slaves?
 Was it for this that Priam was slaughtered, 680
 Ilium burned, and our shore soaked with blood?
 Never! Although there is no heroic name
 In killing a woman, no victory,
 I will be praised for snuffing out evil
 And meting out justice. And it will be sweet 685
 To quench my soul with vengeful fire
 And satisfy my people’s ashes.’

I was carried away by this frenzy, when,
 Shining through the dark in a halo of light,
 My mother appeared before my eyes, more clearly 690
 Than ever before, revealing herself
 As a radiant goddess, just as the great ones
 In heaven see her, so beautiful, so tall.
 She caught me by the hand and, in grace,
 Spoke these words from her pale-rose lips: 695

‘What anguish is behind this uncontrollable rage?
 Why so angry, my son? And where has your love
 For our family gone? Will you not first see
 Where you left your father, Anchises,
 Feeble with age, or whether Creüsa 700
 And your child, Ascanius, are still alive?
 They are surrounded by Greek soldiers
 And but for my loving care would have died
 In the flames by now, or the swords of the enemy
 Would have tasted their blood. It is not 705
 The detestable beauty of Tyndarean Helen
 Or sinful Paris that is to blame. No, it is the gods,

The remorseless gods, who have ruined Troy
 And burnt the topless towers of Ilium.
 See for yourself. I will dispel the mist 710
 That enshrouds you and dulls your mortal vision.
 You might not trust your mother otherwise,
 And disregard her kind instructions.

Here,

Where you see piles of rubble, stones
 Wrenched from stones, and plumes of smoke and dust, 715
 Is Neptune, shaking the walls he has pried up
 With his great trident and uprooting the city
 From its foundations. Over here, Juno,
 Ferocious in her iron vest, first to hold
 The Western Gates, summons with her usual 720
 Fury reinforcements from the ships.
 And now look up. Tritonian Pallas
 Is already seated on the highest towers,
 Glowing from a thunderhead, grim
 With her Gorgon. The Father himself 725
 Gives the Greeks courage and strength
 And incites the gods to oppose the Trojans.
 Hurry away, my son, and end your struggle.
 I will bring you safely to your father's door.'

And she plunged into night's shadows.

Dire faces, 730

Numinous presences hostile to Troy, now loomed
 In the darkness visible.

To my eyes it seemed that all Ilium
 Was sinking in flames, and Neptune's Troy
 Was being overturned from its base. 735

*It was just like an ancient mountain ash
 That woodsmen are straining to fell. Iron axes
 Ring thick and fast on its trunk, hacking it through,
 And it threatens to fall, nodding from its crest,
 Its foliage trembling, until, bit by bit, 740
 Overcome with wounds, it gives one last groan
 And torn from the hillside comes crashing down.*

I descended and, guided by a god,
 Somehow got through fire and foe.
 Weapons gave way; the flames receded. 745

When I reached the doors of my father's house,
 My old home, I sought him first and wanted
 More than anything to lift him up
 Into the mountains—but he refused
 To draw out his life and suffer exile 750
 With Troy in ashes.

‘You are young,’
 He cried, ‘and still strong; you must take flight.
 If the gods wanted to prolong my life
 They would have preserved this home of mine.
 It is enough and more that I have seen 755
 Such destruction once before and have survived
 One capture of my city. Say farewell
 To my body lying just as it is
 And depart. I shall die by my own hand.
 The Greeks will pick over my spoils and pity me. 760
 Loss of burial is light. Despised by heaven
 And useless, I have lived too many years
 Since the Lord of Gods and Men breathed winds
 Of lightning upon me and touched me with fire.’

He kept repeating words such as these 765
 And would not move. We were all in tears,
 My wife, Creüsa, Ascanius, all our household,
 Pleading with my father not to compound
 Our desperate plight and destroy us with him.
 He refused, and remained just as he was. 770
 I reached for my gear, wanting only to die.
 What hope was there for deliverance now?

‘Did you think I could leave without you, Father?
 How could such a thing come out of your mouth?
 If it pleases the gods that nothing be left 775
 Of this great city, and if you are determined,
 If it is your pleasure, to throw yourself

And all of us into Troy's holocaust—
 The door to that fate is wide open. Pyrrhus,
 Grimed with Priam's gore, will be here soon; 780
 Pyrrhus, who mutilates the son
 Before the father's eyes, butchers the father
 Like a beast at the altar. O my merciful mother,
 Was it for this you saved me from the enemy,
 So I could see the enemy in my own home 785
 And Ascanius, and my father, and Creüsa
 Slaughtered in each other's blood?

To arms, men!

The last light calls the vanquished. Take me back
 To the Greeks. Let me start the battle again.
 Never this day shall we all die unavenged!' 790

Once more I strapped on my sword, gripped my shield
 In my left hand, and was hurrying out of the door,
 When Creüsa embraced my feet at the threshold
 And held up little Iülus to his father, saying:

'If you go to die, take us with you, 795
 To whatever fate. But if experience has taught you
 To rely on your weapons, guard first this house.
 To whom do you leave us, little Iülus,
 Your father, and me, once called your wife?'

Her voice filled the house with moaning, 800
 And then, without warning, a strange portent
 Flickered between the faces and hands
 Of Iülus' anxious parents: a light tongue of flame
 Gleaming above his head. Harmless to the touch,
 It licked his soft locks and grazed his temples. 805
 Trembling with fear, we shook the fire from his hair
 Quickly and doused the holy flames with water.
 But my father, Anchises, enraptured,
 Raised his eyes to the stars above
 And lifted his hands and his voice to heaven: 810

'Almighty Jupiter, if you are moved
 By any prayers, only look upon us,

And if by our piety we have earned it,
Give us your aid and confirm this omen.’

His aged words had just finished, when suddenly
Thunder crashed on our left, and a star
Shot down from the sky, sliding through the dark
And trailing a luminous flood of sparks.
We watched it glide over the palace roof
And bury its splendor in Ida’s forest, 815
Leaving a shining furrow in its wake.
The air reeked with sulfur all around.
Overwhelmed, my father lifted himself up
In adoration of the star and spoke to heaven: 820

‘No more delay. I follow, and where you lead, 825
There I am. Gods of our fathers, save this house,
Save my grandson. Yours is this omen,
In your power is Troy. And now, my son,
I am ready to go as your companion.’

He spoke, and now the sound of the fire 830
Could be heard more clearly, and the inferno
Rolled its seething heat ever closer.

‘Come, dear Father, onto my shoulders now.
You will not weigh me down, and come what may
We will face it together, peril or salvation. 835
Little Iulus will walk beside me, and my wife
Will walk in my footsteps some distance behind.
Now listen to me, all of my household:
Just outside the city there is a mound,
And a temple of Ceres, long deserted. 840
Beside these stands an ancient cypress
Worshiped by my ancestors for many years.
There, by our separate ways, we will meet.
Take into your hands, Father, the sacred gods
Of our country. It would be a sacrilege 845
If I touched them before I washed away
The bloody filth of battle in a living river.’

This said, I spread upon my shoulders
 A golden lionskin and bent to my burden.
 Little Iulus held my hand and kept up, 850
 Although his stride could not match his father's,
 And my wife followed behind.

We kept

To the shadows and I undisturbed before
 By any number of weapons thrust my way
 And whole platoons of Greeks, now was frightened 855
 By every breeze and startled by every sound,
 Afraid for my companion and my burden.

We were nearing the gates, and it looked like
 We had made it through, when suddenly
 The sound of marching feet drifted on the wind. 860
 Squinting through the gloom, my father cried:

'Run for it, Son! They're getting close.
 I can see the bronze glitter of their shields.'

I panicked. Some malignant spirit
 Robbed me of my wits, for while I ran 865
 Down back alleys, leaving the familiar streets,
 My wife, Creüsa, was taken from me
 By some evil fortune. Had she stopped,
 Or got lost and sat down exhausted?
 I never saw her again, didn't even look back 870
 Or think of her behind me until we arrived
 At the mound by Ceres' ancient temple.
 When finally we were all gathered there,
 She alone was missing. No one had seen her,
 Not her husband, not her son, no one. 875
 What man or god did I not accuse
 In my delirium? What crueler thing
 Had I seen in our overturned city?
 I entrusted Ascanius, Anchises,
 And the gods of Troy to my companions 880
 And hid them in a bend of the valley.
 Myself, I strapped on my glittering armor
 And went back to the city, hell-bent

On running every risk again,
 Combing through all of Troy, 885
 And putting my life on the line once more.

I started at the walls and the dark gate
 Where I had escaped and retraced my steps
 Through the night, looking everywhere by torchlight.
 Everywhere there was fear. The very silence 890
 Was terrifying. Then I turned homeward,
 In case, just in case, she had gone there.
 The Greeks were there in force, and the house
 Consumed with fire. Fanned by the wind,
 It spiraled up past the eaves and gnawed at the roof, 895
 Blasting the sky with its heat. I moved on
 And saw once more the palace of Priam
 On the citadel. There, in the empty court
 Of Juno's sanctuary, stood Phoenix
 And dire Ulysses, chosen to guard the spoils, 900
 Treasures from every part of Troy, ripped
 Out of burning temples—tables of the gods,
 Solid gold bowls, and plundered robes—
 All in a heap. Boys and trembling matrons
 Stood around in long rows. 905

I even risked casting my voice into the night
 And filled the streets with shouts, calling
 'Creüsa' over and over again
 In my misery, all in vain.

But as I rushed
 Through the empty shells of buildings, frantic 910
 To find her, there rose before my eyes
 The sad ghost of Creüsa herself, an image
 Larger than life. I was transfixed,
 My hair stood on end, and my voice choked.
 Then she spoke to me and calmed my fears: 915

'What good does it do, my sweet husband,
 To indulge in such mad grief? These things
 Do not happen without the will of the gods.
 You may not take your Creüsa with you;

The Lord of Olympus does not allow it. 920
 Long exile is yours, plowing a vast stretch
 Of sea. Then you will come to Hesperia,
 Where the Lydian Tiber runs gently
 Through fertile fields. There, happy times,
 Kingship, and a royal wife shall be yours. 925
 Dry your tears for your beloved Creüsa.
 I shall not look upon the proud domains
 Of the Myrmidons or Dolopians,
 Nor go to be a slave for Greek matrons,
 I, a Trojan woman, and wife of the son 930
 Of the goddess Venus. No,
 The Great Mother keeps me on these shores.
 Farewell, and keep well your love for our child.’

Creüsa spoke, and then left me there,
 Weeping, with many things yet to say. 935
 She vanished into thin air. Three times
 I tried to put my arms around her; three times
 Her wraith slipped through my hands,
 Soft as a breeze, like a vanishing dream.

The long night was spent, and at last 940
 I went back to rejoin my people.

I was surprised by the great number
 Of new arrivals I found, women and men,
 Youth gathered for exile, a wretched band
 Of refugees who had poured in from all over, 945
 Prepared to journey across the sea
 To whatever lands I might lead them.
 The brilliant morning star was rising
 Over Ida’s ridges, ushering in the day.
 The Greeks held all the city gates. 950
 There was no hope of help. I yielded
 And, lifting up my father, sought the mountains.”

AENEID THREE

“After the gods saw fit to overthrow
The power of Asia and Priam’s guiltless race,
After proud Ilium fell, and Neptune’s Troy
Lay smoking on the ground, we were driven
By signs from heaven to seek another home 5
On far, desolate shores. We built a fleet
Close to Antandros and the mountains
Of Phrygian Ida. There, with no idea
Of our destiny, we mustered our men,
And when summer came my father, Anchises, 10
Ordered us to spread our sails to Fate.
With tears in my eyes, I left my native shores
And harbors and the plains where once was Troy.
An exile, I took to sea with my men, my son,
And the great gods of my country and home. 15

There lies at a distance a land dear to Mars.
Its wide fields, once ruled by Lycurgus,
Are tilled by Thracians, old allies of Troy
While Fortune still smiled. There I sailed
And on its curving shore began to build, 20
Under adverse auspices, my first city,
And named it after myself, Aeneadae.

I was bringing offerings to Venus
And the gods who bless new beginnings,
And I was preparing to slaughter a sleek bull 25
To the Lord of Heaven there on the shore.

Nearby was a mound, its summit crowned
 With cornel shrubs and bristling myrtle.
 I went over to it and bent down to pull
 Some greenery from the soil to deck the altars, 30
 When I witnessed an awful portent:
 The first bush that I uprooted oozed drops
 Of black blood that clotted on the ground.
 A cold horror numbed my limbs, and icy fear
 Coursed through my veins. Still, I pulled up 35
 Another sapling, trying to understand
 The mystery within. This one bled too.
 Greatly troubled, I prayed to the Nymphs
 And Father Mars, lord of Thracian fields,
 To lighten this omen and turn it to good. 40
 But when I pulled, with greater effort,
 Upon a third branch, struggling on my knees
 In the sand (should I speak or be silent?)
 I heard a groan from deep within the mound,
 A piteous voice that sighed on the air: 45

‘Why are you rending my flesh, Aeneas?
 Spare a buried man, do not commit
 This sacrilege. I am no stranger to you,
 But Trojan born, nor is it wood and bark
 That wells with blood. Flee this savage land, 50
 This avaricious coast. For I am Polydorus,
 Transfixed by spears and overgrown
 With an iron crop of sprouted blades.’

Fear now pushed me to the breaking point.
 My hair stood on end, my voice choked. 55
 This Polydorus had been sent by Priam,
 With a fortune in gold, to be reared
 By the king of Thrace. This was when Priam
 Had lost all hope that his besieged city
 Could be saved by arms. But the Thracian, 60
 Seeing that Troy’s power was broken,
 Joined forces with victorious Agamemnon
 And broke all faith. He cut down Polydorus
 And seized the treasure. O cursed lust for gold,

To what do you not drive the human heart! 65
 When the fear had ebbed from my bones
 I reported these portents to the elders,
 My father especially, and sought their judgment.
 They were of one mind: to quit this accursed land
 Where hospitality had been desecrated 70
 And sail with the wind. We held a funeral
 For Polydorus, heaping the mound high with earth
 And erecting to his shade somber altars
 Dark with cypress and deep purple ribbons.
 The Trojan women stood around them, 75
 Hair unbound in ceremony, while we offered cups
 Foaming with warm milk and bowls brimming
 With sacrificial blood. So we interred his spirit
 And called his name for the very last time.

As soon as we had good sailing weather 80
 And a whispering southerly called us to sea,
 The crews launched the ships. Out from shore
 We watched cities and lands fade in the distance.

In the middle of the sea lies a hallowed island,
 Dear to the Nereids and Aegean Neptune. 85
 The Archer God, loyal to the isle of his birth,
 Stopped its wandering and moored it in place
 Close to Myconos and Gyaros—the island
 Delos, secure at last from the winds.
 I pulled in there, and the island welcomed 90
 Our weary men in its peaceful haven.
 Onshore we paid homage to Apollo's city.
 Anius, both king and priest of Phoebus,
 Ran up to meet us, his brows bound with fillets
 And sacred laurel. He recognized Anchises 95
 As an old friend and, clasping our hands
 In welcome, led us under his roof.

I began to pray in the god's ancient stone temple:

'Grant us, God of Thymbra, a home of our own,
 Grant our weary band walls, a nation, 100

A city that will endure. Preserve a second Troy
 For the remnant left alive by the Greeks
 And merciless Achilles. Whom shall we follow?
 Where shall we go? Where settle down?
 Give us an omen, Father, slip into our hearts.’ 117

These words were barely out when it seemed
 Everything trembled. The door, the god’s laurel,
 The whole mountain shook, and the holy tripod
 Bellowed loud as the shrine was laid open.
 We fell to the ground, and a voice filled our ears: 110

‘Enduring sons of Dardanus,
 The land that bore you from paternal stock
 Will welcome you back to her fruitful bosom.
 Seek your ancient mother. From that land
 The house of Aeneas will rule the world,
 His son’s sons and their sons thereafter.’ 115

Thus Apollo, and amid tumultuous joy
 Everyone asked, ‘To what land, what city,
 Does Phoebus mean we should finally return?’
 Then my father, searching old memories, said: 120

‘Listen, my lords, and learn what to hope for.
 Crete, the island of great Jupiter, lies
 In the middle of the sea. Mount Ida is there,
 And there too is the cradle of our race.
 Men live in a hundred cities there, 125
 The realm most rich from which Teucer came,
 Our earliest ancestor. If I remember rightly,
 He sailed from Crete to our Rhoetian shores
 And chose a site for his kingdom. Ilium
 And high Pergamum had not yet been built. 130
 Men lived in the lowlands. And from Crete came
 The Great Mother Cybele, the Corybants’ cymbals,
 Our own wooded Mount Ida, the Mysteries’ silence,
 And the lions yoked to Cybele’s chariot.
 We must follow where the god leads, 135
 Appease the winds, and sail for Cnossus.

It is not a far run. If Jupiter is with us,
The third dawn will anchor us off Cretan shores.’

Anchises spoke, and offered due sacrifice:
A bull to Neptune and to you, Apollo; 140
A black sheep to the Storms, a white to the Zephyrs.

A rumor reached us that Idomeneus,
The Cretan hero, had gone into exile,
That the island was deserted, our enemy gone
And the houses abandoned and empty. 145
We left Ortygia and flew over the sea,
Past Naxos ridged with Bacchic revels,
Past green Donyssa and Olearos,
Past gleaming Paros and the Cyclades,
Threading the straits between the islands. 150
The seamen outdid each other chanting,
‘On to Crete, the land of our fathers!’
And a following wind pushed us along
Until we glided up to the ancient shores
The Curetes once haunted. And so I began 155
To build my city. I called it Pergamum
And urged my people, who loved the old name,
To cherish their homes and raise the citadel
High with buildings.

Our ships were just dry,
Drawn up on the beach, our youth beginning 160
Their families and farms, and I was busy
Making laws and parceling land, when suddenly
Heaven’s air turned foul and pestilential,
And we were afflicted with a wretched plague,
A season of death that spread even to our crops. 165
Our people lost their sweet lives, or dragged
Their bodies around like corpses. Then Sirius
Scorched our sterile fields. The grass withered,
And the sickly crops denied us sustenance.
My father urged us to recross the sea 170
And ask Delian Apollo what end he might put
To our weary fate, where we might seek aid
In our distress, where to bend our course.

It was night, and all living things slept,
 When the sacred images of the gods, 175
 The Phrygian Penates I took with me
 Out of burning Troy, seemed to stand
 Before my sleeping eyes, clear in the moonlight
 That flooded through the latticed windows,
 And with these words they dispelled my cares: 180

‘What Apollo would tell you on Ortygia
 He tells you now, sending us unbidden
 To your very door. We followed you,
 Followed your arms when Ilium was burned;
 Under you we traversed the swelling sea; 185
 And we will exalt your coming descendants
 To heaven’s stars and give to their city
 Empire over all. Prepare great walls
 For the great, and do not shirk exile’s long toil.
 You must change your home. These are not the shores 190
 Delian Apollo counseled; not on Crete
 Did he bid you settle. There is a place
 The Greeks call Hesperia, an ancient land,
 Strong in arms and rich of soil. Oenotrians
 Once lived there. Their descendants now 195
 Have named it after their leader—Italy.
 This is our true home. Here Dardanus was born,
 The father of our race, and his brother Iasius.
 Arise, then, be glad, and bring these tidings,
 True beyond doubt, to your aged father: 200
 Seek Corythus and the land of Ausonia.
 Jupiter denies you the Dictaeon fields.’

Awed by this vision and the voice of the gods—
 It was not just a dream; I saw them clearly,
 Their veiled heads and living faces, 205
 And a cold sweat poured down my body—
 I leapt out of bed, lifted both palms to heaven,
 And with a prayer to the gods made pure offerings
 Upon my hearth. This rite completed,
 I rose with joy and told my father 210
 All that had happened. He acknowledged

Our twofold lineage and his confusion
 About our ancestry in two ancient lands.
 Then he said:

‘My son, steeled by Ilium’s fate,
 It was Cassandra, Cassandra alone 215
 Who foretold to me our race’s destiny,
 Often naming Hesperia, naming Italy.
 But who would believe that Teucrians would come
 To Hesperia’s shores? Who would be moved
 By Cassandra’s prophecies? Let us yield 220
 To Apollo, and pursue the better course.’

My father finished, and we all cheered.
 We abandoned this home too,
 And, leaving a few behind, we spread our sails
 And raced our hollow keels over the barren sea. 225

When our ships were sailing out on deep water
 With no land in sight, but only sea and sky,
 A brooding thunderhead settled in above us,
 Bringing dark squalls to the shuddering waves.
 Huge seas rolled under the winds, heaving us 230
 All over the swirling abyss. Dark clouds
 Shrouded the day, and foggy night
 Blotted out the sky while jagged lightning
 Split the air again and again. We were thrown
 Far off course, wandering the blind waves. 235
 Even Palinurus could not tell day from night
 Or remember our heading. Three sunless days
 We drifted the misty sea, three starless nights.
 On the fourth day we raised land at last and saw
 Mountains in the distance and curling smoke. 240
 Down came the sails, and we manned the oars,
 Churning the blue seawater into foam.

Delivered from the sea, I first made shore
 In the Strophades, the Greek name given
 To the islands set in the Ionian Sea, 245
 Which dark Celaeno and the other Harpies

Made their home after they fled in fear
 From the tables they kept in Phineas' palace.
 No monster, no curse, no plague more grim
 Ever raised itself from the water of Styx. 250
 These birds have maiden faces, they drop
 Foulest excrement, their hands are claws,
 And their faces are pale with hunger.
 When we entered the harbor we saw sleek cattle
 Scattered over the plains and flocks of goats 255
 Untended in the meadows. Swords drawn,
 We rushed upon them, calling the gods
 And Jove himself to share the bounty.
 Then we built couches on the curved shore
 And began to feast. But suddenly the Harpies 260
 Swooped down from the mountains, beating
 Their clanging wings, and plundered our feast,
 Fouling every dish with their filthy touch,
 And from the loathsome stench came hideous screams.
 We set up the tables again, this time under 265
 An overhanging rock deep in a hollow,
 And relit the altar fires—and again they came
 From their hidden lair, a clamorous flock
 Circling above their prey with taloned feet,
 And then they polluted the feast with their maws. 270
 I ordered my men to take up arms and wage war
 Against these dread creatures. We hid our swords
 In the long grass and concealed our shields.
 When they swooped down screeching along the shore,
 Misenus gave the signal from his high lookout, 275
 Sounding his brass horn, and my men charged
 Into strange combat, determined to despoil
 Those filthy birds of the sea. But their feathers
 Felt nothing, they could not be wounded,
 And they soared to the sky leaving their prey 280
 Half-eaten and foul. One only, Celaeno,
 A bird of ill omen, perched high on a cliff
 And broke into prophetic speech:

'Sons of treacherous Laomedon,
 Is this how you pay us for killing our cattle, 285

By waging war on the innocent Harpies
 And driving us from our ancestral land?
 Mark my words well. What the Father Almighty
 Told to Apollo, and Phoebus Apollo to me,
 I, first of the Furies, reveal now to you. 290
 You are sailing the seas to reach Italy,
 And so you shall, and enter her harbors.
 But you shall not surround your city with walls
 Until terrible hunger—and the way you wronged us—
 Drives you to chew and swallow your tables.’ 295

Celaeno spoke and then winged her way
 Back to the forest. My men felt their blood
 Turn icy with fear. Their spirits fell,
 And they pleaded with me to sue for peace,
 Resort to vows and prayers rather than arms, 300
 Whether these were goddesses or hellish birds.
 Father Anchises, with hands outstretched,
 Called from the beach upon the great gods,
 With proclamations of due sacrifice:
 ‘Gods, stop their threats. Gods, avert harm. 305
 Save the pious, O Gracious Ones.’

And he ordered

The stern cables torn from the shore
 And the rigging uncoiled. A strong southerly
 Stretched the sails and we escaped on sea-surge,
 Where wind and pilot called our course. 310
 Wooded Zacynthus appeared in mid-sea,
 Then Dulichium, Samê, and craggy Neritus.
 We passed Ithaca’s cliffs, the realm of Laertes,
 And cursed the island that nursed Ulysses.
 Leucate’s storm-whipped peaks soon came into view, 315
 And Apollo’s temple, dreaded by sailors.
 Weary, we sailed up to the little town
 And cast anchor. Our sterns fringed the shore.

Safe on land we never hoped to gain,
 We purified ourselves with rites of Jove 320

And made the altars blaze with sacrifices.
 Then we thronged the shore for Trojan Games.
 My men, stripped and oiled, competed
 In their age-old wrestling matches,
 Glad to have slipped past so many Greek towns 325
 And still be on their journey.

Time went by.

The sun rolled through the year's great circle,
 And winter roughened the sea with icy winds.
 I affixed a bronze shield, once borne by Abas,
 To the doorposts and inscribed this verse: 330

THESE ARMS AENEAS DEDICATES
 FROM VICTORIOUS GREEKS

Then I gave the order to man the benches
 And pull out from the harbor. The crews
 Outdid each other, sweeping the sea with oars. 335
 In no time we dropped the peaks of Phaeacia,
 Grazed the shores of Epirus, and entered
 The Chaonian port of towering Buthrotum.

There we heard the incredible report
 That Priam's son Helenus ruled 340
 Over Greek cities, having won the bride
 And kingdom of Pyrrhus, son of Achilles,
 And that Andromache again had passed
 To a Trojan husband. I was amazed
 And burned with desire to question him 345
 About this strange turn of events.
 I was making my way up from the harbor
 Just when, as it happened, Andromache
 Was offering a ritual feast for the dead
 In a grove outside the city, beside the waters 350
 Of a pretend Simois, pouring libations
 To the ashes of Hector and calling his ghost
 To the empty mound of green turf
 Hallowed with twin altars and with her tears.
 She saw me coming, saw the Trojan arms, 355

And could not believe her eyes. She stiffened,
 The warmth left her body, and she fainted.
 After a long time she gasped out these words:

‘Is the face I see real? Are you a true messenger,
 Goddess-born? Are you alive? Or if the light
 Has left you, where is Hector?’ 360

She spoke
 And poured forth her tears, filling the place
 With her cries, so frantic I was scarcely able
 To reach her with my few stammered words:

‘Yes, I am alive, through all my trials. 365
 You can believe what you see is true.
 O, what has happened to you since you lost
 Your noble husband? What fortune could be
 Worthy of you—Hector’s Andromache?
 Are you still married to Pyrrhus?’

Eyes downcast, 370
 Andromache lowered her voice and said:

‘Priam’s virgin daughter, Polyxena,
 Was most fortunate of all, condemned to die
 At an enemy’s tomb beneath Troy’s walls,
 And never a slave in a conqueror’s bed. 375
 We, our city burnt, were taken overseas
 And bore the disdainful pride of Achilles’ son,
 Giving birth in slavery. Later, he courted
 Leda’s Hermione and a Spartan marriage
 And transferred me to Helenus, 380
 A slave to a slave. Orestes, inflamed
 With jealousy over his stolen bride
 And hounded by the Furies, caught Pyrrhus
 Off guard and killed him at his father’s altar.
 Helenus inherited part of Pyrrhus’ realm 385
 And called it Chaonia after Chaon of Troy
 And built upon its hill a Pergamum,
 This Iliadic citadel.

But you, what winds
 Drove you on your fated course? What god
 Has pushed you to our shores all unaware? 390
 And what about your boy, Ascanius?
 Is he alive and breathing heaven's air?
 Even in Troy he . . .
 Still, does he miss his lost mother?
 Do his father, Aeneas, and his uncle Hector 395
 Inspire him to ancestral valor?

These words poured out of her as she wept,
 And she was raising a futile lament
 When the hero Helenus, Priam's son,
 Came from the city with a great company. 400
 He recognized us as kin and led us
 Joyfully to the city's gates, yet weeping
 Profusely at every word. As I advanced
 I recognized a little Troy, a Pergamum
 Modeled on the great one, a dry creek 405
 Named after the Xanthus, and I embraced
 Another Scaean gate. My fellow Teucrians
 Enjoyed the friendly city as much as I did.
 The king welcomed them in a broad colonnade,
 And they poured libations in the center 410
 Of a great hall, holding their wine-bowls
 As the feast was served on platters of gold.

Day followed day, the breeze called the sails,
 And a strong southerly bellied the canvas.
 I approached the seer and made this request: 415

'Helenus, son of Troy, you speak for the gods.
 You know the will of Clarian Apollo,
 His tripod and laurel, and you know the stars,
 The sounds of birds and birds on the wing.
 All the omens concerning my journey 420
 Have been favorable. All the oracles
 Have counseled me to make for Italy
 And distant lands. Only the Harpy,
 Celaeno, has prophesied a portent

Horrible to speak of and threatened
 Wrath and famine. Tell me now yourself, 425
 What are the main perils I must shun,
 And how may I overcome my trials?’

At this, Helenus first offered sacrifice,
 Prayed for grace, and unbound his sacred brow. 430
 Then he led me by the hand to the gates
 Of your temple, Apollo, my mind soaring
 With your presence, and prophesied:

‘Goddess-born, it is clear that your journey
 Over the deep is sanctioned on high, for so 435
 The Lord of the Gods has ordained,
 And so the wheel of destiny turns. I will,
 Therefore, unfold for you a few things
 Out of many, so you may more safely
 Traverse the welcoming oceans and find 440
 Haven in Ausonia. The Fates forbid
 Helenus to know more, and Saturnian Juno
 Censors my speech.

First, the Italy

That you, unknowing, think is near,
 And whose ports you are preparing to enter 445
 As if they were close, can only be reached
 Along long coastlines and a long, pathless path.
 You must first bend your oar in Sicily’s waves
 And sail your ships in the Ausonian sea
 Past the netherworld lakes and Circe’s isle 450
 Before founding your city in a land secure.
 I will now list signs for you to remember:
 In great distress you will find a huge sow
 Lying under oaks near a hidden stream
 With a litter of thirty, a white sow 455
 Lying on the ground nursing white young.
 That shall be the site of your city,
 And a sure rest from all of your labors.
 Have no fear of gnawing your tables;
 The Fates will find a way, Apollo will come. 460
 Avoid the near coast of Italy

Washed by our sea. All of the towns are held
 By evil Greeks. The Narycian Locri
 Have built a city there. Cretan Idomeneus
 Has occupied the Sallentine plains. 465
 The famous town of Philoctetes is there,
 Little Petelia, defended by her walls.
 But when your ships have crossed the high seas
 And stand moored, and you have built altars
 And fulfill vows on the shore, veil your hair 470
 With a purple robe, so that no hostile face
 May appear in the fires and spoil the omens.
 Both you yourself and your men should hold
 To this manner of sacrifice. Let your children,
 And theirs after, remain pure in religion. 475

When you leave, and the wind has borne you
 To the coast of Sicily, and the straits of Pelorus
 Begin to widen, make for land on the left
 And seas on the left in a long circuit round.
 Shun the shore and water on the right. 480
 These lands, they say, broke apart from each other
 Long ago, in a catastrophic
 Upheaval (the ages can bring titanic changes),
 When the two countries were a continuous whole.
 The sea surged between, cutting off Sicily 485
 From Hesperia, and in a seething channel
 Washed fields and cities on separate coasts.
 Scylla lurks on the right shore, and on the left
 Insatiable Charybdis. At the bottom
 Of her swirling abyss she sucks down 490
 Tons of saltwater in three gulps, then spews
 All of it up again, spraying the stars.
 Scylla, though, lies in her cave's dark gloom,
 Extruding neck and jaws, and dragging ships
 Onto her rocks. She looks human above, 495
 A beautiful woman down to her loins.
 Below, she is a scaly monster, joining
 A belly of wolves to dolphins' flukes.
 Better to round Pachynus slowly,
 Make the turn at this promontory, 500
 And double back to complete the long lap,

Than even to glimpse Scylla's hideous form
 In her vast cavern, or to come within sight
 Of the rocks that echo with her cyan hounds.

And this above all: If Helenus possesses 505

Any foresight, if I have as a seer

Any claim to belief, if Phoebus Apollo

Fills my soul with his truth—this one thing,

Goddess-born, this one thing before all,

I will foretell and repeat again and again: 510

Worship Juno. Pray to her first. Joyfully

Chant vows to Juno. Shower her majesty

With suppliant gifts and win her grace.

At last you will leave Sicily behind

And be sent to the shores of Italy. 515

When you come to Cumae, its mystic lakes,

And the woods of Avernus, you will meet

A prophetess who in her frenzy

Chants the future and commits it to leaves

With marks and signs. Whatever verses 520

The virgin priestess scratches on leaves

She arranges in order and stores in her cave.

There they remain in their numbered ranks.

But if the door is opened and a light breeze

Disturbs the soft leaves and scatters them, 525

She does not bother to gather them up

As they fly through the cave, does not care

To arrange them again and order the verse,

And so those who inquired receive no advice

And learn to hate the Sibyl and her shrine. 530

Here you must spare no expense of time.

Though your men complain and your journey calls

And you have the chance to fill your sails with wind,

You must visit the prophetess. And plead with her

To open her lips and prophesy in person. 535

She will unfold for you Italy's nations,

The wars to come, how to flee some toils

And how to face others. Venerated,

She will also grant you a favorable voyage.

This counsel you are allowed to hear from my lips. 540

Go, and by your deeds lift Troy to the stars.'

Helenus finished his kindly advice,
And then ordered that gifts of heavy gold
And sawn ivory be brought to our ships,
And he himself stowed in our hulls 545
Massive silver and cauldrons from Dodona,
A coat of golden mail, and a superb helmet
Crested with plumes, arms of Pyrrhus himself.
There were gifts, too, for my father, and horses,
And pilots to guide us. . . . 550
Extra oarsmen, and gear for my crews.

Meanwhile, Anchises ordered the ships
Rigged with sails, so we could catch the wind,
And Helenus addressed him with deep respect:

‘Anchises, worthy of wedlock with Venus, 555
Cherished by the gods, twice rescued from Troy,
Before you lies Ausonia. Sail to seize it!
Yet you must drift past this shore. Far is that part
Of Italy promised by Phoebus Apollo.
Go forth, blessed by the love of a pious son. 560
My long speech delays the rising wind.’

Andromache, too, sad at this last parting,
Brought robes embroidered with woven gold
And for Ascanius a Phrygian cloak,
And paid him more honor, loading him 565
With gifts from her loom, saying:

‘Take these also, the work of my hands, child,
And let them remind you of the enduring love
Of Andromache, the wife of Hector.
Take these last gifts of your people, you, 570
The sole surviving image of my Astyanax!
He was just like you in his eyes, his hands,
The expression on his face. He would be
The same age as you are now, a growing boy.’

Tears welled up as I said my good-byes: 575

‘Live happily. Your destiny is complete,
 We are still called from one fate to another.
 Your rest is won. You have no seas to plow,
 No quest for ever-receding Ausonian fields.
 Before your eyes is an image of the Xanthus 580
 And a Troy that your own hands have built,
 Under better auspices, I hope and pray,
 And less vulnerable to the Greeks.
 If I ever enter the Tiber and its valley
 And look upon walls granted to my race, 585
 We will have sister cities and be allies,
 Hesperia allied to Epirus
 With the same Dardanus as ancestor
 And the same tragic past. We will make them
 One Troy in spirit, and may it pass 590
 Into the care of our children’s children.’

We sailed past the near Ceraunian cliffs
 Along the shortest sea-lanes to Italy.
 Evening fell, and the hills grew dark.
 We allotted the next day’s rowers 595
 And spread out on the dry sand
 For refreshment and rest.

Sleep flowed

Through our bodies like a river. Night,
 Driven by the Hours, was just half through,
 When Palinurus woke. He rose 600
 And tested the winds, listening.
 His eyes scanned all the stars
 Gliding in the sky, Arcturus,
 The rainy Hyades, the two Bears,
 And Orion armored in gold. 605
 He saw their steady light in the clear air
 And gave a piercing signal from his ship.
 We broke camp quickly and headed out,
 Spreading our sails. Soon the stars faded
 In the roselight of Dawn, and we saw 610
 Dim on the horizon the hills of Italy.
 ‘Italy!’ Achates was the first to call,

And all the crews cheered ‘Italy, Italy!’
 Father Anchises wreathed a great bowl,
 Filled it with wine, and called on the gods 615
 From his ship’s high stern:

‘Lords of Sea and Earth and Storm, O Gods,
 Make easy our way with wind at our backs!’

The winds he prayed for freshened, a haven
 Opened before us, and a temple of Minerva 620
 Appeared on the heights. The crews furled sail
 And turned the prows shoreward. The harbor
 Curved like a bow away from the eastern surge,
 Hidden behind rocky breakwaters
 That foamed with salt spray. Towering cliffs 625
 Let down two craggy arms, and the temple
 Retreated between them back from the shore.
 I saw there our first omen, four snow-white horses
 Grazing on the plain. And Father Anchises:

‘War, you bring us war, O Promised Land. 630
 Horses are armed for war. And yet,
 Horses sometimes are reined in concord.
 There is still hope for peace.’

Then we prayed
 To the holy power of the warrior goddess,
 Pallas, who first welcomed our cheers, 635
 Veiling our heads with Phrygian robes
 Before her altar. And, remembering
 Helenus’ tense commands, we offered
 The prescribed sacrifice to Argive Juno.

Our devotions done, we pointed our ships 640
 To the open sea, hauled up the sails,
 And left behind the mistrusted Greek lands.
 We scanned the gulf of Tarentum,
 Founded by Hercules (if the tale is true).
 Across the bay, in Lacinia, rose 645
 A temple of Juno, the towers of Caulon,

And Scylaceum, with its wreckage of ships.
 Then, cresting a wave, we sighted far off
 Trinacrian Aetna and heard the sound
 Of the moaning sea crashing on rocks 650
 And breaking over the speaking shore.
 The shoals surged high and seethed with sand.
 Then Father Anchises:

‘This surely must be
 Charybdis; these are the crags and dread rocks
 Foretold by Helenus. Lean on the oars 655
 And pull us away, men!’

They did just that.
 First Palinurus swung the groaning prow
 Hard to leeward, and the whole crew
 Held us to the left with sail and oar.
 The ship rode the arcing waves to the sky 660
 And sank with them to the depths of hell.
 Three times the hollowed cliffs roared,
 Three times we saw spray strike the very stars.
 With evening the wind died, and, bone-tired
 And lost, we drifted to the Cyclopes’ coast. 665

A huge harbor lies there, the water sheltered
 And still, but Aetna thunders nearby
 With horrific crashes and darkens the sky
 With swirls of black smoke and glowing ash.
 Globes of flame rise to lick the sky’s dome, 670
 And then the mountain retches up rocks,
 Its own wrenched-out entrails, and whirls
 Molten stone up with a skyward groan,
 Boiling and churning in its innermost depths.
 The story is told that Enceladus’ body, 675
 Charred by the thunderbolt, is weighed down
 Under all that mass. Above, great Aetna
 Breathes out flame from its ruptured furnace,
 And when Enceladus turns over,
 All Trinacria trembles and groans 680
 And shrouds the sky with smoke.

That night,
 We lay in the woods enduring endless horrors
 And never saw where the sound came from.
 There were no stars, no light at all in the sky,
 And misty clouds had buried the moon. 685

Dawn melted away the night's damp shade
 And rose in a clear sky. At break of day
 A strange figure came from the woods,
 Gaunt with hunger, squalid, and pitiful.
 He stretched his hands toward the beach. 690
 We stared at him in horror. Filthy,
 Beard matted, clothing fastened with thorns,
 But in all else a Greek, who once
 Had been sent to Troy in his country's arms.

When he saw by our clothes and weapons 695
 That we were Trojans, he stopped in fear
 For a moment, then rushed to the shore
 With tears in his eyes and prayed:

‘By the stars,
 By the gods above, and by the light we breathe,
 Take me away, Trojans, anywhere at all. 700
 That will be enough. I know I am a Greek
 Who shipped out to Troy, I admit that I fought
 Against the gods of Ilium. If my guilt for that
 Is so great, cut me to pieces, and throw me
 Into the sea. At least I will die by human hands.’ 705

He spoke, and then clasped our knees, groveling
 At our feet. We urged him to tell us
 Who he was, where he was born,
 And what fate dogged his steps. My father,
 Anchises himself, with just a moment's pause, 710
 Gave the man his hand, encouraging him
 With this pledge of friendship. At last,
 The man put aside his fear and said to us:

‘I am from Ithaca and served under Ulysses,
 That unlucky man. My name is Achaemenides, 715

And because my father Adamastus was poor
 (If only I were still a poor man in Greece!)
 I set out for Troy. Here, my shipmates left me
 In Cyclops' cave, forgetting me when they ran
 From the gruesome entrance, half mad with fear. 720
 That cave is a house of gore, dark and huge,
 And he is gigantic, towering to the stars.
 O Gods, rid earth of this monster! No one
 Could bear to look at or speak to him. He feeds
 On men's flesh and drinks their black blood. 725
 I myself saw him seize two of my friends
 In his huge hand, as he sprawled in his cave,
 And smash them to bits, spattering the rock
 With their gore. I watched while he chewed
 Their dripping limbs, I saw the warm muscle 730
 Quiver in his jaws. But he has not gone unpunished!
 Ulysses did not stand for this, the Ithacan
 Did not forget who he was when the time came.
 Gorged with his feast and soused with wine,
 The monster lay stretched on the floor of his cave 735
 With his head bent sideways belching out gore,
 Wine, and bits of flesh. We prayed to the great ones,
 Drew lots, took our positions, and gouged
 The huge eye set beneath his frowning brow
 Like an Argive shield or the disk of the sun. 740
 We were glad to avenge our dead comrades.
 Now run, you poor fools, cut your cables
 From the shore. . . .
 For there are a hundred other Cyclopes here
 Along these curved shores and in the high hills, 745
 The same size and shape as Polyphemus
 When he pens his sheep in the cave and milks them.
 The moon has filled her horns with light
 Three times since I began to drag out my life
 In the woods, among the lonely lairs of beasts. 750
 I watch the Cyclopes from a high rock
 And tremble at their voices and tramping feet.
 Berries and wild plums are my sorry fare,
 Roots grubbed from the ground. From my lookout
 I saw your fleet coming to shore, and now 755

I have surrendered myself, come what may.
 It is enough to have escaped those savages.
 Take my life by any death whatever.’

These words were no sooner out than we saw
 Polyphemus himself, moving his vast bulk 760
 Down the mountain, a shepherd among his flock,
 Heading down to the shore he knew too well,
 A hideous monster, hulking in his eyeless dark.
 He used a lopped pine tree as a walking staff,
 And his fleecy sheep, his only joy and solace, 765
 Kept him company. When he reached the water
 He washed his oozing eye socket out with brine,
 Gritting his teeth and groaning, and then waded
 Through the open sea, the waves barely wetting
 His towering flanks. We took our worthy suppliant 770
 On board and moved fast to get out of there.
 We cut the cable silently and began to row hard.
 The Cyclops heard and turned toward the sound,
 But when he couldn’t lay hands on us
 Or match the pace of the Ionian waves, 775
 He let out a great roar that shivered the sea.
 The heartland of Italy shuddered, and Aetna
 Bellowed from within its winding caverns.
 The Cyclopes’ tribe was roused and came down
 From the wooded mountains to fill the shore. 780
 We saw them standing helpless, lone eyes glaring,
 These brothers of Aetna, heads reaching the sky,
 An unnerving conclave,

like aerial oaks

*On a mountaintop, or coniferous cypresses
 In a high grove of Jupiter or woods of Diana.* 785

We pitched headlong under full sail
 In whatever direction the wind took us.
 But Helenus’ words rang in my ears:
 Not to steer between Scylla and Charybdis,
 Where the slightest mistake would mean our death. 790
 We had decided to sail back, when a northerly

Came blowing down the straits of Pelorus.
 Our course took me past Pantagia's mouth
 With its living rock, past the bay of Megara
 And low-lying Thapsus. Achaemenides 795
 Pointed out these coasts, which he had seen before
 When he sailed as luckless Ulysses' companion.

An island lies stretched before a Sicilian bay
 Opposite wave-washed Plemyrion. Ortygia
 Is its ancient name. The story is told 800
 That the river Alpheus channeled his water
 Under the sea to this very island, mingling
 His waters with yours, Arethusa.

We worshiped, as told, this land's great gods.
 Then we passed the loam of Helorus' wetlands, 805
 Skirted the jutting rocks of Pachynus, and saw,
 Far in the distance, Camerina—which the Fates
 Will not allow to be moved—the Geloan plains,
 And Gela, named after its rushing river.

Then steep Acragas, breeder of noble horses, 810
 Showed off its great walls, and with a tailwind
 I left you behind, palmettoed Selinus,
 And grazed Lilybaeum with its hidden shoals.

Then the sad harbor of Drepanum
 Took me in. Here I, who had weathered 815
 So many storms at sea, lost my father,
 Anchises, solace of all my cares.

Best of fathers, rescued from such great perils
 In vain, you abandoned me in my weary hour.
 The seer Helenus foretold many horrors 820
 But not this grief; nor did Celaeno.

This was my final trial, the goal and end
 Of all my long journeys. We left Drepanum
 And some god drove me here to your shores.”

Thus Aeneas, the father of our race, 825
 Before an audience who hung on every word,
 Told the tale of heaven's dooms, and the story
 Of his wanderings. He stopped now, and rested.

AENEID FOUR

But the Queen, long sick with love,
Nurses her heart's deep wound
With her pounding blood, and dark flames
Lick at her soul. Thoughts of Aeneas—
The man's heroic lineage, his noble character— 5
Flood her mind, his face and words transfix
Her heart, and her desire gives her no rest.

When Dawn had spread the sunlight over earth
And dispelled night's damp shadow from the sky,
Dido, deeply troubled, spoke to her sister: 10

“Anna, my nightmares would not let me sleep!
This guest who has come to our house—
His looks, the way he carries himself, his brave heart!
He has to be descended from the gods. Fear
Always gives away men of inferior birth. 15
What the Fates have put him through at sea,
The wars he painted, fought to the bitter end!
If I were not unshakable in my vow
Never to pledge myself in marriage again
After death stole my first love away— 20
If the mere thought of marriage did not leave me cold,
I might perhaps have succumbed this once.
Anna, I must confess, since my husband,
Poor Sychaeus, fell at my brother's hands
And stained our household gods with blood, 25
Only this man has turned my eye,
Only he has caused my heart to falter.

I recognize the old, familiar flames.
 But may the earth gape open and swallow me,
 May the Father Almighty blast me 30
 Down to the shades of Erebus below
 And Night profound, before I violate you,
 O Modesty, and break your vows.
 The man who first joined himself to me
 Has taken my love with him to the grave.” 35

Thus Dido, and her tears wet her bosom.

And Anna:

“O sister dearer than light itself,
 Will you waste your youth in spinsterhood
 Alone and grieving, never to taste love’s joys,
 The sweetness of children? Do you think 40
 Any of this matters to ghosts in the grave?
 True, in your mourning no potential husbands
 Have caught your eye, neither back in Tyre
 Nor here in Libya. You’ve looked down your nose
 At Iarbas and Africa’s other heralded chieftains. 45
 But does it make sense to resist someone you like?
 Has it crossed your mind just where you’ve settled?
 The Gaetulians, invincible in war,
 And Numidian horsemen are on one frontier.
 Just off the coast are the Syrtes’ quicksand shoals, 50
 Desert to the south, and wild Barcaean nomads
 Ranging all over. Need I mention the war clouds
 Gathering over Tyre, and your brother’s threats?
 I think the providential gods, with Juno behind them,
 Have blown these Trojan ships our way. 55
 With a husband like this, what a city, Sister,
 What a kingdom you would see rise! With Trojan allies
 What heights of glory our Punic realm would climb!
 Just beg the gods’ indulgence, and when you have
 Good omens from the sacrifices, pamper 60
 Your guests, and invent reasons for them to linger:
 ‘Stormy Orion vexes the dim sea, your ships
 Are battered, the weather just won’t cooperate.’”

With these words Anna fanned the flames of love
 That flickered in Dido's heart and gave resolve 65
 To her wavering mind, dissolving her sense of shame.

First they make the rounds at shrines, soliciting
 Divine approval. To Ceres the lawgiver, Apollo,
 And father Bacchus the sisters slaughter
 Choice sheep in perfect rituals. But they honor 70
 Above all Juno, goddess of marriage. Dido herself,
 With her great beauty, holds the wine-bowl
 And pours it out between a glossy heifer's horns.
 She glides past statues of gods to rich altars,
 Ushers in each day with offerings, consults in awe 75
 The steaming entrails of disemboweled bulls.
 But what do prophets know? How much can vows,
 Or shrines, help a raging heart? Meanwhile, the flame
 Eats her soft marrow, and the wound lives,
 Silent beneath her breast.

Dido is burning. 80

She wanders all through the city in her misery,
 Raving mad,

*like a doe pierced by an arrow
 Deep in the woods of Crete. She is unwary,
 And the arrow, shot by a shepherd who has no idea
 Where it has landed, finds the animal, 85
 And as she runs all through the Dictaeon forest
 The lethal shaft clings to her flank.*

So too Dido.

Now she leads Aeneas on a tour of the walls,
 Shows him what the wealth of Sidon can build.
 She begins to speak, but her voice cracks. 90
 As dusk comes on her royal desire is a banquet.
 Mad to hear once more the labors of Ilium,
 She demands the story again, and again she hangs
 On every word. When her guests have left,
 And the waning moon has set, and the westering stars 95

Make slumber sweet, she pines away
 In the empty hall, lying alone on Aeneas' couch,
 Seeing and hearing him although he is gone.
 Or she holds little Ascanius in her lap
 To fill in the features of Aeneas' face 100
 And in this way cheats her unspeakable love.

The half-built towers rise no higher, the men no longer
 Drill at arms or maintain the city's defensive works.
 All work stops, construction halts on the huge,
 Menacing walls. The idle derricks loom against the sky. 105

When Jove's dear wife saw Dido so lovesick
 That her good name no longer mattered to her
 As much as her passion, she approached Venus and said:

“An outstanding victory! What a memorable display
 Of divine power by you and your little boy, 110
 Two devious deities laying low a single woman!
 Your fear of Carthage and your suspicion
 Of its noble houses hardly escapes me, my dear.
 But to what purpose? Why are we at odds?
 Why not instead work out a lasting peace— 115
 Sealed with a royal marriage? You have what you want:
 Dido burning with love, her very bones enflamed.
 I propose, therefore, that we rule this people jointly,
 With equal authority. Dido can submit
 To a Trojan husband, with Carthage as her dowry.” 120

The Goddess of Love detected a ploy
 To divert power away from Italy
 And to Libyan shores. She responded this way:

“Only a fool would refuse such an offer
 And prefer to oppose you—provided, of course, 125
 That your plan meets with success. But I remain
 A little unclear about the intentions of Fate.
 Does Jupiter want the Tyrians and Trojans
 To form one city? Does he approve

This mingling of races? You are his wife,
 And so you should persuade him. Lead on,
 And I'll follow." 130

And the Queen of Heaven:

"Leave that to me. Now listen, and I'll outline
 Exactly how we will deal with the business at hand.
 Aeneas and the most unfortunate Dido 135
 Are preparing a woodland hunt for tomorrow,
 As soon as Titan lifts his luminous head
 And dissolves with his rays the curtains of the world.
 Just as the beaters start flushing out game
 I'll pour down a black rain laced with hailstones 140
 And make all the heavens rumble with thunder.
 The hunters will scatter in the enveloping gloom,
 And Dido and Aeneas will find themselves
 In the same cave. I will be there too,
 And with your consent I will unite them 145
 In holy matrimony. This will be their wedding."

The Cytherean approved and nodded her assent,
 Smiling all the while at Juno's treachery.

Dawn rose from the river Ocean,
 And at first light the hunting party 150
 Spills out from the gates with nets and spears.
 Massylian horsemen and keen hounds surge ahead,
 But the Carthaginian nobles await their Queen.
 She pauses at the threshold of her chamber
 While her stallion, resplendent in purple and gold, 155
 Champs the foaming bit. Finally, she steps forward
 With her retinue, wearing a Phoenician cloak
 Finished with embroidery. Her quiver is gold,
 Her hair is bound in gold, and the purple cloak
 Is pinned with a clasp of gold.

Then out ride 160
 The Trojans with Iulus, excited to be among them.
 Aeneas himself, handsome as a god,

Takes the lead and joins his troops to Dido's.

*In winter Apollo leaves Lycia and the streams
Of Xanthus and goes to his birth-isle, Delos. 165
There he renews the circling dances,
And Cretans, Dryopes, and painted Scythians
Whirl around his sacred altars while the god
Paces the ridges of Mount Cynthus, braiding
His flowing hair with soft leaves and gold, 170
And the arrows rattle in the quiver on his back.*

No less majestic
Was Aeneas, and his face shone with equal glory.

When they came into the high, trackless hills,
Mountain goats, dislodged from the rocks above,
Ran down the ridges. Elsewhere, herds of deer 175
Streamed across open country, kicking up
Billows of dust in their flight from the hills.
Young Ascanius rode his spirited mount
Up and down the valleys, in high spirits himself,
Chasing deer and goats but hoping all the while 180
That something less tame, a wild boar or tawny lion,
Would come down from the mountains.

Meanwhile, the sky begins to rumble,
And a rainstorm, turning to hail, sweeps in.
The Tyrians and Trojans, with Iulus among them, 185
Venus' own dear grandchild, scatter through the fields
In search of shelter. Streams gush down the mountain,
And Dido and the Trojan leader make their way
To the same cave. Earth herself and bridal Juno
Give the signal. Fires flash in the Sky, 190
Witness to their nuptials, and the Nymphs
Wail high on the mountaintop. That day
Was the first cause of calamity and of death
To come. For no longer is Dido swayed
By appearances or her good name. No more 195
Does she contemplate a secret love. She calls it
Marriage, and with that word she cloaks her sin.

Rumor at once sweeps through Libya's great cities,
 Rumor, the swiftest of evils. She thrives on speed
 And gains power as she goes. Small and timid at first, 200
 She grows quickly, and though her feet touch the ground
 Her head is hidden in the clouds. The story goes
 That Mother Earth, vexed with the gods, bore this
 One last child, a sister to Coeus and Enceladus.
 Fast on her feet, her beating wings a blur, 205
 She is a dread, looming monster. Under every feather
 On her body she has—strange to say—a watchful eye,
 A tongue, a shouting mouth, and pricked-up ears.
 By night she wheels through the dark skies, screeching,
 And never closes her shining eyes in sleep. 210
 By day she perches on rooftops or towers,
 Watching, and she throws whole cities into panic,
 As much a hardened liar as a herald of truth.
 Exultant now, she fills the people's ears
 With all kinds of talk, intoning fact and fiction: 215
 Aeneas has come, born of Trojan blood;
 Dido, impressed, has given him her hand,
 And now they indulge themselves the winter long,
 Neglecting their realms, slaves to shameful lust.
 The loathsome goddess spreads this gossip 220
 Far and wide. Then she winds her way to King Iarbas,
 And with her words his rage flares to the sky.

Iarbas, a son of Jupiter Ammon
 By a Garmantian nymph the god had ravished,
 Had built in his vast realm a hundred temples 225
 For his Father, and on a hundred altars
 Had consecrated sacred fire, an eternal flame
 In honor of the gods. Blood from sacrificial victims
 Clotted the soil, the portals bloomed with garlands,
 As Iarbas, they say, insane with jealousy at Rumor's 230
 Bitter news, knelt at these altars surrounded by gods,
 Upturned his palms and prayed, prayed to his Father:

“Almighty Jupiter, to whom the Moors now offer
 Libations of wine as they feast on brocaded couches—
 Do you see these things? Why should we shudder 235

At you, Father, when you hurl your thunderbolts,
 Or when lightning flashes blindly in the clouds
 And stammering thunder rolls through the sky?
 This woman, a vagrant in my land, who established
 Her little town on a strip of coast we sold to her, 240
 With acreage on lease—this woman has spurned
 My offers of marriage and embraced Aeneas as her lord.
 And now this Paris, with his crew of eunuchs,
 The bonnet on his pomaded hair tied with ribbons
 Beneath his chin, makes off with the prize 245
 While we, who bring offerings to temples—
 Your temples—are worshiping an empty name.”

So Iarbas prayed, clutching the altar.
 And the Almighty heard him, and turned his eyes
 To the royal city and the lovers oblivious 250
 Of their better name.

Then Jupiter said to Mercury:

“Go now, my son, summon the Zephyrs,
 Glide down on your wings and speak to the Trojan
 Idling in Carthage. He seems to have quite forgotten,
 In his infatuation, the cities given him by Fate. 255
 Carry my words down through the rushing winds.
 This is not the man his lovely mother promised us.
 Not for this did she rescue him twice from the Greeks,
 But that he should be the one to rule Italy, a land
 Pregnant with empire and clamorous for war, 260
 And produce a race from Teucer’s high blood,
 And bring all the world beneath the rule of law.
 If his own glory means nothing to him, if he will not
 Take on this labor for his own fame’s sake,
 Does he begrudge Ascanius the towers of Rome? 265
 What is he hoping for? Why does he linger
 Among a hostile people and have no regard
 For Ausonia’s race and Lavinian fields?
 In sum, he must sail. That is my message.”

Jupiter had spoken, and his son prepared 270
 To fulfill his commands. He bound on his feet

The golden sandals whose wings carry him over
 Landscape and seascape in a blur of wind.
 Then he took the wand he uses to summon
 Pale ghosts from Orcus or send them down 275
 To Tartarus' gloom—the same wand he uses
 To charm mortals to sleep and make sleepers awake
 And unseal the dead's eyelids. Holding this wand
 He now rides the wind, sailing through thunderheads.
 As he flies along, he makes out the summit 280
 And steep slopes of Atlas, who shoulders the sky.
 His pine-clad head is forever dark with clouds
 And beaten by storms. Snow mantles his shoulders,
 And icy streams drip from his frozen grey beard.
 Mercury glided to a halt here, poised in the air, 285
 And then gathered himself for a dive to the sea,
 Where he skimmed the waves

like a cormorant

That patrols a broken shoreline hunting for fish.

And so the god flew from the mountain giant, Atlas,
 (Whose daughter, Maia, was Mercury's mother) 290
 And came at last to the beaches of Libya.

The wing-footed messenger stepped ashore,
 And when he reached the huts he saw Aeneas
 At work, towers and houses rising around him.
 His sword was enstarred with yellow jasper, 295
 And from his shoulders hung a mantle blazing
 With Tyrian purple, a splendid gift from Dido,
 Who had stitched the fabric with threads of gold.

Mercury weighed in at once:

“Are you, of all people,
 Laying the foundations of lofty Carthage 300
 And building a beautiful city—for a woman?
 What about your own realm, your own affairs?
 The ruler of the gods—and of all the universe—
 Has sent me down to you from bright Olympus,

Bearing his message through the rushing winds. 305
 What are you thinking of, wasting your time in Libya?
 If your own glory means nothing to you,
 Think of the inheritance you owe to Ascanius—
 A kingdom in Italy and the soil of Rome.”

With these words on his lips, Mercury vanished 310
 Into thin air, visible no more to human eyes.

Aeneas stood there amazed, choking with fear.
 He bristled all over, speechless, astounded,
 And he burned with desire to leave that sweet land,
 In awe of the commandment from the gods above. 315
 But what should he do? What can he say
 To the Queen in her passion? How will he choose
 His opening words? His mind ranges all over,
 Darting this way and that, and as he weighs
 His options, this seems the best choice: 320
 He calls his captains, Mnesteus, Sergestus,
 And brave Serestus, and he orders them
 To prepare the fleet for silent running, get the men
 To the shore and the gear in order, but conceal
 The reason for this change of plans. Meanwhile, 325
 He explains that—since good Dido knows nothing
 And would never dream that a love so strong
 Could ever be destroyed—he himself will find
 A way to approach her, the proper occasion
 To break the news to her gently.

The captains 330

Were more than happy to fulfill his commands.

But the Queen (are lovers ever really fooled?)
 Had a presentiment of treachery. Fearing all
 Even when all seemed safe, she was the first
 To detect a shift in the wind. It was evil Rumor 335
 Who whispered that the fleet was preparing
 To set out to sea.

She went out of her mind,
 Raging through the city

as wild and furious
As a maenad when the holy mysteries have begun,
Her blood shaking when she hears the cry “Bacchus!” 340
In the nocturnal frenzy on Mount Cithaeron,
And the mountain echoes the sacred call.

Finally she corners Aeneas and says:

“Traitor! Did you actually hope to conceal
 This crime and sneak away without telling me? 345
 Does our love mean nothing to you? Does it matter
 That we pledged ourselves to each other?
 Do you care that Dido will die a cruel death?
 Preparing to set sail in the dead of winter,
 Launching your ships into the teeth of this wind! 350
 How can you be so cruel? If Troy still stood,
 And you weren’t searching for lands unknown,
 You wouldn’t even sail for Troy in this weather!
 Is it me? Is it me you are fleeing?
 By these tears, I beg you, by your right hand, 355
 Which is all I have left, by our wedding vows,
 Still so fresh—if I have ever done anything
 To deserve your thanks, if there is anything in me
 That you found sweet, pity a house destined to fall,
 And if there is still room for prayers, I beg you, 360
 Please change your mind. It is because of you
 The Libyan warlords hate me and my own Tyrians
 Abhor me. Because of you that my honor
 Has been snuffed out, the good name I once had,
 My only hope to ascend to the stars. 365
 To what death do you leave me, dear guest
 (The only name I can call the man
 I once called husband)? For what should I wait?
 For my brother Pygmalion to destroy my city,
 For Gaetulian Iarbas to lead me off to captivity? 370
 If you had at least left me with child
 Before deserting me, if only a baby Aeneas
 Were playing in my hall to help me remember you,
 I wouldn’t feel so completely used and abandoned.”

Dido finished. Aeneas, Jupiter's message
 Still ringing in his ears, held his eyes steady 375
 And struggled to suppress the love in his heart.
 He finally made this brief reply:

“My Queen,
 I will never deny that you have earned my gratitude,
 In more ways than can be said; nor will I ever regret 380
 Having known Elissa, as long as memory endures
 And the spirit still rules these limbs of mine.
 I do have a few things to say on my own behalf.
 I never hoped to steal away from your land
 In secret, and you should never imagine I did. 385
 Nor have I ever proposed marriage to you
 Or entered into any nuptial agreement.
 If the Fates would allow me to lead my own life
 And to order my priorities as I see fit,
 The welfare of Troy would be my first concern, 390
 And the remnants of my own beloved people.
 Priam's palace would still be standing
 And Pergamum rising from the ashes of defeat.
 But now the oracles of Gryneian Apollo,
 Of Lycian Apollo, have commanded with one voice 395
 That the great land of Italy is my journey's end.
 There is my love, my country. If the walls
 Of Carthage, vistas of a Libyan city,
 Have a hold on you, a Phoenician woman,
 Why do you begrudge the Trojans 400
 A settlement in Ausonia? We too have the right
 To seek a kingdom abroad.

The troubled ghost
 Of my father, Anchises, admonishes me
 Every night in my dreams, when darkness
 Covers the earth, and the fiery stars rise. 405
 And my dear son, Ascanius—am I to wrong him
 By cheating him of his inheritance,
 A kingdom in Hesperia, his destined land?
 And now the gods' herald, sent by Jove himself,
 (I swear by your head and mine) has come down 410
 Through the rushing winds, ordering me to leave.

I saw the god myself, in broad daylight,
 Entering the walls, and heard his very words.
 So stop wounding both of us with your pleas.
 It is not my own will—this quest for Italy.” 415

While he is speaking she looks him up and down
 With icy, sidelong glances, stares at him blankly,
 And then erupts into volcanic fury:

“Your mother was no goddess, you faithless bastard,
 And you aren’t descended from Dardanus, either. 420
 No, you were born out of flint in the Caucasus,
 And suckled by tigers in the wilds of Scythia.
 Ah, why should I hold back? Did he sigh as I wept?
 Did he even look at me? Did he give in to tears
 Or show any pity for the woman who loved him? 425
 What shall I say first? What next? It has come to this—
 Neither great Juno nor the Saturnian Father
 Looks on these things with impartial eyes.
 Good faith is found nowhere. I took him in,
 Shipwrecked and destitute on my shore, 430
 And insanely shared my throne with him.
 I recovered his fleet and rescued his men.
 Oh, I am whirled by the Furies on burning winds!
 And now prophetic Apollo, now the Lycian oracles,
 Now the gods’ herald, sent by Jupiter himself, 435
 Has come down through the rushing winds
 With dread commands! As if the gods lose sleep
 Over business like this! Go on, leave! I’m not
 Arguing with you any more. Sail to Italy,
 Find your kingdom overseas. But I hope, 440
 If there is any power in heaven, you will suck down
 Your punishment on rocks in mid-ocean,
 Calling Dido’s name over and over. Gone
 I may be, but I’ll pursue you with black fire,
 And when cold death has cloven body from soul, 445
 My ghost will be everywhere. You will pay,
 You despicable liar, and I will hear the news;
 Word will reach me in the deeps of hell.”

With these words she breaks off their talk
 And in her anguish flees from the daylight 450
 And out of his sight, leaving him there
 Hesitant with fear, and with so much more to say.
 Her maids support her as she collapses, take her
 To her marble room, and lay her on her bed.

Aeneas, loyal and true, yearns to comfort her, 455
 Soothe her grief, and say the words that will
 Turn aside her sorrow. He sighs heavily,
 And although great love has shaken his soul,
 He obeys the gods' will and returns to the fleet.

Then the Trojans redouble their efforts 460
 And haul their ships down all along the shore.
 Keels are caulked and floated, leafy tree limbs
 Are brought in for oars, and beams left rough
 In the men's impatience to leave. You could see them
 Streaming down from every part of the city. 465

*Ants, preparing for winter, will busily plunder
 A huge pile of seeds and store it in their nest.
 The black line threads through the fields as the insects
 Transport their spoils on a narrow road through the grass.
 Some push the huge grains along with their shoulders, 470
 Others patrol the line and keep it moving,
 And the whole trail is seething with their work.*

What was it like, Dido, to see all this? What sighs
 Escaped your lips, when from your high tower
 You saw the shoreline crawling with Trojans, 475
 And the sea roiled with the shouts of sailors?

Cruel Love, what do you not force human hearts to bear?
 Again Dido collapses into tears, again feels compelled
 To beg Aeneas and to bow down to Love,
 Lest she leave something untried and so die in vain: 480

“Look at them, Anna, scuttling across the shore,
 Streaming down from every direction. The canvas

Can hardly wait for the breeze, and the sailors
 Are laughing as they hang the sterns with garlands.
 I had the strength to foresee this sorrow, 485
 And I will have the strength to endure it, Sister.
 There is one more thing I will ask of you.
 You are the only one that traitor befriended,
 Confiding in you even his deepest feelings.
 Only you will know the best way to approach him. 490
 Go, my dear, bend your knee before our archenemy.
 Tell him I never joined the Greek alliance at Aulis
 To burn down Troy, never sent my warships
 To Pergamum, nor defiled his father's ashes
 Or disturbed his ghost. Why, then, does he refuse 495
 To admit my words into his obstinate ears?
 What is his hurry? Is he too rushed to grant
 The final request of his wretched lover:
 To wait for favorable winds for his flight?
 I am no longer asking for our marriage back— 500
 The marriage he betrayed—nor that he do without
 His precious Latium or relinquish his realm.
 All I want is time, some breathing room for my passion,
 Until Fate has taught me how the vanquished should grieve.
 Beg from him this last favor, Sister. If he grants it, 505
 I will pay it back with interest—by my death.”

Thus Dido's prayer, and her sister sadly
 Bore it to Aeneas, then bore it again. Unmoved
 By her tears, he made no response to her words.
 Fate stood in the way, and a god sealed the man's ears. 510

*Alpine winds swoop down from the North, struggling
 To uproot an ancient oak. They blow upon it
 From every side, until its leaves strew the ground
 And the strong trunk-wood creaks. But the tree
 Clings to the crag, and as high as its crest reaches to
 heaven, 515
 So deep do its roots stretch down into Tartarus.*

So too the hero, battered with appeals
 On this side and that. His great heart feels

Unendurable pain, but his mind does not move,
And the tears that fall to the ground change nothing. 520

And now Dido, in awe of her doom,
Prays for death. She is weary of looking upon
The dome of heaven, and, furthering her resolve
To leave the light, she saw as she placed offerings
On the incense-fumed altar a fearful omen: 525
The holy water turned black, and the wine,
When she poured it, congealed into gore.
She told no one of this, not even her sister.
There was more. Dido had in the palace
A marble shrine to her deceased husband, 530
A shrine she honored by keeping it wreathed
With snow-white wool and festal fronds.
Now she heard, or seemed to hear, her husband's voice,
When dusk had melted the edges of the world,
Calling her. And the owl, alone on the rooftop, 535
Would draw out its song into an eerie wail.
And the sayings of seers from days gone by
Would fill her with terror. And then in her sleep
A fierce Aeneas would pursue her as she raved.
And then she would be alone, abandoned forever, 540
Forever traveling a long, lonesome road
Through a desert landscape, searching for her Tyrians—

*Like mad Pentheus when he sees the maenads,
And sees a double sun and a duplicate Thebes;
Or like Orestes stalked by Furies on an empty stage, 545
Pursued by his mother with torches and snakes
While the avenging Fiends lurk in the doorway.*

And so Dido, worn down by grief, went mad.
Determined to die, she worked out by herself
The time and the means, and only then 550
Did she address her sister, hiding her plan
Behind a face radiant with serenity and hope:

“O Sister, I have found a way—be glad for me—
Either to get him back or free myself from love.

On the shore of Ocean, near the setting sun,
 Lies farthest Ethiopia, where gigantic Atlas
 Turns on his shoulders the star-studded heavens. 555
 A priestess from there, of the Massylian tribe,
 Has been presented to me. She guarded the sanctuary
 Of the Hesperides, protected the golden apples
 On their tree, and feasted the dragon 560
 On honey and the poppy's drowsy opium.
 She claims her incantations can set hearts free
 Or plunge them into the depths of despair,
 All as she chooses. She can stop rivers cold, 565
 Make the stars turn backward, and conjure up
 The spirits of night. You will hear the ground bellow
 Under your feet, see elms stroll down mountains.
 I swear by the gods, Anna, and by your dear head,
 I am reluctant to resort to black magic. Still, 570
 Build a pyre secretly in the central courtyard
 Under the open sky and pile upon it
 The weapons our impious hero left
 On our bedroom walls, and all his forgotten clothes,
 And the marriage bed that was my undoing. 575
 It will do me good to destroy every reminder
 Of that evil man—as the priestess told me.”

She fell silent, and the color drained from her face.

In spite of everything, her sister Anna
 Did not believe that Dido was inventing 580
 These strange rites to disguise her own funeral.
 She could not conceive of passion so great
 And feared no worse for Dido now
 Than at the death of Sychaeus.

And so,

Anna prepared the pyre. 585

But the Queen, out in the open courtyard—
 Where the pyre now reared heavenward,
 Vast with billets of pine and sawn oak—
 Hangs the place with garlands and funeral fronds.

Upon the bed she arranges his clothes, the sword
That he left, and his picture, knowing well
What was to come. 590

There were altars
Around the courtyard, and the priestess
Shook her hair out free and chanted thunderous prayers
To three hundred gods, to Erebus and Chaos, 595
To three-bodied Hecate and Diana's three faces,
Virgin huntress, Moon, and pale Proserpina.
She sprinkled water as being from Avernus
And with a bronze knife harvested by moonlight
Herbs selected for their milky, black poison. 600
She calls for the love charm of a newborn foal
Torn from his forehead before his mother can eat it.
Dido herself, sacred cakes of barley in her pious hand,
Stands close to the altars, one foot unsandaled,
Her dress unbound. Then she calls to witness, 605
As one about to die, first Gods and then Stars
Who share Destiny's secrets. And then she prays
To whatever Power makes a final reckoning
For lovers who love on unequal terms.

It was night, and all over earth weary bodies 610
Lay peacefully asleep. Woods and wild seas
Had fallen still, and the stars were midway
In their gliding orbits. Ox and meadow were quiet,
And all the brilliant birds who haunt
The lapping lakes and tangled hedgerows 615
Were nestled in sleep under the dark, silent sky.

But not Dido, unhappy heart. She never drifted off
Into sleep, nor let night settle on her eyes or breast.
Her anxiety mounts, and her love surges back
And seethes, wave after wave on a furious sea. 620
At last she breaks into speech, debating in her heart:

“What am I doing? Should I entertain once more
My former suitors—and hear them laugh at me?
Go begging for a marriage among the Nomads,
After scorning their proposals time and again? 625

Shall I follow the Trojans' fleet and be subject
 To their every command? After all, aren't they
 So grateful for the help I gave them
 That they could never forget my past kindnesses?
 Even if I wanted to, who would let me on board, 630
 Welcome someone so hated onto their ships?
 Poor Dido, do you not yet appreciate
 The treachery bred into Laomedon's race?
 What then? Shall I crew with the Trojans
 Cruising cheerfully away, all on my own? 635
 Or should I, at the head of my own Tyrian fleet,
 Give them pursuit, order my people to hoist sail
 Into the wind again, a people I could scarcely persuade
 To abandon their city back in Phoenicia?
 No, Dido, die as you deserve, end your sorrow 640
 With a sword.

You, my dear sister, caving in to my tears,
 First loaded my frenzied soul with these sorrows
 And put me in the enemy's path. It was not my lot
 To live a blameless life as a widow, as free
 As a wild thing, untouched by these cares. 645
 I have not kept my vow to Sychaeus' ashes."

As these cries erupted from Dido's heart,
 Aeneas, bent on leaving, with everything in order,
 Was catching some sleep on his ship's high stern,
 And in his sleep he had a vision of Mercury, 650
 Returning to him in the same form as before,
 The same voice and face, the same golden hair
 And graceful body—and, as before, with a warning:

"Goddess-born, how can you sleep in a crisis like this?
 Are you blind to the perils surrounding you, 655
 Madman? Don't you hear a sailing breeze blowing?
 Dido's heart revolves around evil. Determined
 To die, she seethes with tides of raw passion.
 Will you not flee now, while flight is still possible?
 You will soon see this sea awash with timbers 660
 And the shore in flames—if Dawn finds you

Lingering here. Push off, then, without delay.
A woman is a fickle and worrisome thing.”

And with these words he melted into the dark.

Aeneas was deeply shaken by this apparition. 665
He tore himself from sleep and woke his crew:

“On the double, men, unfurl those sails
And get to the benches! A god has come down
From heaven again, urging us to cut the cables
And get out of here as fast as we can. 670
We will follow you, Holy One, whoever you are,
And gladly obey your commands again.
Be with us once more, grant us your grace,
And set propitious stars in the sky before us.”

He spoke, drew his sword 675
Flashing from its sheath, and severed
The stern cable. Aeneas’ fervor
Spread through the fleet. They ran to their posts
And shoved off from the shore, blanketing the sea
With their hulls. Leaning into the oars, 680
They swept the blue water and churned it to foam.

Dawn left Tithonus’ saffron bed
And sprinkled the world with early light.
The Queen, in her tower, watched the day whiten
And saw the fleet moving on under level sails. 685
She knew the shores and harbors were empty,
The oarage gone. She beat her lovely breast
Three times, four times, and tore her golden hair.

“O God!” she said. “Will he get away,
Will this interloper make a mockery of us? 690
To arms, the whole city, after him!
Launch the fleet! Bring fire, man the oars!
What am I saying? Where am I?
What has come over me? Oh, Dido, only now

Do you feel your guilt? Better to have felt it 695
 When you gave away your crown. Behold
 The pledge, the loyalty, of the man they say
 Bears his ancestral gods, bore on his shoulders
 His age-worn father! Could I have not torn him
 Limb from limb and fed him to the fishes? 700
 Murdered his friends? Minced Ascanius himself
 And served him up as a meal to his father?
 The battle could have gone either way: What of it?
 Doomed to die, whom did I have to fear?
 I should have torched his camp with my own hands, 705
 Annihilated father and son and the whole race,
 And thrown myself on top of the conflagration.
 O Sun, fiery witness to all earthly deeds,
 And Juno, complicit in my unhappy love,
 Hecate, worshiped with howls at midnight crossroads, 710
 Avenging Furies, and gods of dying Elissa—
 Attend to this, turn the force of your wrath
 Upon sins that deserve it—O hear my prayer!
 If this criminal is destined to make harbor again,
 If this is what the Fates and Jupiter demand, 715
 May he still have to fight a warlike nation,
 Be driven from his land and torn from Iulus.
 May he plead for aid and see his people slaughtered.
 And when he has accepted an unjust peace,
 May he not enjoy his reign or the light of day 720
 But die before his time and lie unburied
 On a desolate shore. This is what I pray for.
 These last words I pour out with my blood.
 And you, my Tyrians, must persecute his line
 Throughout the generations—this your tribute 725
 To Dido's ashes. May treaties never unite
 These nations, may no love ever be lost between them.
 And from my bones may some avenger rise up
 To harry the Trojans with fire and sword,
 Now and whenever we have the power. 730
 May coast oppose coast, waves batter waves,
 Arms clash with arms, may they be ever at war,
 They themselves and their children forever.”

Dido said these things and then set her mind
 On a quick escape from the hated light. She exchanged 735
 A few words with Barce, Sychaeus' nurse; her own
 Was black ashes back in the old country.

“Dear Nurse, bring my sister Anna here.
 Have her sprinkle her body with river water
 And bring along the victims for expiation. You 740
 Come with her, and wreath your brows with wool.
 I intend to complete the rites to Stygian Jove
 That I have begun, and so end my troubles,
 And to send the Trojan's pyre up in flames.”

She spoke. The old woman quickened her step. 745
 Dido trembled, panicked at the enormity
 Of what she had begun. Eyes bloodshot,
 Blotched cheeks quivering, pale with looming death,
 She burst into the innermost part of the house,
 Climbed the pyre like a madwoman, and unsheathed 750
 The Trojan sword—a gift not sought for such a use.
 The sight of the familiar bed and the clothes he wore
 Made her stop in tears. Struggling to collect herself,
 She lay upon the couch and spoke her final words:

“Love's spoils, sweet while heaven permitted, 755
 Receive this soul, and free me from these cares.
 I have lived, and I have completed the course
 Assigned by Fortune. Now my mighty ghost
 Goes beneath the earth. I built an illustrious city.
 I saw my walls. I avenged my husband 760
 And made my evil brother pay. Happy,
 All too happy, if Dardanian ships
 Had never touched our shores!”

Dido spoke,
 And pressing her face into the couch:

“We will die unavenged, but we will die. 765
 This is how I want to pass into the dark below.
 The cruel Trojan will watch the fire from the sea
 And carry with him the omens of my death.”

With these words on her lips her companions saw her
 Collapse onto the sword, saw the blade 770
 Foaming with blood and her hands spattered.
 A cry rises to the roof, and Rumor
 Dances wildly through the shaken town.
 The houses ring with lamentation
 And the wails of women. Great dirges 775
 Hang in the air. It was as if Carthage itself
 Or ancient Tyre had fallen to the enemy,
 And flames rolled through the houses of men
 And over the temples of the gods.

Anna, in great distress, heard the cries. 780
 She rushed through the crowd, clawing her face
 With her nails, and beating her breasts
 With her fists, and then spoke to her dying sister:

“So this is what it was all about, Sister.
 You cheated me, didn’t you? This is what 785
 Your pyre was for, your altars, your fire—
 To deceive me. What should I lament first,
 Deserted like this? Did you scorn my company
 In death? You should have called on me
 To share your fate, to die by the sword 790
 With the same agony, at the same moment!
 Did I build this pyre with my own hands
 Calling upon the gods of our fathers,
 So that when you were lying upon it like this
 I would not be here? Cruel! You have destroyed 795
 Yourself, me, the Sidonian elders, and your city.

Ah, let me bathe her wounds, and if any last breath
 Still lingers on her lips, let me catch it on mine.”

She had reached the top of the pyre by now
 And was holding her sister close to her bosom, 800
 Sobbing as she used her dress to stanch
 The blood’s dark flow. Dido, trying to lift
 Her heavy eyes, grew faint again. The wound hissed
 Deep in her chest. Three times she struggled
 To prop herself upon her elbow, 805

Three times she rolled back on the bed.
With wandering eyes she sought the light
In heaven's dome and moaned when she found it.

Then Almighty Juno, pitying Dido's long agony
And hard death, sent Iris down from Olympus 810
To free her struggling soul from its mortal coils.
Her death was neither fated nor deserved
But before her day and in the heat of passion.
Proserpina had not yet plucked from her head
A golden lock, nor allotted her a place 815
In the Stygian gloom. And so Iris flew down
Through the sky on sparkling, saffron wings,
Trailing in the sunlight a thousand changing hues,
And then stood above Dido's head.

“This offering
I consecrate to Dis and release you from your body.” 820

As soon as she had cut the lock, all the body's warmth
Ebbd away, and Dido's life withdrew into the winds.

AENEID FIVE

By now Aeneas was out at sea with his fleet,
Holding course through waves darkening
Under a cold North Wind—and looking back
At the walls of Carthage lit with the flames
Of Dido's pyre. The cause of the fire 5
Was hidden, but the terrible pain
Of a great love defiled and knowledge
Of what a frenzied woman could do
Gave the Trojans grim presentiments.

When the ships were out on deep water, 10
With no land in sight, but only sea and sky,
A cobalt cloud loomed overhead
Bringing night and storm, and the waves
Shuddered with shadows. Palinurus,
The pilot, cried from the high stern: 15

“Look at these storm clouds ringing the sky!
What are you doing, Father Neptune?”

With this,
He gave the order to bring in the rigging
And man the oars. Then he trimmed the sails
Aslant to the wind and spoke again: 20

“Noble Aeneas, not even if Jupiter
Promised me himself could I hope
To reach Italy with such a sky. The winds
Have shifted and are blowing across us,

Roaring in from the black west. The air
 Is thickening, and for all our efforts 25
 We cannot make headway into this storm.
 We must follow Fortune and let her
 Call our course. The friendly shores
 Of your brother Eryx and Sicilian ports
 Are not too far, if I remember my stars.” 30

And Aeneas, steadfast:

“For some time now
 I have seen what the wind wants. You can’t steer
 Against it. Set the sails for a new course.
 What place could be more welcome to me 35
 And my weary ships than the island
 Of Trojan Acestes, the land that holds
 My father’s bones in her bosom?”

This said,
 They headed for port, with the West Wind
 Filling their sails. The fleet raced on 40
 And turned at last toward the familiar shore.

Standing on a distant hilltop, Acestes
 Marveled at the arrival of friendly ships.
 He hurried down toward them, bristling
 With javelins and a Libyan bearskin— 45
 Acestes, born of a Trojan mother
 To the rivergod Criniseus. Mentioning
 Their family ties, he congratulated them
 On their return and made them welcome
 With his rustic riches and comforts of home. 50

Early the next day, when a clear dawn
 Had put the stars to flight, Aeneas assembled
 His men on the shore and spoke to them
 From a high dune:

“Great sons of Dardanus,
 My people born of the gods’ high race, 55

A year of circling moons has passed
 Since we laid in the earth the last remains
 Of my divine father and hallowed his altars.
 And now, by my count, the day has come
 That I shall always keep as a day of mourning— 60
 As you willed, O Gods—and a day of honor.
 Were I spending this day as an exile
 In the Gaetulian Syrtes, or the sea of Argos,
 Or in Mycenae itself, still I would fulfill
 My yearly vow with solemn rites 65
 And pile the altars high with offerings.
 But now we stand near my father's bones,
 Not without, I think, the will of heaven,
 Carried here to a safe and friendly haven.
 Then let us all celebrate this day with joy, 70
 Pray for favorable winds, and ask Anchises
 For his blessing. May I offer these rites
 Year by year when I found my city,
 In temples consecrated to his memory.
 Acestes, himself of Trojan birth, has given 75
 Two head of oxen for every ship.
 Summon to the feast the gods of your hearth
 And the gods of Acestes. Moreover,
 When the ninth day dawns with light for men
 And reveals the world, I will propose 80
 Games and contests for the Trojans:
 First a regatta for our sailing ships,
 And then a footrace, a javelin throw,
 And a boxing match with rawhide gloves.
 Come one and all, and compete for glory! 85
 Now wreath your brows and observe silence all.”

Aeneas spoke, and crowned his own brows
 With his mother's myrtle. Helymus
 Did the same, as did aged Acestes
 And the boy Ascanius. The others followed. 90
 Aeneas returned to the mound, thousands
 Thronging around him. He poured a libation—
 Two goblets of undiluted wine, two

Of fresh milk, and two of the victims' blood—
And scattered flowers. Then he cried: 95

“Hail once more, venerable Father,
Hail, ashes rescued in vain, soul and shade
Of my sire. I was not destined to seek
The fields of Italy with you at my side,
Nor find with you the Ausonian Tiber.” 100

He had no sooner spoken when there slithered
From the shrine's base a serpent trailing
Seven huge coils. It circled the mound
And glided tranquilly among the altars,
Its back spotted midnight blue and its scales 105
Shimmering with the iridescent gold
Of a rainbow refracting the cloud-scatched sun.
Aeneas was filled with awe. The serpent
Slid its length amid the bowls and polished cups,
Tasted the food on the altars, and at last 110
Crept harmlessly beneath the mound.
Aeneas renewed the rites with greater fervor,
Unsure whether it was the genius of the place
Or his father's spirit. He sacrificed
Two sheep, two swine, and as many 115
Dark-backed bullocks, all the while
Pouring wine from shallow bowls and calling
Great Anchises' soul and shades of Acheron.
His men gladly brought gifts and heaped them
On the altars. Others slaughtered steers, 120
Set out cauldrons, and, spread out on the grass,
Roasted the meat over glowing coals.

Dawn of the ninth, long-awaited day
Was escorted in by the horses of the Sun.
The games, and Acestes' illustrious name, 125
Brought in the crowds. They filled the shores
In a holiday mood, some coming to see
Aeneas and his men, others to compete.
The prizes were set out for all to see:

Ritual tripods, green wreaths and palms
 For the victors, arms, robes dyed rich purple,
 A talent of silver and another of gold.
 A trumpet pealed from a central mound,
 Signaling the start of the competition.

Four ships entered the first contest,
 Well-matched in oarage, the pride of the fleet.
 The swift Leviathan was captained by Mnestheus,
 Namesake of the Italian clan of Memmius.
 Gyas commanded the huge Chimaera,
 A trireme the size of a city, rowed
 By Dardanian youths sweeping their oars
 In three ordered tiers and propelling her on.
 Sergestus, namesake of the house of Sergius,
 Rode in the great Centaur, and Scylla,
 A sea-blue vessel, carried Cloanthus,
 Whence your family, Roman Cluentius.

Far offshore lies a rock, pounded
 By the waves. During winter storms
 It is submerged, but in fair weather
 It rises in stony silence from the still sea,
 And cormorants sun themselves on its surface.
 Father Aeneas wedged a leafy oak branch there
 To mark the turning point for the sailors.
 They drew for positions. The captains
 High on the sterns gleamed in purple and gold,
 And the rowers were wreathed in poplar,
 Their bare shoulders glistening with oil.
 They sat on the benches, hands tense on the oars,
 And eagerly awaited the start, blood
 Shaking their hearts in their lust for glory.
 The instant the trumpet sounded they broke
 From their places. The shouts of the rowers
 Split the air, and the water churned and foamed
 With each pull of their arms. Side by side
 The ships plowed furrows, and the sea's plain
 Was ripped to its depths by the cleaving oars
 And the triple prongs of the vessels' beaks.

*Chariot teams that break from the start
 And eat up the plain are not so headlong
 Even when their drivers shake out the reins
 And lean forward to apply the whip.* 170

The crowds applaud and cheer on their favorites,
 And all the woodlands return the sound,
 And it echoes off the hills and cliffs
 And reverberates across the sheltered shore. 175

Gyas took the lead first, slipping through the waves
 Amid all the roaring. Cloanthus was next,
 With better rowers but a heavier ship. Then,
 Equally far behind, Leviathan and Centaur
 Battled for third. Leviathan would pull ahead, 180
 Then huge Centaur would pass her by,
 And then they would sail neck and neck
 And cleave the salt sea with their curving keels.
 They were drawing close to the rocky turn
 When Gyas, the leader on the course, 185
 Called out to his ship's pilot, Menoetes:

“Why are you going so far to the right?
 Steer this way! Hug the shore, let the oars
 Scrape the rock on the left. The others
 Can have the deep water.”

But Menoetes, 190
 Fearing blind rocks, swung the prow out to sea.

“Where are you veering? Hug the rocks,
 Menoetes!”

As Gyas was shouting,
 He looked back and saw Cloanthus
 Coming up fast, cutting a course
 Between Gyas' ship and the roaring rock. 195
 He surged past in an instant, turned the goal,
 And was safely out on the open sea.
 Gyas' dismay burned in his bones,

And tears streamed down his face. Forgetting
 His own honor and his sailors' safety, 200
 He pushed the sluggish Menoetes
 Off the stern into the sea headfirst
 And took the rudder himself. Urging on his crew,
 The captain, now pilot, turned the prow toward shore.
 Menoetes, heavy and old, bobbed up 205
 From the depths and pulled himself out
 Dripping wet onto the rock and sat there.
 The Trojans laughed when he fell, laughed
 As he swam, and were laughing now
 As he vomited up buckets of seawater. 210

Sergestus and Mnestheus, bringing up the rear,
 Now brightened with hope of catching Gyas.
 Sergestus was ahead coming up to the turn
 But not by much: Leviathan's prow
 Overlapped his keel and was pushing hard. 215
 Mnestheus strode up and down mid-ship
 Exhorting his crew:

“Lean on those oars, men!
 Comrades of Hector, men I handpicked
 For Troy's last stand—show me the strength,
 The spirit you had in the shoals off Carthage, 220
 In the Ionian Sea and Cape Malea's currents!
 We can't win this race, we're not shooting for first,
 (If only!—but Neptune decides the winners)
 But coming in last is a total disgrace. Your victory
 Is to not let that happen!”

And they fell on the oars 225
 With a supreme effort. The bronze-beaked ship
 Shivered under their strokes, and the sea
 Slipped away beneath them as they panted for breath,
 Mouths dry, sweat pouring down their bodies in rivers.
 It was an accident that gave them the glory. 230
 As Sergestus rashly squeezed his prow inside
 And into the danger zone, he ran out of luck
 And caught the jutting rock. The oars

Splintered on its jagged edge, and the prow
 Crashed hard and hung out over the water. 235
 The sailors rose with a shout and steadied her
 By rowing backward, then they pushed her off
 With iron-tipped poles and fished out their oars.
 Mnestheus, flushed with success, broke free
 With oars flashing and winds at his call, 240
 Running shoreward on the open sea.

A dove

*Flushed from its nest in a cave's porous rock
 Flies out with a tremendous explosion of wings
 Into the open fields and then starts gliding
 In pure, still flight on the quiet air.*

Thus Mnestheus, 245

And thus the Leviathan, cutting through
 The final stretch of water and flying along
 On her own momentum. First she left behind
 Sergestus, struggling on the craggy rock
 And vainly calling for help on the shoals 250
 While he learned how to row with broken oars.
 Then she caught Gyas on the huge Chimaera,
 Which, without her pilot, soon fell behind.

At the finish, only Cloanthus was left,
 And Mnestheus went after him with all he had. 255
 The noise from the crowd doubled, all rooting
 For the ship behind. The sky rang with their cheers.
 The leading crew cringed to lose the glory
 Now in their grasp, and would trade their lives for it.
 The other feeds off success. They can 260
 Because they think they can, and perhaps
 They would have won when they drew up level
 If Cloanthus had not stretched out both hands
 Over the sea and made this prayerful vow:

“Gods of the sea, upon whose plains I race, 265
 I will place before your altars on this shore

A shining bull to discharge this my vow,
Cast entrails in the waves, and pour forth wine.”

He spoke, and the gods deep in the water
Heard his prayer, all the Nereids, Phorcus, 270
And his daughter, Panopea. And as the ship
Moved on, Father Portunus himself
Reached out his great hand and drove her forward.
Swifter than wind or a speeding arrow, she flew
To the land and came to rest deep in the harbor. 275

Then Aeneas, true son of Anchises,
Summoned all the crews in ritual fashion
And, proclaiming Cloanthus the victor,
Wreathed his brows with fresh green laurel.
Then he had each ship select three bullocks 280
And gave to each wine and a great bar of silver.
The two leading captains he singled out
With special honors. To the victor he gave
A gold-embroidered cloak with a wavy border
Of Meliboean purple and the woven design 285
Of a royal youth on wooded Mount Ida,
A boy keen in the hunt, chasing down stags
With his javelin. As he ran, out of breath,
An eagle of Jove swooped down from Ida
To snatch him up in his hooking talons. 290
The boy’s aged guardians lifted their palms
In vain to the stars, and his dogs barked at the wind.
To Mnestheus, who won second place,
Aeneas gave a corselet with burnished links
Interwoven with triple-meshed gold 295
That he himself had stripped from Demoleos
By the rushing Simois under Ilium’s walls,
A prize of honor and a protection in war.
Sagaris and Phegeus could barely carry
The multilayered corselet on their shoulders 300
To give to Mnestheus, yet Demoleos
Ran in it when he routed the Trojans.
Third prize was a pair of bronze cauldrons
And finely finished cups chased in silver.

They all had their gifts and were gleaming with pride, 305
 Their temples bound with crimson ribbons,
 When Sergestus, having with consummate skill
 Wrenched his boat from the pernicious rock,
 Was bringing her in missing an entire tier of oars,
 A crippled vessel without any honor. 310

*Sometimes a snake caught crossing a road
 Is run over by a bronze wheel or struck by a rock
 Thrown by a passerby who has left it half-dead.
 It twists and writhes in an attempt to flee,
 And although its eyes burn with ferocity 315
 And its tongue hisses in its upreared head,
 The rest of its wounded body is coiled
 As it struggles along in trailing knots.*

So too this ship and her oars, moving slowly,
 Yet she made sail and pulled into the harbor. 320
 Aeneas gave Sergestus the promised gifts,
 Glad to see the ship saved and her men returned,
 And added a slave woman, a Cretan named Pholoë,
 Skilled in crafts and with two infants nursing.

This contest done, pious Aeneas 325
 Strode to a grassy field ringed by hills
 That formed a natural stadium,
 And thousands came with him. Here the hero
 Took his place on a raised platform
 And invited all comers who had enough spirit 330
 To compete in a sprint for the prizes set forth.
 A crowd of Teucrians and Sicilians
 Stepped up to enter, first and foremost
 Nisus and Euryalus. . . .
 Euryalus stood out for his youthful beauty, 335
 And Nisus for his pure love for this boy.
 Diores, a son of Priam, was next in line,
 And then Salius and Patron, one of them
 From Acarnania, the other an Arcadian.
 Then two Sicilians, Helymus and Panopes, 340
 Woodsmen both and attendants of Acestes,

And many more, whose names oblivion hides.
 Standing in their midst Aeneas addressed them:

“Hear my words, men, and be of good cheer.
 No one will leave here without winning a prize: 345
 Two Cretan arrows with burnished steel tips
 And a two-headed axe embossed with silver,
 The same award for all. The first three finishers
 Will receive other prizes and will be wreathed
 In golden olive. The winner will get a horse 350
 With splendid trappings. The prize for second
 Is an Amazonian quiver full of Thracian arrows
 Slung on a belt with a broad gold band
 And a gemstone buckle. Third place will be content
 To leave the field with an Argive helmet.” 355

When he finished speaking they took their places,
 And when the signal was given they were off,
 Streaming out from the line like pouring rain.
 When the finish was in sight Nisus took off,
 Leaving them all behind, faster than wind 360
 Or the wings of lightning. Next, but far behind,
 Was Salius, and trailing behind him
 Euryalus ran third. Helymus was in fourth,
 And hard on his heels was Dioces, leaning
 Over his shoulder; in a longer race 365
 Dioces would have passed him
 Or they would have finished dead even.
 They were in the final stretch, tiring
 As they came up to the line, when Nisus
 Had the bad luck to slip on a patch of grass 370
 Wet with the blood of slaughtered oxen.
 He was already celebrating his victory
 When he lost his footing and fell face first
 Into the filthy gore from the sacrifice.
 But he did not forget Euryalus 375
 Or his love for the boy. He slid through the slime
 Into the path of Salius and knocked him
 Head over heels onto the hard-packed sand.
 Euryalus shot ahead and thanks to his friend

Flew on to victory to the sound of applause. 380
 Helymus finished second and Diores third.
 But Salius protested loud and long
 Before the spectators, filling the ears
 Of the elders in front with his complaints
 That he had been cheated and robbed of his prize. 385
 Euryalus was saved by his popularity
 And becoming tears, and by the manly spirit
 All the more pleasing in so handsome a frame.
 And Diores gave him strong vocal support.
 He had finished third but would have no prize 390
 If Salius were awarded first place.
 Then Father Aeneas:

“Your prizes are fixed,
 And no one will change the finishing order.
 But I do have a consolation prize
 For our friend who did not deserve to fall.” 395

And he presented the hide of a Gaetulian lion
 To Salius, a huge shaggy skin with golden claws.
 At this Nisus put in:

“If the losers are to get
 These great prizes, and you feel so sorry for falls,
 What about me, Nisus? I would have won 400
 If I had not had the same bad luck as Salius.”

As he spoke he displayed his face and arms
 Filthy with muck. Aeneas, like a good father,
 Smiled at Nisus and had a shield brought to him,
 The work of Didymaon, a shield the Danaans 405
 Had removed from the door of Neptune’s temple,
 Now a splendid prize for this noble youth.

The races were done, the awards completed.

“Now, if there is a man here with any heart,
 Come out with gloves on and hands held high.” 410

Aeneas spoke and put up a double prize
 For the boxing match: for the victor,
 A bullock with gilded horns and woolen fillets;
 A sword and fine helmet to console the vanquished.

Without delay, Dares muscled himself up 415
 To a chorus of cheers. He was the only man
 Who used to hold his own against Paris,
 And who at the funeral of Hector
 Fought Butes, the great Bebrycian champion,
 And laid him out dying on the yellow sand. 420
 It was this Dares who now held his head high
 For the first match, flexed his arms for his fans,
 And began to shadowbox, punching the air.
 Not a man stepped forward, out of all that crowd,
 To put on gloves and go up against him. 425
 Thinking everyone had conceded the prize,
 He went up to Aeneas and without hesitation
 Grasped the ox's horn with his left hand, saying:

“Goddess-born, if no one dares to fight me,
 What are we standing here for? Give me the word 430
 To lead away my prize.”

The Dardanians

All yelled that he should be given his prize.
 And then Acestes, sitting next to Entellus
 On the green grass, said to him sternly:

“Entellus, you were once the bravest of heroes, 435
 But it means nothing now if you are willing to let
 Prizes like this be won uncontested.
 What about the divine Eryx, your teacher?
 Honored in memory only? What about your fame
 Throughout Sicily, all your trophies at home?” 440

And Entellus:

“It's not that my love of glory
 Has given away to fear. But I'm old and slow

And don't have any juice. I'm all worn out.
 If I had the youth that gives this rascal
 His confidence, if I had my youth back, 445
 I wouldn't need any prize, no prettied-up bull,
 To make me fight. I don't care about prizes."

And he threw into the ring a pair of gloves
 Of enormous weight, gloves that fierce Eryx
 Would bind onto his hands for use in battle. 450
 They all stared in wonder at the outsize leather,
 Seven-ply rawhide stiff with lead and iron.
 Dares stared the hardest and backed off fast
 While Aeneas, Anchises' great-souled son,
 Turned the huge, heavy gauntlets over and over. 455
 Then old Entellus' voice boomed out:

"What if you had seen the gloves of Hercules
 And the grim fight on this very shore?
 Your half-brother, Eryx, wielded these weapons
 (You can still see on them spattered blood and brains) 460
 And stood against great Hercules with them.
 I used them too, when my blood was hotter,
 Before jealous old age sprinkled grey in my hair.
 But if Trojan Dares objects to these gloves,
 And if that sits well with pious Aeneas 465
 And Acestes approves, we can even up the fight.
 Relax; I'll give up Eryx's gloves
 And you take off your Trojan mitts."

With that he flung his mantle from his shoulders,
 Baring his heavy-boned, knotted arms, 470
 And stood like a giant in the middle of the sand.
 Father Aeneas, Anchises' true son,
 Brought out two pairs of well-matched gloves
 And bound the thongs to each boxer's hands.
 They were up on their toes in an instant, 475
 Both fearless, hands lifted skyward,
 They held their heads high and well out of range
 And began mixing it up, sparring for an opening,
 Dares relying on fancy footwork and youth,

Entellus a heavyweight with a longer reach, 480
 But his knees were going and his breath came hard.
 They threw many knockout punches that missed
 But landed many hard body blows, thudding
 Into the rib cage and chest, and made frequent jabs
 To head and ears; their jaws snapped with the impact. 485
 Entellus stood his ground, tense and poised,
 Swaying away from punches, eyes on his opponent.
 Dares fought

as if attacking a city
With high, massive walls, or laying siege
To a hilltop fortress, trying first one approach, 490
Then another, using all of the arts of war
And mounting various assaults in vain.

Entellus showed a high right hand and stepped in
 For a hard downward blow. Dares saw it coming
 And twisted out of the way. Entellus spent 495
 All his force on the air and fell heavily
 Onto the ground,

like a vaulted pine
Uprooted and falling to the ground
On Erymanthus or great Mount Ida.

Trojans and Sicilians were on their feet, 500
 Their shouts reaching the sky. Acestes
 Ran out to lift his old friend from the ground,
 But the great hero was unfazed by the fall
 And returned to the fight with even more spirit,
 Pumped up by anger, fortified by shame, 505
 And fiercely proud. He drove Dares
 All over the arena, hitting him with a right,
 With a left, pelting him without letting up,
 Like stinging hail. Both fists flying, the hero
 Pounded Dares until he sent him spinning. 510

Father Aeneas did not allow Entellus
 To pursue his bitter rage any further.

He stopped the fight, took Dares aside,
And spoke to him these soothing words:

“What happened out there? Didn’t you sense
The powers had shifted? Yield to the gods.” 515

Then he announced that the boxing was over.
Dares’ supporters led him to the ships, dragging
His weak knees and lolling his head
As he spat out teeth clotted with blood. 520
They took the sword and helmet, leaving
First prize for Entellus. Towering over the bull
In pride of victory, the hero said:

“Goddess-born, and Trojans all, observe
The strength I had when I was young 525
And the kind of death you saved Dares from.”

He spoke, then stood facing the ox
That was his prize, and, lifting his right hand,
Poised the hardened glove high between its horns,
Struck, and crushed its skull. The bull trembled 530
And then sank to the ground, a lifeless heap.
And Entellus spoke these heartfelt words:

“This life rather than Dares’ I offer to you, Eryx.
I retire a champion and hang up my gloves.”

Aeneas now announced the archery contest, 535
Invited all comers, and listed the prizes.
He set up a mast from Serestus’ ship,
Holding it in one great hand, and tied
A dove to a cord suspended from its top.
This was the target. The contestants gathered 540
And threw their names into a bronze helmet.
The crowd cheered when Hippocoön,
Son of Hyrtacus, was sorted first. Mnestheus,
Who had just won the boat race, drew second,
Mnestheus, crowned with green olive leaves. 545
Eurytion drew third, your brother,

Most glorious Pandarus, who broke the truce
 As bidden, first to shoot into the Achaean ranks.
 The last position was drawn by Acestes,
 Who had the courage to try his hand 550
 In a young man's game.

Each man bent his bow
 And took arrows from his quiver. The first shot
 Was taken by Hippocoön. His bowstring twanged,
 And his arrow whipped through the air,
 Hitting the mast and sticking in the wood. 555
 The mast quivered, and the frightened dove
 Fluttered her wings. The crowd applauded.
 Then Mnestheus eagerly took his stance,
 Drawing his bow back for a high shot,
 Intent on his aim. But he had no luck at all, 560
 His iron-tipped arrow missed the bird, slicing instead
 Through the knotted cord where it was attached
 To the tip of the mast. The freed dove flew off
 Into the warm wind and up toward the clouds.
 Eurytion, who already had an arrow in his bow, 565
 Spotted the carefree bird flapping her wings
 In the empty sky and, with a quick prayer
 To his brother Pandarus, shot her as she flew
 Beneath a dark cloud. The dove fell lifeless,
 Leaving her spirit in the stars, and in her fall 570
 She returned to its owner the piercing arrow.

Only Acestes was left. He had no chance
 For a prize but shot an arrow nonetheless
 High into the air, the old patriarch
 Displaying his skill and his sounding bow. 575
 Then a sudden marvel appeared, destined to be
 A mystic portent in days to come,
 When seers chanted of late-fulfilled omens.
 For as the arrow flew through the wispy clouds
 It caught fire and marked its trail with flames 580
 Until it was consumed in the thin upper air,

*Like a star that has come unfixed from heaven
 And flies across the sky with long, streaming hair.*

Sicilians and Trojans stood rooted in wonder,
Murmuring prayers, and great Aeneas himself
Acknowledged the omen. He embraced Acestes
And lavished gifts upon him, saying: 585

“These are yours, sir. God on Olympus
Has shown with these auspices his high will
That you should receive exceptional honors. 590
As tribute from long-lived Anchises himself,
Accept this embossed bowl, which Cisseus,
The Thracian king, gave to my father
As a memorial and pledge of his love.”

So saying, he wreathed Acestes’ head 595
With verdant laurel and proclaimed him
Foremost champion. The good Eurytion
Did not begrudge him this preference
Even though he alone had shot down the dove.
Second prize went for severing the cord, 600
And third for piercing the mast with an arrow.

Before the archery contest was over
Aeneas had a private word with Epytus,
Young Iulus’ trusted companion and guardian:

“Go find Iulus, and if the boys’ column 605
Is ready for the equestrian parade,
Tell him to put on his best dress armor
And lead the procession in his grandfather’s honor.”

Aeneas himself had the crowd pull back
And form a large circle around the open field. 610
The boys entered on their bridled horses
And shone in their parents’ eyes. Teucrians
And Trinacrians murmured in admiration.
The boys were all crowned in trim-cut wreaths,
And each bore two iron-tipped cornel spears. 615
Some carried polished quivers, others wore
Twisted gold collars around their throats—
All in ceremonial style. Three troops

Of riders each with a leader rode in formation,
 Each troop in two files of six, each with a trainer, 620
 All gleaming in the light. The first troop
 Of triumphant boys was led by a little Priam,
 Polites' noble son, named after his grandfather
 And destined to increase the Italian race.
 His mount was a dappled Thracian stallion, 625
 White above the hooves and with a white forelock.
 The second troop was led by Atys, founder
 Of the Latin Atii. Young Atys
 Was a dear friend of the boy Iulus,
 And Iulus, the handsomest of them all, 630
 Led the last troop, riding a Sidonian horse
 Given to him by the lovely Dido
 As a memorial and pledge of her love.
 The other boys were given Sicilian mounts
 By old Acestes. 635
 They received the crowd's applause nervously,
 And the Dardanians, watching them,
 Recognized their ancestors' faces.
 After they had happily paraded around
 The entire assembly before their parents' eyes, 640
 The son of Epytus gave the signal, first a shout,
 Then the crack of a whip, and the riders split
 Into separate sections, each of the three troops
 Dividing in half. At a second command
 The two new formations wheeled around 645
 And advanced on each other, spears leveled.
 Then they performed other maneuvers,
 Attacks and counterattacks mirroring each other,
 Weaving in and out of circular patterns,
 Fighting mock battles in full battle gear, 650
 Retreating, attacking, then calling a truce
 And riding along side by side.

The Labyrinth

*In lofty Crete is said to have been
 A route woven within blind walls, a maze
 With a thousand irretraceable paths 655
 Designed to foil any map for escape.*

So too the patterns the sons of the Trojans
Wove in their mock attacks and retreats

*Like dolphins crisscrossing the Carpathian Sea
Or the sea off Libya in their playful swimming.* 660

The tradition of this equestrian display
And these mock battles was first revived
By Ascanius, who taught the native Latins
How to perform them when he built the walls
Of Alba Longa. The Albans taught their sons 665
To do as Ascanius and the Trojans had done
When they were boys. In the course of time
Great Rome itself received and preserved
This ancestral tradition. It is now called “Troy,”
And the boys are called “the Trojan Troop.” 670

Thus the funeral games of Anchises,
Venerable father of Aeneas.

Fortune now shifted. While they celebrated
The funeral games, Juno sent Iris
Down from the sky to the Trojan fleet 675
And blew her along with a favoring wind.
The goddess was scheming, her old grievance
Still unsatisfied. Iris, herself unseen,
Soared through a thousand arcing colors,
Descending when she saw the great assembly. 680
She passed along the shore and saw the fleet
Unattended in the empty harbor.
Farther along, alone on the deserted beach,
The women of Troy wept for Anchises
And wept as they looked out at the boundless sea. 685
How weary they were, with so much water
Still to cross! All of them agreed,
It was a city they yearned for. The tedium
Of the sea had them sick at heart. Iris,
Who knew how to cause trouble, put aside 690
Her goddess’s appearance and dress

And became Beroë, the aged wife
 Of Doryclus of Tmarus, a woman
 Nobly born, with a good name and fine sons.
 In this guise Iris mingled 695
 With the women of Troy and said:

“Trojan women, your tragedy
 Is that Greek hands did not drag you off
 To be killed before the walls of your city.
 O my unhappy people, for what destruction 700
 Is Fortune preserving you? Seven summers
 Since the fall of Troy have we been driven
 On the wind, measuring every sea and land,
 Every inhospitable rock and hostile star,
 Rolling in the waves as we search the ocean 705
 For an ever-receding Italy. Now we are here
 In the land of Eryx, our brother,
 And Acestes is our host. Who is there
 Who would prevent us from laying foundations,
 Building walls, and giving our people a city? 710
 O my country, O gods of my country,
 Snatched from enemy hands to no purpose,
 Will there never again be a city called Troy?
 Will I never see the streams that Hector saw,
 The Xanthus and the Simois? Come with me, 715
 Women, and set fire to these accursed ships,
 Burn them up! Cassandra, our prophetess,
 Came to me in a dream and gave me torches,
 Saying, ‘Find Troy here, here is your home.’
 It is time to act; we cannot delay 720
 With portents like this. Look, Neptune’s
 Four altars! The god himself provides torches!”

So saying, she seized the deadly fire
 And, from where she stood, whirled the torch high
 And let it fly. The women of Ilium 725
 Were astounded, their minds tense and alert.
 The eldest among them, Pyrgo,
 Nurse of so many of Priam’s children,
 Now spoke:

“This is not Beroë, women,
 Not Doryclus’ Trojan wife, I tell you. 730
 Don’t you see the marks of divinity,
 Her burning eyes, the high spirit, that face,
 The sound of her voice, her step when she walks?
 I just left Beroë, sick and fretting
 That she alone was missing our ceremony 735
 And not paying her last respects to Anchises.”

At first the women were uncertain and gazed
 Upon the ships with angry eyes, wavering
 Between wretched love for the present land
 And kingdoms calling with the voice of Fate. 740
 Then the goddess rose through the air on wings
 And cut a huge rainbow beneath the clouds.
 Now the women, frenzied by this portent,
 Began to shriek and scream. They ransacked
 The camp’s hearth-fires, despoiled the altars, 745
 And hurled torches made of twigs and branches.
 Vulcan raged unbridled through the pine benches,
 The banks of oars, and the painted sterns.

The herald Eumelus brought the news
 To the assembly at Anchises’ funeral mound 750
 That the ships were burning. Looking back,
 They saw black ash eddying up in a cloud;
 And first of them all Ascanius,
 Just as he was, gaily mounted for the games,
 Rode furiously to the Trojan camp, 755
 The breathless trainers unable to restrain him.

“What madness is this, what are you doing?”
 He asked. “My pitiable countrywomen,
 This is not an enemy Argive encampment
 But your future that is going up in smoke. 760
 Look, it is I, your Ascanius!”

And he threw at their feet the plumed helmet
 He had worn in the war games.

Now Aeneas,
 At the head of columns of Teucrians,
 Was riding up fast. The women scattered 765
 All over the shore, afraid, seeking the woods
 And the shelter of rocks. They were ashamed
 Of their deed, ashamed to be seen. Then,
 Their mood altered, they recognized their menfolk,
 And Juno was shaken from their breasts. 770

But the fire was not so easily tamed.
 Beneath the wet wood the caulking
 Was still alive, slowly belching out smoke,
 And the smoldering heat ate at the keels
 And spread through the frames, resisting 775
 The men's heroic efforts and all the water
 They sluiced onto the ships.

Then pious Aeneas
 Rent his garments and stretching out his palms
 Called on the gods:

“Almighty Jupiter,
 If you do not yet hate the Trojans to a man, 780
 If you have any feeling for human suffering
 As you did of old, save the fleet from fire,
 Now, Father, and snatch Troy's slim fortunes
 From utter perdition. Or finish what is left,
 And if I deserve it, strike me dead with lightning 785
 Here and now, and blot me out with your hand.”

He had scarcely spoken when a black tempest
 Began to rage. Rain poured down without limit,
 Plains and steep hills trembled with thunder,
 And the whole sky fell in a turbulent deluge 790
 Swept with darkest winds. The ships' decks
 Were inundated, the charred beams soaked,
 The fire's last traces all extinguished, and
 All the ships but four saved from destruction.

But Aeneas, stunned by this bitter blow, 795
 Turned his immense troubles over and over

In his great heart. Should he settle in Sicily
 And ignore Fate or seek Italy's shores?
 Then old Nautes came to him. Pallas Athena
 Had instructed this man above all in her lore, 800
 Teaching him what might be portended
 By the gods' wrath and what Fate demanded.
 He comforted Aeneas and said to him:

“Goddess-born, we must follow Fate's lead.
 All fortune is overcome by endurance. 805
 You have Dardanian Acestes, of divine stock.
 Take him into your counsel, a willing friend.
 Entrust to him as many as the lost ships carried,
 Those who are weary of your great enterprise,
 The elderly, the mothers sick of the sea, 810
 And whoever is weak or afraid of danger.
 Choose them; let the weary have their own city here
 And call it Acestes, if that name is permitted.”

Old Nautes' friendly advice made Aeneas
 Even more anxious. His mind was on fire. 815
 Night's black horses had reached the zenith
 When suddenly there glided down from heaven
 An apparition of his father, Anchises,
 Who poured these words from his heart:

“My son, once dearer to me than life 820
 While life remained, my son, steeled in Ilium's fall,
 I come here at Jove's command, Jove who drove the fire
 Away from the ships, finally taking pity on you
 From high heaven. You must follow the counsel,
 Most fair, that old Nautes gives. Choose 825
 The bravest hearts and take them to Italy.
 There is a rough and sturdy race in Latium
 You must defeat in battle. But before that,
 Come to the realms of Dis, the deeps of Avernus,
 To meet with me. For sinful Tartarus 830
 Does not hold me, nor doleful shade.
 I live in Elysium, in the pleasant company
 Of the souls of the blessed. Virgin Sibyl

Will lead you here for the price of the blood
 Of many black cattle. Then you will learn 835
 All your race to come and the walls that await you.
 And now, farewell. Dewy Night is turning
 Past the middle of her course, and cruel Dawn
 Breathes upon me with her panting horses.”

He finished and was gone like a wisp of smoke. 840

“Where are you going? Why are you leaving
 So quickly? Why can’t we hold each other?”

As Aeneas spoke he was rekindling
 The hearth-fire, and he paid reverence
 To the Lar of Pergamum and to Vesta 845
 With salted meal and clouds of incense.

Moments later he met with his comrades,
 Acestes foremost, and explained to them
 His beloved father’s instructions
 And how he himself now stood. The discussion 850
 Was brief, and Acestes had no objections.

They registered the women and made citizens
 Of those souls who had no need of glory.
 The ships’ crews rebuilt the benches,
 Replaced the timbers charred in the fire, 855
 And refit the oars and rudders. These men
 Were few in number but ready for battle.

Meanwhile, Aeneas marked out with a plow
 The city’s boundaries and allotted homesteads,
 Designating one neighborhood as Ilium, 860

Another as Troy. Trojan Acestes gladly
 Called an assembly and handed down laws
 To the new city fathers. High on Mount Eryx,
 Near to the stars, a temple was dedicated
 To Idalian Venus, and a sacred grove 865
 Was annexed to the burial mound of Anchises.

For nine days all the people feasted
 And sacrificed at altars. The water was calm

And a steady South Wind summoned the Trojans
 Out to sea again. The sound of weeping 870
 Curved along the shore. A day and a night
 The people prolonged their farewell embraces.
 Now the women themselves, and the same men
 To whom the very mention of the sea
 Had been abhorrent, wanted to go 875
 And endure exile's toil. All of these
 Good Aeneas consoled and, weeping himself,
 Commended them to Acestes, their kin.
 Then he ordered sacrifices—
 Three calves to Eryx, and to the Storms a lamb— 880
 And the ritual of untying the stern cable.
 He himself stood on the prow, his head wreathed
 In olive branches, holding a shallow bowl.
 He poured out wine and cast the entrails
 Into the salt sea. They got underway 885
 And caught a rising tailwind. The crews
 Outdid each other sweeping the sea with oars.

Venus, meanwhile, anxious and worried,
 Was pouring out her heart to Neptune:

“Juno's iron anger and implacable heart 890
 Force me, Neptune, to exhaust every prayer.
 Neither time nor worship mollify her;
 Neither at Jove's command nor broken by Fate
 Does she acquiesce. It is not enough for her
 To have eaten out the heart of the Phrygian nation, 895
 Not enough to have dragged Troy's remnant through every
 Conceivable chastisement: she must persecute
 The city's very ashes and bones. The cause
 Of such a monumental obsession
 She knows best herself. You yourself saw 900
 The wreckage she made of the sea off Libya,
 Embroiling sea and sky, exploiting Aeolus—
 All in vain—and daring this in your realm!
 She drove the Trojan matrons to crime
 And shamefully burned the ships, forcing Aeneas 905

To abandon his people in a strange land.
 From now on, let them entrust their sails
 And safety to you and reach Laurentine Tiber,
 If what I request has been ordained by Fate.”

And Saturn’s son, Lord of Sea, replied: 910

“Cytherean, it is entirely proper
 That you trust my realm, whence, after all,
 You emerged at birth. And I have earned your trust.
 I have often quelled the fury of sea and sky,
 And no less on land (Simois and Xanthus 915
 Can testify to this) has your Aeneas
 Been under my care. When Achilles
 Stampeded the Trojans into their city,
 Robbing thousands of life, and all the streams
 Were choked with corpses, and the river Xanthus 920
 Could not roll its water into the sea—then,
 Just as Aeneas was about to do battle
 With Peleus’ strong son, equal in neither
 Gods nor strength, I whisked him away
 In a hollow cloud, even though I yearned 925
 To tear down the perjured city’s walls,
 Which my own hands had built.

Dispel your fears;
 My mind has not changed. Your son will arrive
 Safely at Avernus, just as you wish.
 One man only will be lost at sea, 930
 One life given for many.”

So Neptune
 Gladdened Venus’ heart with soothing words.
 Then the lord yoked his horses with gold,
 Put bits into their foaming mouths,
 And let out the reins, gliding lightly 935
 Over the whitecaps in his chariot blue.
 The sea flattened its swollen waves
 Under the thundering axle, and the clouds
 Fled from the threatening sky. Then came
 The many shapes of his retinue, creatures 940

From the deep, old Glaucus and his train,
 Ino's son Palaemon, swift Tritons,
 And all the company of Phorcus. On the left,
 Thetis and Melite and virgin Panopea,
 Nisaea, Spio, Cymodoce, and Thalia. 945

Now a quiet joy came over Aeneas
 And his tension ebbed away. He ordered
 The masts to be raised and the sails hung.
 The crews set the sheets and let out their sails,
 First to the left, then to the right, swinging 950
 The yardarms in unison as the fleet tacked
 Into the wind. Palinurus kept the ships
 In tight formation. The other captains
 Had orders to set their course by him.

Dewy Night had almost reached its midpoint, 955
 And the sailors were slumped over their oars
 Up and down the hard benches, when Sleep
 Drifted down from the stars of heaven,
 Parting the shadows as he moved through the air
 Seeking you, Palinurus, bringing grim dreams 960
 To your innocent soul. The god settled
 On the high stern, the image of Phorbas,
 And said in a soft, insinuating voice:

“Palinurus, son of Iasius, the sea
 Bears the fleet onward, steady blows the wind. 965
 It is time for rest. Put your head down
 And steal your weary eyes from their vigil.
 I'll fill in for you for a little while.”

And Palinurus, hardly lifting his eyes:

“Are you asking me to forget what I know 970
 About a sea that looks calm? Asking me
 To trust this monster? What, entrust Aeneas
 To the vagaries of wind and weather?
 I've been fooled too often by a calm, clear sky.”

Saying these things, he held the rudder tight
 And did not move his eyes from the stars above. 975
 But the god shook a branch soaked in Lethe
 Above both his temples, a branch drowsed
 With the power of Styx, and he nodded off,
 Closed his swimming eyes. His limbs 980
 Had just begun to relax when the god,
 Looming over him, threw him headfirst
 Into the water along with part of the stern
 And the rudder he still held. He called
 His unhearing shipmates over and over 985
 As the god soared upward into thin air.

The fleet sailed on safely without alarm,
 As Neptune had promised, and now approached
 The cliffs of the Sirens, formerly perilous
 And white with men's bones but now just rocks 990
 Roaring and echoing in the ceaseless surf—
 When Aeneas sensed the ship was drifting
 Without its master. He steered it himself
 Through the midnight waves, sick at heart,
 Lamenting the loss of his friend: 995

“O Palinurus,
 You trusted the sea's calm too much, and now
 Your corpse will lie naked on an unknown shore.”

AENEID SIX

Aeneas wept as he spoke, and let the fleet
Glide along until it reached Cumae. Keels
Backed into the long arc of Euboean beach,
Prows seaward, as the anchors bit
Into the sea's shelving floor. Crews flashed ashore 5
Onto the banks of Italy. Some kindled fire
From veins of flint, some foraged timber
From the wilderness, others located streams.
But Aeneas, on a mission of his own,
Sought the high, holy places of Apollo 10
And the Sibyl's deeps, the immense caverns
Where the prophetic god from Delos breathes
Into her mind and soul and opens the future.
Aeneas and his men were soon within
The groves of Trivia and under golden eaves. 15

Daedalus once, fleeing Minoan Crete
On beating wings, trusted himself
To the open sky, an unused path,
North toward the Bears and a light landing
On this Chalcidian height, 20
And dedicated here his airy oarage
To you, Phoebus, and founded this temple.

On the doors, the murder of Androgeus
And the annual penalty for the Athenians,
Seven of their sons offered for sacrifice. 25
The urn stands ready, the lots are drawn. Opposite,

Rising from the sea, the island of Crete,
 Raw passion for a bull, and Pasiphaë
 In her furtive position, raising her knees.
 And there too the mixed breed, the Minotaur, 30
 Hybrid monument to unspeakable desire.
 Here the Labyrinth winds its inextricable course,
 And here is Daedalus himself, pitying
 Princess Ariadne's great love, unraveling
 The twisted skein of the maze, guiding Theseus' 35
 Blind footsteps with a thread. And you also,
 Icarus, would have played a great part
 In this masterpiece, if grief had allowed:
 Twice the artist attempted your fate in gold,
 Twice the father's hands fell.

Aeneas' eyes 40

Would have scanned every last detail.
 But Achates, sent ahead, was back,
 And with him was Deïphobe, Glaucus' daughter,
 Priestess of Phoebus and Trivia. A figure
 Of divine awe, she had this to say to Aeneas: 45

“This is no time for looking at pictures.
 You should be sacrificing seven bulls
 From a sacred herd, and seven chosen sheep.”

She spoke, and when Aeneas' men
 Had seen to the sacrifice the priestess 50
 Called the Trojans under the looming temple.

The flank of that Euboean cliff was carved
 Into a hundred cavernous mouths, gaping orifices
 That roar the Sibyl's oracular responses.
 The virgin priestess greeted them at the threshold: 55

“It is time to demand your destiny. The god! Behold,
 The god!”

And as she spoke there before the gates
 Her color changed, her hair spread out

Into fiery points, she panted for air,
 And her breast heaved with feral madness. 60
 She was larger than life now, and her voice
 Was no longer human, as the god's power
 Took possession of her:

“You hesitate
 To pray, hesitate, Aeneas of Troy?
 The great mouths of this thunderstruck hall 65
 Will not open until you pray.”

And she was silent.
 Fear seeped like icy water through the Trojans' bones,
 And their lord poured forth his heart in prayer:

“Phoebus, who has always pitied Troy
 In its darkest times, who guided the arrow 70
 From Paris' hand into the body of Achilles,
 And who guided me through so many seas
 Pounding so many distant shores,
 The remote Massylian tribes, the lands
 Fringed by the shoals of the Syrtes— 75
 Now at last we have in our grasp
 The ever-receding shore of Italy.
 May Troy's fortune follow us no farther.
 You also, gods and goddesses
 Whom Ilium's great glory offended, 80
 May now justly spare the Dardan race.
 And you, most holy prophetess, who hold
 The future in your mind, grant the realm
 That has been pledged to me by Fate,
 Grant that the Teucrians settle in Italy 85
 With the wandering, harried gods of Troy.
 Then to Phoebus and Trivia I will dedicate
 A temple of solid marble and holy days
 In Phoebus' name. And a great shrine
 Awaits you in our realm, gracious priestess, 90
 An inner sanctum where I will deposit
 Your prophecies and the mystic sayings

Told to my people and ordain your priests.
 Only do not entrust your verses to leaves,
 Playthings swirling when the wind gusts,
 But chant them out loud.” 95

Aeneas finished.

But the priestess had not yet taken Apollo’s
 Bit in her mouth, and she convulsed like a maenad
 Monstrous in the cave, desperate to shake
 The great god from her breast. All the more,
 Though, he tired her rabid mouth, tamed 100
 Her wild heart, and molded her to his will.
 And now the cave’s hundred mouths
 Opened of their own accord and transmitted
 The oracle’s response through the empty air: 105

“You have escaped the perils of the sea,
 But perils more grave await you on land.
 The Dardanians will enter Lavinium—
 Be sure of that—but will wish they had never come.
 War, I see horrible war, and the Tiber 110
 Foaming with blood. You will have another
 Simois and Xanthus, another Doric camp.
 A second Achilles has been born in Latium
 To a goddess mother, and Juno will
 Continue to afflict the Teucrians, 115
 While you, a suppliant, shall beg for help
 Throughout Italy. And the cause
 Of all this suffering for the Trojans
 Shall be once more a foreign bride,
 An alien marriage. 120
 Do not yield, but oppose your troubles
 All the more boldly, as far as your fate
 And fortune allow. Salvation will come first
 From where you least expect it—
 A Greek city will open wide its gates.” 125

In words such as these the Sibyl of Cumae
 Chanted eerie riddles from her shrine
 In the echoing cave, shrouding truth

In darkness, as Apollo shook the reins
 And twisted the goad in her raving heart. 130
 As soon as her frenzy ceased, and her lips
 Were hushed, the Trojan hero began:

“Virgin priestess, trouble of any kind,
 However strange, no longer surprises me.
 I expect it, and I have thought this through. 135
 I ask for one thing. It is said that here
 Are the dark lord’s gate and the murky swamp
 Of Acheron’s backwater. Let me pass.
 Open the sacred doors and show me the way,
 So that I might see my father face to face. 140
 I saved him, I carried him on my shoulders
 Through fire and a thousand enemy spears.
 He was at my side through the long journey,
 Sharing the perils of sea and sky, crippled
 As he was, beyond what his age allowed. 145
 It was his pleas that convinced me to come
 As suppliant to you. Pity father and son,
 Gracious one, for you have the power.
 Not in vain did Hecate appoint you
 Mistress of the groves of Avernus. 150
 If Orpheus could call forth his wife’s ghost,
 Enchanting the shades with his Thracian lyre,
 If Pollux could ransom his brother, taking turns
 With death, traveling the way so many times—
 Not to mention Theseus and Hercules. 155
 I too am descended from Jove most high.”

So Aeneas prayed, clutching the altars.
 And the Sibyl answered:

“Goddess-born son
 Of Trojan Anchises, the road down
 To Avernus is easy. Day and night 160
 The door to black Dis stands open.
 But to retrace your steps and come out
 To the upper air, this is the task,
 The labor. A few, whom Jupiter

Has favored, or whom bright virtue
 Has lifted to heaven, sons of the gods,
 Have succeeded. All the central regions
 Are swathed in forest, and Cocytus
 Enfolds it with its winding, dark water.
 But if you have such longing, such dread desire
 To cross the Styx twice, twice to see
 Black Tartarus, and if it pleases you
 To indulge this madness as a sacred mission,
 Listen to what you must do first.
 Hidden in a darkling tree there lies
 A golden bough, blossoming gold
 In leaf and pliant branch, held sacred
 To the goddess below. A grove conceals
 This bough on every side, and umber shadows
 Veil it from view in a valley dim.
 No one may pass beneath the earth
 Until he has plucked from the tree
 This golden-leaved fruit. Fair Proserpina
 Decrees it be brought to her as a gift.
 When one bough is torn away another
 Grows in its place and leafs out in gold.
 Search it out with your deepest gaze
 And, when you find it, pluck it with your hand.
 It will come off easily, of itself,
 If the Fates call you. Otherwise you will not
 Wrench it off by force or cut it with steel.
 Farther, there lies unburied (ah, you do not know)
 The lifeless body of your friend,
 Defiling the entire fleet with his death
 While you seek counsel at my doorstep.
 Bear him to his resting place and bury him
 In the tomb. Then lead black cattle here
 As first victims to expiate your sins.
 Only then will you see the Stygian groves
 And realms closed to the living.”

She spoke,
 Closed her lips, and said no more.

Aeneas

Left the cave and walked on with downcast eyes,
 Pondering these mysteries. Loyal Achates
 Walked with him, just as worried, and the two
 Talked with each other, trying to sort out 205
 Which comrade might be dead, whose unburied body
 The seer spoke of. Then they came to the shore
 And saw on the beach the body of Misenus,
 Dead before his time—Misenus, son of Aeolus,
 Second to none at rousing men to war 210
 With his bugle's call. He had been the companion
 Of great Hector and fought at his side,
 As good with a spear as he was with his horn.
 But when Achilles deprived Hector of life,
 Misenus joined the ranks of Aeneas, 215
 Unwilling to follow a lesser hero.
 But today he had been sounding a conch shell,
 Making it blare and sing like the sea, insanely
 Challenging the gods to a contest. Triton
 Was jealous and, if the tale is true, caught 220
 The man and drowned him in the rocks and surf.
 And so they gathered around and mourned,
 And Aeneas led the echoing dirge,
 Since this also was his duty. Then,
 In tears, they hurried to carry out 225
 The Sibyl's orders, piling up trees
 For his tomb's altar and rearing it skyward.
 Then into the primeval forest, the deep lairs
 Of wild things—and down fell the pines,
 The ilex rang with the axe, ash logs and oak 230
 Were split with wedges, and enormous trunks
 Rolled down the mountainside.

Aeneas

Led the way in this work also, wielding
 The same tools and cheering on his men.
 But his heart was heavy, and as he gazed 235
 At the deep woods a prayer came to his lips:

“Let the golden bough show itself now

On a tree in this forest, since the prophetess
Was all too right about you, Misenus!”

He had scarcely spoken when twin doves 240
Came fluttering down from heaven
Before his very eyes and settled
On the green grass. Aeneas’ mind soared
When he saw his mother’s birds, and he prayed:

“Show me the way, float on the air to the heart 245
Of the forest, where the earth lies soft
In the shadow of the radiant bough
And you, Goddess and Mother, do not fail me
In these doubtful times.”

And he stood quietly,
Watching, tracking their direction in the trees. 250
The doves, as they fed, flew only as far
As someone following could keep them in sight.
But when they came to the jaws of Avernus,
With its foul smell, they ascended swiftly,
And then, gliding down through the limpid air, 255
They sat side by side on their chosen perch,
A tree through whose branches there shone
A discordant halo, a haze of gold.

*During winter’s cold, deep in the woods,
Mistletoe blooms with strange leafage 260
On a tree not its own and entwines
The burlled branches with its yellow fruit.*

Such was the gold seen on the dark ilex,
And so rustled its foil in the gentle breeze.
Aeneas seized it at once, and though the bough 265
Hesitated, he broke it off eagerly and brought it
Safely back beneath the Sibyl’s roof.

The Trojans were still lamenting Misenus
There on the shore, performing final rites
For thankless ash. First, they built a huge pyre 270

Out of resinous pine and split oak,
 Then trimmed its sides with gloomy foliage
 And set up before it funereal cypresses.
 They adorned the top with glittering arms.
 Others heated water in bronze cauldrons 275
 And bathed and anointed the cold body.
 A cry went up. And then they placed the corpse,
 Wet with their tears, onto the couch
 And draped it with his familiar purple robes.
 A small group lifted the heavy bier, 280
 A poignant service, and with eyes averted
 In ancestral manner, lit the fire. Flames crackled
 Around the gifts heaped on the pyre—frankincense,
 Platters of food, bowls filled with olive oil.
 After the embers collapsed and the flames 285
 Died away, they doused the remnant
 Of glowing ash with wine. Corynaeus
 Gathered the bones and placed them in an urn.
 Then he circled the company three times,
 Sprinkling them with water fresh as dew 290
 From an olive branch, and so purified the men.
 Then he spoke some last words. Aeneas,
 In an act of piety, heaped above Misenus
 A huge burial mound—with the hero's arms,
 Horn, and oar—beneath a soaring hill 295
 That is still called Misenus
 And will bear that name throughout the ages.

The funeral was finished. Aeneas turned all his attention
 To the Sibyl's commands.

There was a deep cave
 With a jagged, yawning mouth, sheltered 300
 By a dusky lake and a wood's dark shade.
 Over this no winged thing could fly, so putrid
 And so foul were the fumes that issued
 From the cave's black jaws and rose to the sky
 (And so the Greeks called the place Avernus). 305
 Here the priestess set in line four black bulls,
 Poured wine upon their brows, and plucked

The topmost bristles from between their horns.
 They set them on the sacred fire as first offerings,
 Calling on Hecate, mistress of the moon 310
 And of Erebus below. Others slit the bulls' throats
 And caught their warm blood in bowls
 While Aeneas himself sacrificed a lamb,
 Black-fleeced, to Night, the Eumenides' mother,
 And to Earth, her great sister. To you, 315
 Proserpina, he offered a barren heifer.
 Then began a sacrifice to the Lord of Styx,
 As at night's darkest hour the hero lay
 Carcasses of bulls on the altars, pouring rich oil
 On their burning entrails. But, look, under 320
 The threshold of the rising sun the ground rumbled.
 The wooded ridges trembled, and dogs howled
 As through the gloom the goddess drew near.

“Begone,
 Begone, you uninitiated!” shrieked the seer.
 “Stand off from the grove! And you, Aeneas, 325
 Onto the road and unsheathe your sword. Now
 Is the time for courage and a heart of iron.”

She spoke, then plunged wildly into the cave,
 And Aeneas matched her stride for stride.

Gods of the world below, silent shades, 330
 Chaos and Phlegethon, soundless tracts of Night—
 Grant me the grace to tell what I have heard,
 And lay bare the mysteries in earth's abyss.

On they went, shrouded in desolate night,
 Through shadow, through the empty halls 335
 Of Dis and his ghostly domain, as dim

*As a path in the woods under a faint moon
 When Jupiter has buried the sky in gloom
 And night has stolen color from the world.*

Just before the entrance, in the very jaws 340
 Of Orcus, Grief and avenging Cares

Have set their beds. Pale Diseases
 Dwell there, sad Old Age, Fear, Hunger—
 The tempter—and foul Poverty,
 All fearful shapes, and Death and Toil, 345
 And Death's brother Sleep, Guilty Joys,
 And on the threshold opposite, lethal War,
 The Furies in iron cells, and mad Strife,
 Her snaky hair entwined with bloody bands.

In the middle a huge elm stands, spreading 350
 Its aged branches, the abode of false Dreams
 That cling to the bottom of every leaf.
 At the doors are stabled the monstrous shapes
 Of Centaurs, and biform Scyllas, and Briareus
 With a hundred heads, the Lernaean Hydra, 355
 Hissing horribly, the Chimaera armed with flame,
 Gorgons, Harpies, and the hybrid shade of Geryon.
 Suddenly panicked, Aeneas drew his sword
 And turned its edge against their advance,
 And if his guide had not observed 360
 That they were hollow, bodiless forms,
 Flitting images, he would have charged
 And slashed vainly through empty shadows.

From here a road led to the Tartarean waters
 Of Acheron, where a huge whirlpool, 365
 Churning with mire, belched all its sand
 Into Cocytus. The keeper of these waters
 Was Charon, the grim ferryman, frightening
 In his squalor. Unkempt hoary whiskers
 Bristled on his chin, his eyes like flares 370
 Were sunk in flame, and a filthy cloak hung
 By a knot from his shoulder. He poled the boat
 Himself, and trimmed the sails, hauling the dead
 In his rusty barge. He was already old,
 But a god's old age is green and raw. 375

And now a whole crowd rushed streaming
 To the banks, mothers and husbands, bodies
 Of high-souled heroes finished with life,

Boys and unwed girls, and young men
Placed upon the pyre before their parents' eyes. 380

*As many as leaves that fall in the woods
At autumn's first frost, as many as birds
That teem to shore when the cold year
Drives them over the sea to sunny lands.*

There they stood, begging to be the first 385
Ferried across, hands stretched out in love
For the farther shore. But the grim boatman
Culled through the crowd, accepting some,
But keeping the others back from the sand.

Aeneas, shocked by this mob of souls, said: 390

“What does this mean, priestess, the spirits
Crowding to the river? How is it decided
That some must leave the banks while others
Sweep the bruised water with oars?”

And the priestess, ancient of years: 395

“Son of Anchises and true son of the gods,
You are looking at the lagoons of Cocytus
And the river Styx, by whose name
Even the gods fear to swear falsely.

The crowd you see are the unburied dead; 400

The ferryman is Charon; his passengers
Are the dead entombed. He may not carry
Any across the raucous, dread water
Until their bones are at rest. Else,

A hundred years they must roam the shoreline 405

And only then may return to cross these shoals.”

The son of Anchises stopped in his tracks,
Pondering all this, and pitied in his heart
Their unjust lot. He saw among them,
Sad and bereft of death's due, Leucaspis, 410
And Orontes, captain of the Lycian fleet,

Overwhelmed by the storm that engulfed their ships
As they sailed the windy seas out of Troy.

And now there came Palinurus, who
While reckoning their course from Libya 415
By the stars had fallen from the stern
Into the waves. Aeneas hardly knew him,
Forlorn in the deep gloom, but finally
Recognized him and called out:

“Palinurus,
What god tore you from us and plunged you 420
Into the open sea? Apollo, never before
Found false, deluded me when he foretold
You would escape the sea and reach Ausonia.”

And Palinurus:

“Delphi did not mislead you,
My captain, nor did any god drown me. 425
The rudder I was holding to steer our course
Ripped apart, and as I fell headlong I
Dragged it down with me. I swear by the wild sea
I was not so afraid for myself as for your ship,
Afraid that stripped of its gear and its pilot overboard 430
It might founder and sink in the heavy weather.
Three stormy nights the South Wind drove me
Over boundless seas. As the fourth dawn broke
I rode the crest of a wave and sighted
Italy. I fought my way toward land and thought 435
I had safety in my grasp. I hooked my fingers
On a crag of shore, but weighed down
By my dripping clothes I was easy prey
For a band of marauders. Wind and surf
Now roll my body along the tide line. 440
By the sweet light and the air of heaven,
By your father, by the promise Iulus holds,
Save me from these woes, Aeneas unconquered!
Either cast earth upon me—it is in your power
If you sail back to Velia—or if your divine mother 445

Shows you how (surely it is not your plan
 To sail the great Styx without divine power),
 Give me your hand and take me with you
 Across these waves, so that I may at least
 Find in death my final resting place.” 450

Thus Palinurus, and the Sibyl answered him:

“Where did you get this outrageous desire?
 Are you, unburied, to look upon the Styx,
 The Furies’ stream, and approach these shores
 Unbidden? Stop hoping that the gods’ decrees 455
 Can be bent with prayer. But hear this
 And bear it in your heart as consolation.
 The neighboring peoples, in cities far and wide,
 Will be driven by portents to appease your bones,
 Will build a tomb, and to the tomb will tender 460
 Solemn offerings, and forever the place
 Will be called Palinurus.”

By these words

His anguish was relieved, his grief dispelled.
 And the land rejoices in the name Palinurus.

Continuing their journey, they drew near the river. 465
 Out on the water the boatman saw them
 Heading to the bank through the silent wood,
 And before they could speak he rebuked them:

“Hold it right there, whoever you are
 Coming to our river in arms! Why are you here? 470
 This is the Land of Shadows, of Sleep
 And drowsy Night. Living bodies
 May not be transported in this Stygian keel.
 I was not happy to take Hercules
 Across the lake, or Theseus and Pirithoüs, 475
 Invincible sons of the gods though they were.
 One of them wanted to drag off in chains
 The Tartarean watchdog from Pluto’s throne—

And dragged him off trembling. The others tried
To carry off the queen from the bedroom of Dis.” 480

Apollo’s prophethess responded briefly:

“There is no such treachery here. Calm down.
Our weapons offer no threat of violence.
The giant watchdog may howl from his cave
Eternally and frighten the bloodless shades. 485
Proserpina may keep her chastity intact
Within her uncle’s doors. Aeneas of Troy,
Famed as a warrior and man of devotion,
Goes down to his father in lowest Erebus.
If this picture of piety in no way moves you, 490
Yet this bough” (she showed it under her robe)
“You must acknowledge.”

Charon’s engorged rage
Subsided. No more was said. Marveling
At the venerable gift, the fateful bough
So long unseen, he turned the dark-blue prow 495
Toward shore. There he cleared the deck,
Pushed the shades from the benches, and laid out
The gangplank. He took aboard his hollow boat
Huge Aeneas. Groaning under his weight,
The ragtag craft took on water. At last, 500
The swamp crossed, the ferryman disembarked
Hero and seer unharmed in the muddy sedge.

Crouching in a cavern on the farther shore
Cerberus made these regions resound,
Barking like thunder from all three of his throats. 505
The seer, close enough now to see the snakes
Bristling on his necks, flung a honeyed cake
Laced with drugs into his ravenous jaws.
Cerberus snatched it from the air and then
Went slack, easing his huge, limp bulk 510
To the ground, stretching out over all his den,
Dead to the world. Aeneas entered the cave
And left behind the water of no return.

Now came the sound of wailing, the weeping
 Of the souls of infants, torn from the breast 515
 On a black day and swept off to bitter death
 On the very threshold of their sweet life.
 Nearby are those falsely condemned to die.
 These places are not assigned without judge
 And jury. Minos presides and shakes the urn, 520
 Calls the silent conclave, conducts the trial.

In the next region are those wretched souls
 Who contrived their own deaths. Innocent
 But loathing the light, they threw away their lives
 And now would gladly bear any hardship 525
 To be in the air above. But it may not be.
 The unlovely water binds them to Hell,
 Styx confines them in its nine circling folds.

Not far from here the Fields of Lamentation,
 As they are called, stretch into the vastness. 530
 Here those whom Love has cruelly consumed
 Languish concealed in sequestered myrtle glades,
 Sorrow clinging to them even as they wander
 These lost paths in death. In this region of Hell
 Aeneas makes out Phaedra, Procris, 535
 And mournful Eriphyle, displaying the wounds
 She received from her son. He sees Evadne
 And Pasiphaë and, walking with them,
 Laodamia, and Caeneus, a young man once,
 Now a woman, returned to her original form. 540
 And among them, her wound still fresh,
 Phoenician Dido wandered that great wood.
 The Trojan hero stood close to her there
 And in the gloom recognized her dim form

As faint as the new moon a man sees, 545
Or thinks he sees, through the evening's haze.

He broke into tears and spoke to her
 With tender love:

“Oh, Dido, so the message was true
 That you were dead, that you took your own life
 With steel. Was I really the cause of your death? 550
 I swear by the stars, by the powers above,
 And by whatever faith lies in the depths below,
 It was not my choice to leave your land, my Queen.
 The gods commanded me to go, as they force me now
 With their high decrees to go through this shadowland, 555
 This moldy stillness, the abyss of Night.
 I could not believe that I would cause you
 Such grief by leaving. Stop! Don’t turn away!
 Who are you running from? Fate will never
 Let us speak with each other again.” 560

With such words Aeneas tried to soothe
 Her burning soul. Tears came to his eyes,
 But Dido kept her own eyes fixed on the ground,
 As unmoved by his words as if her averted face
 Were made of flint or Marpesian marble. 565
 Finally she left, a stranger to him now, and fled
 Into a darkling grove, where her old husband,
 Sychaeus, comforted her and returned her love.
 But Aeneas, struck by the injustice
 Of her fate, wept as he watched her 570
 Disappear, and pitied her as she went.

Aeneas and the Sibyl now made their way
 To the farthest fields, a place set apart
 For the great war heroes. Here Tydeus
 And renowned Parthenopaeus met Aeneas, 575
 And the pale shade of Adrastus. And here,
 Lamented on earth and fallen in war,
 Were many Dardanians. Aeneas moaned
 When he saw their long ranks:
 Glaucus, Medon, and Thersilochus, 580
 Antenor’s three sons; Polyboetes,
 Priest of Ceres, and Idaeus,
 Still with his chariot, still bearing arms.
 They crowded around him, right and left,
 And it was not enough for these shades 585

To have seen him: they want to linger,
 To walk beside him and learn why he came.
 But as soon as the foremost Danaans
 And the battalions of Agamemnon
 Saw Aeneas' arms flashing in the gloom, 590
 They trembled with fear. Some turned to run,
 As if fleeing again to their beachhead camp.
 Others tried to shout, but their voices,
 Thin and faint, mocked their gaping mouths.

And here Aeneas saw Deïphobus, 595
 Son of Priam, his whole body mangled
 And his face cruelly mutilated, shredded,
 And both hands gone. His ears had been torn
 From the sides of his head, and his nostrils lopped
 With a shameful wound. Aeneas scarcely 600
 Recognized him as he trembled, struggling
 To hide his brutal disfigurement. He paused
 But then addressed him in familiar tones:

“Deïphobus, mighty warrior
 Of Teucer's high blood, who took delight 605
 In such torture? Who dared treat you like this?
 Word reached me that on that last night, weary
 With endless slaughter of Greeks, you fell
 On a heap of tangled corpses. I set up for you
 An empty tomb on the Rhoetian shore 610
 And called three times upon your ghost.
 Your name and your arms guard the place.
 You, my friend, I could not see, nor bury you
 In your native soil before I had to leave.”

And Priam's son responded:

“My friend, 615
 You have left nothing undone but have paid
 All that is due to Deïphobus' shade.
 My own fate, and that lethal Spartan woman,
 Plunged me into this misery. She left
 These memorials! You know how we spent 620

That last night in delusive joy. You know,
 You remember all too well. When the Horse
 Leapt to the city's high, holy place, its womb
 Heavy with infantry, Helen feigned
 A ritual dance and led the Trojan women 625
 Crying in ecstasy around Pergamum's heights
 While she herself held the huge, blazing torch
 That signaled the Greeks from the citadel.
 I was asleep in our ill-starred bedroom,
 Worn out with care, wrapped in slumber 630
 As peaceful as death, while Helen,
 My incomparable wife, was busy removing
 Every weapon from the house and even slipped
 My trusty sword from under my head.
 Then she called Menelaus inside, 635
 Hoping this would please her lover
 And wipe out the memory of her old sins.
 Why draw it out? They burst into my room,
 Ulysses with them, the evil counselor.

O Gods,

If my face is pious enough to pray for vengeance 640
 Make the Greeks pay in kind!

But you,

Tell me now, what has brought you here,
 Alive? Were you driven here while roaming the sea,
 Or by Heaven's command? Why do you visit
 The drear confusion of this sunless realm?" 645

While they were talking, Dawn had climbed
 High up the sky in her roselight chariot,
 And they might have spent all their allotted time
 On these matters had not the Sibyl warned:

"Night is coming on, Aeneas, yet we 650
 Weep away the hours. Here is the place
 Where the road splits into two. To the right,
 Winding under the walls of great Dis,
 Is the way to Elysium. But the left road

Takes the wicked to their punishment
In Tartarus.” 655

Deïphobus responded:

“Do not be angry, great priestess. I will go
And return to my place in the shadows. But you,
Glory of our race, go. Go to a happier fate.”

And on this word he turned away. 660

Aeneas suddenly looked back and saw,
Under a cliff to the left, a great fortification
Surrounded by a triple wall and encircled
By a river of fire—Phlegethon—
That rolled thunderous rocks in its current. 665
The Gate was flanked by adamantine columns
That could not be destroyed by any force,
Human or divine. High on a tower of iron,
Tisiphone sat, draped in a bloody pall,
Sleeplessly watching the portal night and day. 670
Groans, the crack of the lash, iron clanking,
And dragging chains grated on the ear.
Stunned by the noise, Aeneas froze in his tracks.

“What evil is here, priestess, what forms of torture,
What lamentation rising on the air?” 675

And the Sibyl began:

“Teucrian hero,
No virtuous soul may ever set foot
On this accursed threshold, but when Hecate
Made me mistress of the groves of Avernus
She showed me all of the punishments 680
The gods inflict.

Cretan Rhadamanthus
Rules this iron realm. He queries each soul,
Hears his lies, and forces him to confess

The sins whose atonement he has postponed,
 In his deluded vanity, until too late. At once, 685
 Tisiphone pounces upon the guilty soul
 With her avenging scourge, brandishing
 Glaring serpents in her left fist as she calls
 Her sister Furies. Then, metal grinding
 Upon metal, slowly open the Gates of Hell. 690
 Do you see the face of the Fury who guards
 The vestibule? The Hydra lurking within
 Is much worse—fifty gaping black throats.
 Then there is the pit of Tartarus itself,
 Plunging down into darkness twice as deep, 695
 As Olympus is high. Here Earth's ancient brood,
 The Titans, struck down by the thunderbolt,
 Writhe in the abyss. And here too I saw
 The twin sons of Aloeus, the Giants who tried
 To tear open the sky and pull Jupiter down. 700
 And I saw Salmoneus suffering torment
 For aping the Olympian's thunder and lightning.
 Torches shaking, he drove his chariot
 Through all the cities of Greece in triumph,
 And he brought his show of smoke and mirrors 705
 Home to Elis, demanding a divinity's honors
 For mimicking with bronze and horses' hooves
 The inimitable rumble of thunderheads.
 But the Father Almighty hurled his bolt—
 No smoky torch—through the thick clouds 710
 And blasted the sinner into perdition.
 And Tityos is there, another son of Earth,
 His body stretched over nine full acres,
 And a monstrous vulture with a hooked beak
 Gnaws away at his immortal liver 715
 And tortured entrails, pecking deep for its feasts.
 The bird lives in his bowels while his flesh,
 Like his pain, is renewed endlessly.
 And then there are the Lapiths, Ixion
 And Pirithoüs, above whom a black rock 720
 Totters, ever about to fall. Before their eyes
 A banquet fit for a king is spread,
 And high festive couches gleam with gold.

Reclining there, the eldest Fury
Keeps their hands from touching the table, 725
Rearing up with a torch and roaring ‘No!’

Here are those who hated their brothers,
Struck a parent, or betrayed a client;
Those who hoarded the wealth they had won,
Saving none for their kin (the largest group this); 730
Those slain for adultery; those who did not fear
To desert their masters in treasonous war—
All these await their punishment within.
Do not ask its form, or what fortune undid them.

Some roll huge stones, or hang outstretched 735
On the spokes of a wheel. Theseus sits
And will sit forever. Phlegyas in his agony

Lifts his voice through the gloom, admonishing all:
‘Learn justice, beware, do not slight the gods.’
This one sold his country for gold and installed 740
A tyrant; another made and unmade laws

For a price. This one went to his daughter’s bed.
All dared a great crime, and did what they dared.
Not if I had a hundred mouths, a hundred tongues,
And a voice of iron, could I recount 745
All the crimes or tell all their punishments.”

Thus the aged priestess of Apollo.

“But come, pick up your pace, and complete
What you came for,” the Sibyl continued. “Hurry!
I see the walls forged by the Cyclopes 750
And the gates in the archway opposite, where
We have been told to place our offering.”

They went side by side down dusky paths
And drew near the doors. Aeneas
Stood on the threshold, sprinkled his body 755
With fresh water, and fixed the bough in place.

The offering to the goddess complete,
Aeneas and the Sibyl now came
To regions of joy, the green and pleasant fields

Of the Blissful Groves. Air and sky
 Are more spacious here, and the light shines 760
 With an amethyst glow. The land here knows
 Its own sun and stars.

Some are at exercise

On the grassy wrestling ground, some contend
 On the yellow sand, others tread a dance 765
 And chant a choral song. And Orpheus,
 In the long robes of a Thracian priest,
 Accompanies them on his seven-toned lyre,
 Plucking notes with his fingers and ivory quill.
 Here too is the ancient race of Teucer, 770
 A people most fair, high-souled heroes
 Born in better times—Ilus, Assaracus,
 And Dardanus, founder of Troy.

Aeneas

Wonders at their weapons and chariots,
 Mere phantoms, and yet their spears 775
 Stand fixed in the ground, and their horses
 Graze unyoked over all the plain.
 The pleasure they took in arms and chariots
 When they were alive, in keeping sleek horses,
 Is still theirs now beneath the earth. 780
 And he sees others, to the right and left,
 Scattered on the grass, feasting, or singing
 Songs of joy in a fragrant grove of laurel
 Where the Eridanus rolls its mighty waters
 Through forests to the world above.

Here too are those 785

Wounded fighting in their country's defense,
 Those who in life were priests and poets,
 Bards whose words were worthy of Apollo;
 Also, those who enriched life with inventions
 Or earned remembrance for service rendered— 790
 Their brows bound with bands as white as snow.
 When they had gathered around, the Sibyl
 Addressed them, Musaeus especially,
 Who stood head and shoulders above the others:

“Tell me, blessed souls, and you, best of poets,
Which part of this realm harbors Anchises?
For him we have crossed the rivers of Erebus.” 795

The great soul Musaeus answered her briefly:

“We have no fixed homes but dwell in shadowed
Groves, recline on riverbanks, and live in meadows 800
Freshened by streams. But if you so wish,
Over this ridge I can show you an easy path.”

He led them up and pointed out to them
Shining fields below. The pair went down.

Anchises, deep in a green valley, was reviewing 805
As a proud father the souls of his descendants
Yet to be born into the light, contemplating
Their destinies, their great deeds to come.
When he saw his son striding toward him
Through the grass, he stretched out 810
His trembling hands, tears wet his cheeks,
And these words fell from his lips:

“You have come at last! I knew your devotion
Would see you through the long, hard road.
I can look upon your face, and we can hear 815
Each other’s familiar voices again.
I have been counting the hours carefully
Until this day, and my love has not deceived me.
All the lands and seas, all the dangers
You have been through, my son! How I feared 820
You would come to harm in Libya.”

And Aeneas:

“You, Father, your sad image,
Kept appearing to me, leading me here.
Our ships stand offshore in the Italian sea.
Let me hold your hands in mine, Father, 825
Do not pull away from my embrace!”

As Aeneas said this he began to weep.
 Three times he tried to put his arms
 Around his father's neck. Three times
 His father's wraith slipped through his hands, 830
 As light as wind, as fleeting as a dream.

While they talked in this sequestered valley
 A secluded grove caught Aeneas' eye.
 A stream drifted past its rustling thickets—
 The river Lethe—and around it hovered 835
 Nations of souls, innumerable

*As bees on a cloudless summer day
 That settle upon wildflowers in a field
 And swarm so thickly around the white lilies
 That the whole meadow hums and murmurs.* 840

Aeneas was shaken at the sight
 And asked, in his ignorance, the reason
 For this congregation. What was the river,
 And who were the men crowding its banks?
 Father Anchises answered: 845

“These are souls owed another body by Fate.
 In the ripples of Lethe they sip the waters
 Of forgetfulness and timeless oblivion.
 I have been longing to show them to you,
 The census of my generations, so that you 850
 May rejoice as I do at finding Italy.”

“Father, can it be that souls go from here
 To the world above and return again
 To their gross bodies? What is this yearning
 For these poor souls to taste the light?” 855

Aeneas asked this.

“I will tell you, my son,
 And not keep you in doubt.”

Anchises answered,
 And he revealed the mysteries one by one.

“First, heaven and earth, the sea’s expanse,
 The moon’s bright globe, the sun and stars 860
 Are all sustained by a spirit within.
 Every part is infused with Mind,
 Which moves the Whole, the source of life
 For man and beast and all winged things
 And the monsters of the marmoreal deep. 865
 A divine fire pulses within those seeds of life,
 A celestial energy, but it is slowed and dulled
 By mortal frames, earthly bodies doomed to die.
 And so men fear and desire, sorrow and exult,
 And, shut in the shade of their prison-houses, 870
 Cannot see the sky. Nor, when the last gleam
 Of life flickers out, are all the ills
 That flesh is heir to completely uprooted,
 But many corporeal taints remain,
 Ingrained in the soul in myriad ways. 875
 And so we are disciplined and expiate
 Our bygone sins. Some souls are hung
 Spread to the winds; others are cleansed
 Under swirling waters or purged by fire.
 We each suffer our own ghosts. Then we are sent 880
 Through spacious Elysium, and a few enjoy
 The Blessed Fields, until the fullness of time
 Removes the last trace of stain, leaving only
 The pure flame of ethereal spirit.

All these,
 When they have rolled the wheel of time 885
 Through a thousand years, will be called by God
 In a great assembly to the river Lethe,
 So that they return to the vaulted world
 With no memory and may begin again
 To desire rebirth in a human body.” 890

Anchises paused, and he led his son,
 Along with the Sibyl, into the heart

Of the murmuring crowd. He chose a mound
 From which he could scan all their faces
 As they passed by in long procession. 895

“Now I will set forth the glory that awaits
 The Trojan race, the illustrious souls
 Of the Italian heirs to our name.
 I will teach you your destiny.

That youth you see leaning on an untipped spear 900
 Is first in line to be reborn, first in the upper air
 From Italian blood mingled with ours,
 Silvius, an Alban name, your last child,
 Born in your twilight years and reared by your wife,
 Lavinia, in a sylvan home, 905
 To be a king and father of kings.
 We shall rule through him in Alba Longa.

Next comes Procas, pride of our race,
 Then Capys and Numitor, and then
 Your avatar, Aeneas Sylvius, 910
 Equal to you in piety and arms,
 If ever he succeeds to Alba’s throne.
 Look at these young men, their strength,
 Their brows shaded with civic oak!
 They will build for you Nomentum, Gabii, 915
 And the town of Fidena. They will crown
 Collatia’s hills with towers and will found
 Pometii and Inuus, Bola and Cora,
 Famous names someday, now places without names.
 Then a son of Mars will support his grandsire— 920
 Romulus, born to Ilia from the line of Assaracus.
 Do you see the double plumes on his head,
 And how the Father of Gods honors him
 As one of his own? Under his auspices,
 My son, Rome will extend her renowned empire 925
 To earth’s horizons, her glory to the stars.
 She will enclose seven hills within the wall
 Of one city, blessed with a brood of heroes

*As the Berecynthian Mother
Is blessed with a brood divine, riding* 930
*In her chariot through Phrygian towns,
Wearing her turreted diadem, and embracing
A hundred grandsons, all of them gods,
All of them with homes in high heaven.*

Now turn your gaze here and let it rest upon 935
Your family of Romans. Here is Caesar,
And here are all of the descendants of Iūlus
Destined to come under heaven's great dome.
And here is the man promised to you,
Augustus Caesar, born of the gods, 940
Who will establish again a Golden Age
In the fields of Latium once ruled by Saturn
And will expand his dominion
Beyond the Indus and the Garamantes,
Beyond our familiar stars, beyond the yearly 945
Path of the sun, to the land where Atlas
Turns the star-studded sphere on his shoulders.

Even now the Caspian Sea trembles
At the oracles that foretell his coming,
As does Persia, and the seven-mouthed Nile. 950
Not even Hercules ranged so far
Though he shot the bronze-hooved stag, brought calm
To Erymanthus' groves, and made Lerna quake
At his bow. Nor did Bacchus, though he drove
Tigers yoked with vine shoots from Nysa's heights. 955
And still we shrink from extending our virtue,
And fear to take our stand in Ausonia?

But who is this in the distance, resplendent
In his olive crown and sacred insignia?
I know that white hair and beard. 960
This is Numa, who will lay a foundation
Of law in our city, sent from a small town
In Sabine country to command a great nation.

Coming up after Numa is Tullus,
 Who will shatter his country's leisure 965
 And rouse to war men sunk in idleness
 And an army unaccustomed to triumphs.

Hard upon Tullus' heels is Ancus,
 Flaunting himself, blowing even now
 In winds of popular favor.

 Would you like to see 970
 The Tarquin kings, the proud, avenging
 Spirit of Brutus, and the rods of office
 He will recover? He will be first to receive
 The power of consul, and the stern axes.
 When his sons stir up rebellious war 975
 Their own father will exact punishment
 In sweet liberty's name, an unhappy man
 However the future might judge his deeds.
 Love of country will prevail with him,
 And a boundless desire for glory. 980

Look at the Decii and Drusi, still in the distance,
 And Torquatus ferocious with his battle-axe,
 And Camillus with the legion's standards regained.

But the two you see there, a match for each other
 In resplendent armor, harmonious souls 985
 While they are buried in night—what wars will they wage
 Against each other, what civil slaughter
 Should they ever reach the light, the bride's father
 Marching down the Alps from Monaco,
 His son-in-law drawing up his Oriental troops! 990
 Do not inure yourselves to such war, my sons,
 Nor rend your country's body with strife.
 And you, child of Olympus, should show
 Clemency first. Cast down your weapons,
 My own flesh and blood. . . . 995

There is Corinth's conqueror, whose chariot
 Will ascend the Capitoline Hill in triumph
 After the slaughter of his Greek enemies.

And here is the Roman who will uproot Argos
 And Agamemnon's Mycenae, and even the blood 1000
 Of Aeacus, mighty Achilles' grandsire,
 Avenging Troy and Minerva's temple.
 Who, great Cato, could leave you unsung,
 Or you, Cottus? Or the Gracchi brothers;
 Or the two Scipios, twin thunderbolts of war 1005
 And bane of Carthage; or Fabricius,
 Whose power will be thrift, or you, Serranus,
 Who left your plow? And you Fabii,
 Where do you draw my weary gaze? Ah,
 You are Fabius Maximus, whose strategy 1010
 Was delay, and who alone saved our state.

Others will, no doubt, hammer out bronze
 That breathes more softly, and draw living faces
 Out of stone. They will plead cases better
 And chart the rising of every star in the sky. 1015
 Your mission, Roman, is to rule the world.
 These will be your arts: to establish peace,
 To spare the humbled, and to conquer the proud."

Thus Anchises, and as they marvel he adds:

"Look at Marcellus, proud in choice spoils 1020
 Torn from the vanquished enemy commander,
 Towering triumphant over all the crowd!
 When the Roman state is falling in ruin
 He will set it upright; he will trample down
 The Carthaginians, crush the rebel Gauls, 1025
 And offer to Quirinus a third set of arms."

At this, Aeneas, seeing a youth pass by
 Beautiful in his gleaming armor
 But with downcast eyes and troubled brow,
 Asked his father:

"Who is this, 1030
 At the hero's side? His son, or another
 In his great line of descendants? What

An impression he makes with his crowd of followers!
But the shadow of death enshrouds his head.”

And Anchises, tears welling up in his eyes: 1035

“Son, do not seek your people’s great grief.
Fate will permit him on earth a brief while,
But not for long. Gods above, you thought Rome
Would be too powerful had your gift endured.
What lamentation of the brave will hang 1040
Over the Field of Mars. O River Tiber,
What a funeral you will see as you glide past
His new tomb. No boy bred of Troy will ever raise
The hope of his Latin forefathers so high,
Nor the land of Romulus ever be so proud 1045
Of any of its sons. O, lament
His devotion, lament his pristine honor
And his sword arm invincible in war!
No enemy would have faced him unscathed,
Whether he fought on foot or dug his spurs 1050
Into the flanks of a foaming stallion.
If only you could shatter Fate, poor boy.
You will be Marcellus! Let me strew
Armfuls of lilies and scatter purple blossoms,
Hollow rites to honor my descendant’s shade.” 1055

And so they wandered every region of the wide,
Airy plain, surveying all it contained.
When Anchises had led his son
Through every detail and enflamed his soul
With longing for the glory that was to come, 1060
He told him of the wars he next must wage,
Of the Laurentine people and Latinus’ town,
And how to face or flee each waiting peril.

There are two Gates of Sleep. One, they say,
Is horn, and offers easy exit for true shades. 1065
The other is finished with glimmering ivory,
But through it the Spirits send false dreams
To the world above. Anchises escorted his son

As he talked, then sent him with the Sibyl
Through the Gate of Ivory.
Aeneas made his way to the ships,
Rejoined his men, and sailed along the coast
To Caieta's harbor. They cast anchor
From the prow; the sterns faced the shore.

1070

AENEID SEVEN

You too Caieta, nurse of Aeneas,
Have by your death given eternal fame
To our shores. Still your resting place
Is honored, and if bones can lie in glory
So lie yours beneath your name 5
In great Hesperia.

When the last rites
Were done, and her burial mound heaped up,
Godly Aeneas set sail from the haven
As soon as the high seas had subsided.
Breezes blew on into the night, and the moon 10
Shone white on the tremulous water below,
Lighting their voyage. Hugging the coastline,
They passed the land where Circe,
Daughter of the Sun, lived in opulence.
The woodland rang with her perpetual song, 15
And in her high house she burned fragrant cedar
To illumine the night while she worked the loom,
Combing her shrill shuttle through delicate threads.
And from those shores could also be heard 20
Lions roaring and snapping at their chains
Late into the night, the raging of bristled boars
And caged bears, and huge wolf-shapes howling.
All these were men whom Circe had cruelly drugged
And clad in the hides and faces of beasts.
But Neptune, to save the good Trojans 25
From these monstrous transformations,

Kept them from landing on those deadly shores,
 Filling their sails with wind, and bearing them past
 The seething shoals and out of danger.

Now the sea was reddening, and Dawn, 30
 Saffron in her rosy chariot, shone in the sky,
 When the winds fell and every breeze died down.
 As the oars struggled in the smooth, marble water,
 Aeneas, still far offshore, looked out and saw
 A vast forest, and flowing through it 35
 The beautiful Tiber, its current swirling
 With golden sand as it broke into the sea.
 Above and all about, birds of many kinds
 That haunted the banks and bed of the river
 Flew through the woods, enchanting the air 40
 With their trilling.

Aeneas ordered his men
 To change course and turn their prows landward,
 And with joy he drew into the shady river.

And now, Erato, who were the kings 45
 And what was the state of ancient Latium
 When this foreign army landed in Italy?
 Help me, Goddess, your sacred poet,
 Recall the prelude to the hostilities,
 For I will tell of war's horror, of pitched battle,
 Heroes driven by courage to meet their doom, 50
 Of Etruscan squadrons, and all Hesperia
 Pressed into arms. A higher order of things
 Opens before me; a greater work now begins.

King Latinus, old and grey, ruled over lands 55
 And cities through a long twilight of peace.
 He was born, we are told, from Faunus
 And the Laurentine nymph Marica.
 Faunus' father was Picus, and Picus
 Looked to you, Saturn, as his father:
 You were the founder of the royal line. 60
 Latinus' son, his sole male heir, was gone,

Torn away by Fate in the springtime of youth.
 He had only a daughter to keep his great house,
 A daughter ripe for marriage, a bride to be,
 Courted by many in broad Latium, by many 65
 From all Ausonia, and the handsomest of all
 Was Turnus. He was from old blood, powerful,
 And Latinus' queen was strangely passionate
 To join him to herself as her son in marriage.

But portents from the gods warned otherwise. 70

A sacred laurel stood in the inner courtyard
 Of the palace, tended in awe for many years.
 Latinus himself is said to have found this tree
 When he first built the citadel. He dedicated
 Its foliage to Phoebus Apollo 75
 And from its name called his people
 The Laurentines. A thick swarm of bees
 Buzzing and humming through the crystal air
 Settled in the top of this tree, and—
 A sign and a wonder—hung with feet interlaced 80
 From the highest branch—a sudden hive.
 At once the seer cries:

“I see an outlander—
 Troops arriving from the same direction
 As these bees, seeking and mastering the citadel.”

And again, while Lavinia at her father's side 85
 Kindled the altar with a hallowed torch,
 Her long hair, to everyone's horror, caught fire.
 Flames crackled in her headdress, her jeweled tiara
 Flared with heat, and the princess herself,
 Shrouded in glowing yellow smoke, 90
 Scattered Vulcan's sparks throughout the palace.
 This ghastly miracle was reported widely
 And taken to mean that the princess's future was bright,
 But that a great war would come upon her people.

The king was troubled by these portents 95
 And consulted the oracle of Faunus,
 His prophetic father, the vatic grove
 Beneath high Albunea, a great forest
 That echoes with the sound of a sacred spring
 And breathes mephitic vapors from its shadows. 100
 The people of Italy and all Oenotria
 Come to consult this oracle in time of doubt.
 It is here the priest brings his offerings,
 And when he has lain down to sleep
 Upon the fleeces of slaughtered sheep 105
 In the still of the night, he sees many phantoms
 Flitting about in strange ways, hears
 Many voices, converses with the gods,
 And speaks to Acheron in Avernus' depths.
 Father Latinus came to consult this oracle. 110
 He slaughtered a hundred yearling sheep
 In ritual order and lay himself down
 Cushioned by their woolly fleece. Suddenly,
 A voice came from deep within the grove:

“Seek not, my son, to marry your daughter 115
 Into a Latin family. Trust not a wedding
 Already prepared. A stranger will come
 To be your son-in-law. His blood will exalt
 Our name to the stars, and his children's children
 Will see the world turn under their feet, 120
 And their rule will stretch over all that the Sun
 Looks down upon, from sea to shining sea.”

Thus the response of father Faunus,
 His warning given in the dead of night.
 And Latinus did not keep it a secret. Rumor 125
 Took flight and had already spread the news
 Through all the cities of Ausonia
 When the men of Laomedon's Troy
 Were mooring their ships to the Tiber's grassy banks.

Aeneas and his captains, and fair Iulus, 130
 Reclined in the shade of a towering tree

And spread out a feast on the grass below,
 Heaping fruits of the field—Jupiter himself
 Gave them this notion—on wheat flatbread
 To supplement the meal. When they had eaten 135
 Everything else, their appetites drove them
 To break the scored, fateful rounds into sections
 And sink their teeth into the crusty bread.

“We’re so hungry we’re even eating our tables!”

Iūlus said this in jest and said no more, 140
 But Aeneas heard it as the first sign
 That their trials were ending. Awestruck,
 He seized upon his son’s words and cried:

“Hail to the Promised Land and faithful gods
 Of Troy! Here is our home, this is our country. 145
 My father Anchises foretold this to me—
 I remember it now—one of Fate’s secrets:
 ‘When you are borne, my son, to shores unknown,
 And hunger compels you to eat your tables,
 Then in your weariness hope for a home. 150
 Build your first houses there, roof them well
 With your own hands, and bank them with mounds.’
 This was that hunger, the final stretch
 Of all our misfortunes.

Come, then, be happy!

With the sun’s first light we will explore these lands, 155
 Find out who lives here, locate their city.
 We will fan out from the harbor. For now, though,
 Pour libations to Jove, pray to Anchises,
 And set the wine again on the tables!”

Aeneas spoke

And wreathed his temples with leaves. 160
 Then he prayed to the place’s indwelling spirit,
 And to Earth, first of the gods, and to nymphs
 And rivers yet unknown; then to Night
 And Night’s wheeling constellations,
 To Jove of Ida and the Phrygian Mother, 165

And his two parents, one in heaven,
 One in Erebus below. And at his prayer
 The Father Almighty sent three peals of thunder
 From a clear sky, set in the ether
 A cloud glowing with shafts of gold, 170
 And shook the cloud with his own great hand.
 Word spread quickly through the Trojan ranks
 That the day had come for them to found
 Their promised city. They outdo each other
 To renew the feast and, cheered by the great omen, 175
 Fill the bowls with wine to the beaded brims.

Dawn touched the sky with her early light,
 And Aeneas and his men fanned out
 To reconnoiter the exact location
 Of the city, its borders and coasts. 180
 Some found the pool of Numicia's spring,
 Others the Tiber, and still others the home
 Of the brave Latin people. Aeneas ordered
 A hundred ambassadors from every rank
 To go to the king's majestic city, 185
 All of them shaded with olive branches,
 To offer gifts and beg peace for the Trojans.
 They strode off quickly on their mission,
 And Aeneas marked off walls for his city
 With a shallow trench and started building, 190
 Encircling this first settlement on the coast
 With the ramped stockades of an army camp.

Now the envoys could make out the rooftops
 Of Latinus' city. Outside the walls,
 Young men and boys in life's early bloom 195
 Were breaking in horses, riding them hard
 On the dusty plain, or practicing archery,
 Hurling javelins, squaring off to box,
 Or running footraces—when, galloping up,
 A messenger brought word to the aged king 200
 That a great company had arrived, huge men
 In strange dress. The king ordered them in
 And took his seat upon his ancestral throne.

Stately, immense, column upon column,
 Latinus' palace crowned the whole city. 205
 Once the palace of Laurentine Picus,
 It bristled with groves and religious awe.
 Here it was auspicious for kings to receive
 Their scepters and first lift the fasces. This shrine
 Was their senate, here they held holy feasts, 210
 And here, after the slaughter of rams,
 The elders sat at long rows of tables.
 Their ancestors' images, carved in cedar,
 Lined the walls: aged Saturn, Italus,
 And father Sabinus, who first planted the vine, 215
 Pictured holding his long pruning hook,
 And double-faced Janus—all of them standing
 In the vestibule. And there were other kings
 From the early days, and heroes who had suffered
 Wounds while defending the fatherland. 220
 And many arms were hung from the sacred doors,
 Chariots taken in war, curved axes, helmet crests,
 Massive bars of gates, javelins and shields,
 And beaks wrenched from ships. And there too
 Sat a figure holding the Quirinal staff, 225
 In his robes of office, his left hand wielding
 A sacred shield. This was Picus,
 Breaker of horses. His lovesick bride, Circe,
 Later struck him with her rod of gold,
 And with poisonous drugs transformed him 230
 Into a bird of colorful plumage.

It was into this temple of the gods
 That Latinus, seated on his ancestral throne,
 Summoned the Teucrians and as they entered
 Welcomed them in calm and measured tones: 235

“Sons of Dardanus—for we do know your race
 And your city and have heard of your sea voyage—
 Tell us why have you come. What purpose, or need,
 Has borne you over so many dark-blue seas
 To the shores of Ausonia? 240
 Whether you lost your bearings, or storm winds

Blew you off course, as often happens to those
 Who sail the high seas, and so entered our river,
 Do not refuse our hospitality.
 Know that the Latins are Saturn's race, 245
 A people just not by laws or constraints
 But of their own free will, keeping the ways
 Of their ancient god. And I seem to recall,
 Though time has dimmed the old Auruncan tale,
 How Dardanus was born in this land 250
 And went from here to Phrygian Ida
 And to Samothrace. It was from here he came,
 From the Tyrrhenian town of Corythus.
 And now he sits in the golden palace
 Of the starry sky, while here on earth 255
 There is one more altar to the gods above."

And Ilioneus, in response to Latinus:

"My lord, illustrious heir of Faunus,
 No black storm has driven us here
 To seek shelter in your land, nor has star 260
 Or coastline deceived us. We have come
 To your city on purpose, with willing hearts,
 Exiled from a realm once the mightiest
 The sun has seen from the circle of sky.
 Our race is from Jove; the sons of Dardanus 265
 Glory in Jove as their forebear; our king himself
 Is of Jove's highest race—Trojan Aeneas,
 Who sent us to you. How fierce was the storm
 That swept from Mycenae over Ida's plains,
 How the worlds of Europe and Asia clashed 270
 In fateful conflict, has been heard the world over,
 From the farthest shore lapped by Ocean
 And the farthest region of the globe's five zones
 Severed from us by the tropical sun.
 From that deluge we have sailed the barren seas 275
 And now we ask a safe strip of shore,
 A little land for the gods of our country,
 And water and air that are common to all.
 We will hardly be a shame to your realm,

And I do not spurn your gifts. While Latinus is king
 You shall not lack rich fields or the wealth 315
 You had at Ilium. However,
 If Aeneas is eager for this alliance,
 Let him come himself and not shrink
 From friendly eyes. My condition for peace 320
 Is that I have touched your master's hand!
 Now take this message back to your lord.
 Tell him I have a daughter whom oracles
 From my ancestral shrine, and countless signs
 From heaven, do not allow me to marry 325
 To any of our race. It is Latium's destiny
 That a son-in-law will come from foreign shores,
 And that his blood will exalt us to the stars.
 It is my belief that he is the chosen one,
 And if I augur true, it is my desire." 330

And the old king picked out horses
 From the three hundred in his stables
 And ordered them to be led forth,
 One for each of the Teucrians,
 Horses swift of foot and caparisoned 335
 With embroidered purple. Golden chains
 Hung below their chests, their saddle cloths
 Were gold, and gold the bits they champed.
 For absent Aeneas he chose a chariot
 And a matched pair of fire-breathing horses 340
 Reared by Circe, daughter of the Sun,
 Who had stolen one of her father's stallions
 And mated it with a mortal mare.
 And so Aeneas' men rode back to him
 High on their mounts, bearing gifts 345
 And words of peace from Latinus.

But now Jupiter's ferocious wife
 Was returning from Argos, striding
 The level air, when she saw from afar—
 All the way from Sicilian Pachynus— 350
 Aeneas, his spirits high, with all his people.
 They were already building a city,

At home on the land, their ships empty.
 She stopped in midair, pierced with grief,
 And, shaking her head, poured forth these words: 355

“Ah, hated race, Phrygian fates
 At odds with mine! Couldn’t they have died
 On the Sigean plain? Defeated,
 Couldn’t they have endured defeat?
 Didn’t burning Troy cremate these men? 360
 No! They found a way through fire and foe.
 My divinity must be wearing thin,
 Or I have grown content, my wrath appeased.
 Not exactly! When they were thrown out
 Of their country, I persecuted the outcasts 365
 All over the deep blue sea. All the powers
 Of sea and sky have been used against them.
 But what did the Syrtes get me, or Scylla,
 Or gaping Charybdis? They have found shelter
 In Tiber’s long-sought channel, safe from the sea 370
 And safe from me. Mars could destroy
 The giant Lapith race; the Father of the Gods
 Sacrificed Calydon to Diana’s wrath,
 But what did the Lapiths or Calydon do
 To deserve such punishment? But I, 375
 Jove’s great consort, who have left nothing
 Undared, have tried every trick and turn,
 Am bested by Aeneas! But if my powers
 Are not great enough, why should I hesitate
 To seek help from any source whatever? 380
 If I cannot sway Heaven, I will awaken Hell!
 I concede Aeneas the rule of Latium,
 And Lavinia is his bride by iron fate,
 But to draw it out and delay the issue,
 That I may do, and destroy both nations. 385
 Their people’s lives will be the price
 For father and son-in-law to form a union.
 Trojan and Rutulian blood will be your dowry,
 Bride of Aeneas, and Bellona
 Your matron of honor! It was not only Hecuba 390
 Who conceived a firebrand and gave birth

To nuptial flames. Venus' own child
Is a second Paris, a funeral torch for New Troy.”

With these words Juno descended to earth,
A terrifying presence, and called forth Allecto 395
From the home of the Dread Goddesses
And the shadows below, gruesome Allecto
Whose heart is set on war and wrath,
Intrigues and crime. She is hateful
Even to Pluto, who sired her, hateful 400
To her Tartarean sisters: so many shapes
She assumes, so cruel her faces, so vile
The black vipers that sprout from her scalp.
Juno enflamed her with words such as these:

“Daughter of Night, grant me a favor, 405
A special service that will preserve my honor.
Prevent Aeneas from winning over Latinus
Through marriage, or from invading Italy.
You are able to make like-minded brothers
Arm for battle, to overturn homes with hate, 410
To bring lash and funeral torch to the hearth.
You have a thousand names, a thousand ways
To cause harm. Ransack your teeming heart.
Shatter the peace, sow the seeds of war.
Make each man want to grip a weapon, 415
Demand one and seize one all in one breath.”

And so Allecto, venomous as any Gorgon,
Makes for Latinus' palace in Latium
And occupies the still threshold
Of Amata. The queen was inside, seething 420
With a woman's fury at the Teucrians' coming
And sick at heart over Turnus' marriage.
The goddess plucks a snake from her dark hair
And throws it on Amata, thrusting it
Deep into her bosom to drive her mad 425
And so bring down the entire house. Gliding
Between her clothes and smooth breasts,
It insinuates itself unseen and unfelt

By the frenzied woman and hisses into her
 Its viperous breath. The huge serpent becomes 430
 The twisted gold around her neck, becomes
 The long band about her brows, entwines itself
 Into her hair, and slithers down her limbs.
 As the first taint of the poison is absorbed—
 Assailing her senses and enflaming her bones 435
 But not yet engulfing her soul in fire—
 Softly, as mothers do, she murmurs, weeping
 Over her daughter's wedlock with Aeneas:

“Will you give Lavinia to Teucrican exiles,
 You, her father? Have you no pity left 440
 For your daughter or yourself? No pity
 For her mother, whom this traitor will desert
 With the first North Wind, sailing away
 With our girl as plunder? Wasn't this how Paris
 Entered Lacedaemon and bore off Helen 445
 To Ilium? What of your solemn promise?
 What of your old love for your own, what of
 Your hand so often pledged to Turnus,
 Your kinsman? If it has been decided
 That we need a son-in-law of foreign stock, 450
 If the words of your father Faunus
 Are so important, then I maintain
 That every land not under our rule
 Is a foreign land, and the gods agree.
 Turnus himself, if you trace his lineage, 455
 Is descended from Inachus and Acrisius
 With roots in Mycenae, the heart of Greece.”

Amata's words had no effect on Latinus.
 When she saw her husband standing against her,
 And when the venom had infected her deeply, 460
 Pulsing through her veins, the ill-starred queen
 Was swept away by monstrous horrors
 And raged in her frenzy all through the city.

*A top kept spinning by a twisted cord,
 As boys, intent on their game, drive it along* 465

*In great loops through an empty courtyard,
Will whip around curve after curve as the throng
Of entranced children hovers above it,
Mesmerized by the whirling boxwood toy.*

Likewise Amata, driven through the cities 470
Of the fierce Latian peoples and through the forests,
Feigning the spirit of Bacchus, a greater sin,
And reaching new heights of madness.
She hid her daughter in the wooded mountains
To forestall her wedding to the Teucrian, 475
Shrieking:

“Hail, Bacchus! You alone
Are worthy of her. She waves the thyrsus
For you, worships you in the dance,
Grows her sacred tresses for you, Bacchus!”

Rumor spreads, inflaming the Latian mothers 480
With fury, and they rise as one, abandoning
Their homes, hair streaming in the wind
As they fill the air with their quavering cries,
Dressed in fawnskins and carrying spears
Entwined with vines. The frenzied queen 485
Lifts up a blazing torch of pine and sings
A wedding song for her daughter and Turnus,
Rolling her bloodshot eyes and suddenly
Shouting:

“Hear me, mothers of Latium,
Wherever you are! If your hearts are still loyal 490
To unhappy Amata, if you still care about her
And a mother’s rights—unbind your hair
And celebrate the revels along with me!”

Such was the queen, driven by Allecto
With Bacchic goads through the haunts of wild beasts. 495

When the dark goddess thought she had put
A fine enough edge on the first shafts of frenzy

And had undone Latinus and all his house,
 She flew on dusky wings to the walls
 Of the bold Rutulian's city. 500
 The story is told that Danaë,
 Driven ashore by the strong South Wind,
 Built this city with her Acrisian settlers.
 Ardea it was called, and the great name remains,
 But the place is desolate now.

Midnight, 505
 And Turnus was asleep in his high palace.
 Allecto sloughed off her fiend's body
 And changed herself into an old woman.
 She creased her brow, made her hair white,
 And bound it with wool and an olive chaplet. 510
 She was Calybe now, aged priestess
 Of the temple of Juno, and with these words
 She offered herself to the young hero's eyes:

“Turnus, will you allow all your work
 To be washed away, and the scepter handed 515
 To these Dardanian settlers? The king
 Denies you the bride you won with your blood,
 And a stranger is sought as heir to your throne.
 Go ahead, face danger unrewarded, you fool,
 Smash Tuscan ranks, shield the Latins with peace! 520
 Saturn's almighty daughter in person
 Told me to tell you this while you lay abed
 In the still of the night. Up then, smile,
 Arm your lads, march them through the gates
 Into the fields, and burn the painted Phrygian ships 525
 Lying at anchor in our beautiful river!
 Heaven commands it. And unless King Latinus
 Honors his word and gives you your bride,
 Let him feel the full force of Turnus as foe.”

And Turnus, mocking the seer:

“So a fleet 530
 Has entered the Tiber's mouth, and you think
 I don't know? Don't invent a crisis

For my benefit. Queen Juno does not forget me.
 Old age has rotted your mind and deludes
 Your prophetic soul with false alarms. 535
 See to the gods' temples and statues.
 War is the work of the men who wage it."

Allecto's hair spread out in fiery points,
 And as Turnus spoke a sudden spasm
 Seized his limbs. He stared in horror 540
 At the Fury's hissing snakes and the face
 That loomed before him. Her eyes rolled in flame
 As she pushed him back. Turnus stumbled,
 Tried to say more, but the Fury pulled
 A pair of snakes from her hair, cracked her whip, 545
 And spoke again from her rabid lips:

"Behold me, mind rotted with old age,
 Prophetic soul deluded with false alarms.
 Look on this! I come from the Dread Sisters,
 And in my hand I bear War and Death." 550

And she threw a torch at the young hero,
 Sticking it in his chest, where it smoked
 With black light. Turnus woke in terror,
 Sweat pouring down, drenching him
 To the bone. He called madly for arms, 555
 Groped wildly in the bed for weapons,
 Lusting for steel and the rut of battle,
 Rage crowning all.

A fire crackling

*Under a bronze cauldron heats the water
 Until it seethes and bubbles, unable to contain itself, 560
 And a cloud of dark steam rises into the air.*

And so Turnus, peace be damned, ordered his captains
 To march on Latinus. His battle cry rang out:

"For Italy! Drive the enemy out!
 Turnus is here, a match for Teucrians 565
 And Latins alike!"

And he called on the gods
 To witness his vows. The Rutulians
 Outdid each other in the call to arms,
 Stirred by Turnus' good looks, his high lineage,
 And his prowess in battle, second to none. 570

While Turnus steeled the Rutulians' hearts
 Allecto was flying on shadowy wings
 To the Trojan camp, surveying the region
 With new wiles in mind. There on the shore
 Iulus was hunting with horses, nets, 575
 And a pack of dogs. The dark goddess
 Threw the hounds into a sudden frenzy
 And touched their nostrils with a familiar scent
 That sent them off in pursuit of a stag.
 This was the first cause of war in the countryside. 580

There was a stag of surpassing beauty,
 With towering antlers, that had been torn
 From its mother's breast and raised by Tyrrhus
 And his children. Tyrrhus was the keeper
 Of the king's herds and far-flung pastures. 585
 His daughter, Sylvia, had trained the animal
 And would lovingly twine its antlers with flowers,
 Comb its coat, and bathe it in a spring.
 Tame, and used to eating from its master's table,
 It would wander the woods but always come back 590
 To the door it knew, however late at night.

The stag had wandered far from home
 And, having swum downstream, was cooling off
 On the green riverbank when Iulus' dogs
 Started it running. Ascanius himself, 595
 Eager for glory, aimed an arrow
 From his curving bow, and the goddess steadied
 His trembling hand. The reedy shaft
 Whistled through the air and pierced
 The stag's belly and flank. The wounded animal 600
 Fled to its familiar home and dragged itself
 All bloody into its stall, and its moans

Filled the house like the cries of a suppliant.
 Silvia, the sister, slapping her arms in fear,
 Called for help from the hardy county folk, 605
 Who came instantly, prompted by the fiend
 Lurking in the silent woods. They were armed
 With burnt-out torches, knotted clubs: whatever
 Came to hand wrath turned into a weapon.
 Tyrrhus, who was splitting oak with wedges, 610
 Called to his men as he snatched up an axe,
 His breath coming in huge gulps of rage.

But the cruel goddess, watching for the moment
 She could do the most harm, scaled the rooftop
 And sounded the shepherds' call, her hellish voice 615
 Blaring through the twisted horn. All the groves
 Quivered with fear, and the woods echoed
 To their very depths. Trivia's lake
 Heard the sound from afar, white Nar heard it
 In his sulfurous water, and the springs of Velinus. 620
 Fearful mothers clasped their sons to their breasts.
 But their husbands, unruly farmers,
 Quickened their pace at the trumpeted signal,
 Snatching up weapons as they ran in from all sides.
 And, from their camp's open gates, 625
 The Trojans poured out to help Ascanius.
 The battle-lines formed. This was no longer
 A country quarrel fought with stakes and clubs,
 But combat with sharp steel. The field bristled
 With a dark crop of drawn swords, and flaring bronze 630
 Reflected the sunlight up to the clouds.

*The first wave begins to whiten in wind,
 And then the swells rise higher and higher
 Until they arch from the seafloor up to the stars.*

An arrow whined through the foremost ranks 635
 And hit the firstborn of Tyrrhus' sons,
 Young Almo, full in the throat, blood choking
 Speech and breath. He lay in the dust,
 And around him lay many bodies of men,

Old Galaesus among them, cut down
 As he threw himself between the two lines, 640
 Pleading for peace. He was of all men
 The most just, and once the wealthiest
 In all Ausonia. Five flocks of sheep
 Bleated in his fields, five herds of cattle
 Returned from his pastures, and his soil 645
 Was turned over by a hundred plows.

So the battle raged across the whole plain.
 Allecto's promise was fulfilled. Blood
 Had been spilled in battle, deaths inflicted. 650
 She left Hesperia and turned through the sky
 To address Juno in triumphant tones:

“I have crowned discord with grim war,
 As you wished. Tell them to unite in friendship
 Now that I have painted the Trojans 655
 With Ausonian blood! And more,
 If I am assured of your intention,
 I will draw in the bordering towns with rumors
 And inflame their minds with battle lust.
 War will spread. I will sow the fields with arms.” 660

And Juno answered her:

“Enough of treachery
 And terror. The causes of war are in place.
 They are fighting man to man, and the weapons
 Chance first gave are now stained with fresh blood.
 This is the wedding they must celebrate, 665
 Venus' perfect son and great king Latinus!
 The Lord of Olympus would not approve
 Of your roaming too freely in the upper air.
 Leave these regions. I will deal myself
 With whatever troubles remain.”

Thus Juno, 670
 Daughter of Saturn. Serpents hissed
 In Allecto's wings as she spread them wide, leaving

The world above for her home in Cocytus.
 There is a place in the heart of Italy,
 Beneath towering mountains, the famed 675
 Vale of Amsanctus. Dark woods surround it,
 And a stream roars through its center,
 Spilling over rocks and swirling in eddies.
 Here can be seen a dread cavern, and fissures
 Through which the Dark Lord breathes, 680
 And a vast gorge that belches out Acheron.
 Here the Fury disappeared, relieving
 Heaven and earth of her abhorrent presence.

Now Juno put the finishing touches
 On her nascent war. A company of shepherds 685
 Poured into the city from the battlefield,
 Bearing the dead—the boy Almo
 And Galaesus' mangled body. They called
 On the gods and held Latinus to account.
 Turnus was there, and amid the riot, 690
 The passions, and the shouts of 'Murder!'
 He multiplied their terror:

“Teucrians
 Are called in to rule! We are becoming
 Phrygian half-breeds, and I am shut out!”

The Bacchic women were still in their frenzy, 695
 Mothers dancing through the trackless woods—
 The name of Amata carried some weight.
 And now their men were coming together
 From all sides, wearying Mars with their pleas.
 Defying the omens and the sacred oracles, 700
 Their minds twisted, they all clamored
 For an unholy war. Latinus' palace
 Was soon besieged by an ugly crowd.
 He stood as a cliff stands on an ocean shore,

Motionless as a cliff in the crashing ocean. 705
Its sheer bulk holds steady as the sea below

*Howls and roars in the foaming crags,
And it flings back the seaweed that strikes its face.*

But when he saw that he was powerless
To change their blind resolve, that all was going 710
As cruel Juno wished, old Latinus
Called the gods and the empty air to witness:

“We are being broken by Fate, swept away
By the storm. You will pay for this in sorrow
With your sacrilegious blood. You, Turnus, 715
You will suffer punishment severe. Too late
Will you supplicate the gods with vows.
As for me, my rest is won, but at the gate
Of the harbor, I am robbed of a happy death.”

Saying no more, Latinus shut himself 720
In the palace and dropped the reins of power.

There was a custom in ancient Latium,
Held sacred later by the Alban cities
And now by Rome most high, whenever Mars
Is first roused—be it the Getae 725
Or Arabs or Hyrcanians against whom
They prepare to bring the tears of war,
Or to march on India, pursue the Dawn,
And reclaim their eagles from the Parthians.
There are twin Gates of War (so men call them) 730
Sanctified by faith and fear of Mars,
Held shut by a hundred bronze bolts
And the eternal strength of iron. Janus,
Their guardian, never leaves the threshold.
Here, when the Fathers declare war, 735
The Consul, wearing Quirinal robes
And a toga with a Gabine cincture,
Unbars the grating doors and calls forth War.
The rest of the army then takes up the cry,
And brass horns blare in hoarse accord. 740
Latinus was charged to declare war on Aeneas
In just this way and open the grim gates;

But the old man would not touch them, recoiling
 From such service, and hid himself in shadows.
 It was the Queen of the Gods, gliding down 745
 From the sky, who with her own hand pushed
 The hesitant doors on their turning hinges
 And burst open the ironbound Gates of War.

Now all Ausonia was in burning motion.
 Some were starting to cross the plain on foot, 750
 Others rode out furiously on war-horses,
 Raising clouds of dust. All lusted for weapons.
 You could see men burnishing shields,
 Polishing spears, and whetting axes on stones,
 Glad to bear standards and hear the trumpets call. 755
 Five great cities started to forge new weapons—
 Mighty Atina, high Tibur and Ardea,
 Crustumeri, and turreted Antemnae.
 They molded helmets, framed shields in wicker,
 Hammered bronze into breastplates, 760
 And crafted smooth greaves of pliant silver.
 They beat their plowshares into swords
 And re-tempered the swords of their fathers.
 The trumpet sounds, the password goes around,
 Signaling war. A man anxiously snatches 765
 A helmet from his home; another harnesses
 His trembling horses, puts on his golden,
 Triple-linked armor, and straps on his sword.

Now open the gates of Helicon, Goddesses,
 And lift my song. Who were the kings 770
 Incited to war, and the fighting men
 Who filled the plain? With what heroes
 Did sweet Mother Italy even then bloom,
 With what armies did she burn? For you know,
 Divine ones; you can remember and tell, 775
 While we hear only the whisper of fame.”

First into war came the fierce Etruscan,
 Mezentius, scorner of the gods,

And he marshaled his troops. At his side
 Stood his son, Lausus, in glory of youth 780
 Second only to Turnus.

Lausus,
 Breaker of horses, led into battle
 A thousand men from Agylla's town
 Who followed him in vain, a son worthy
 Of a father better than Mezentius. 785

Next came Aventinus, handsome son
 Of handsome Hercules, his chariot
 And prizewinning horses on parade
 In the fields of glory, and on his shield
 His father's insignia—a hundred serpents 790
 Surrounding the Hydra. The priestess Rhea
 Gave birth to him in the Aventine's woods,
 Bringing him secretly into the world of light,
 A woman who lay with a god. Hercules,
 Having slain Geryon, had just arrived 795
 At the Laurentian fields and was watering
 His Iberian cattle in the Tuscan stream.
 Aventinus' men bore javelins
 And great battle-pikes while he himself
 Marched on foot, a huge lionskin 800
 Swinging from his shoulders, its white teeth
 Crowning his head. This was how Aventinus
 Would enter the hall, an unnerving sight,
 Bristling with the cloak of Hercules.

Next, the twins Catillus and Coras, 805
 Brave Argives, came from Tibur,
 Named after their brother, Tiburtus.
 They worked their way to the front lines
 Through a forest of weapons,

Like cloud-born
Centaurs racing down a mountain, 810
Leaving Homole or snowy Orthys behind,
The woods parting before them
As they crash through the thickets.

There too was Caeculus, Praeneste's founder,
 The king, as every age has believed, 815
 Born to Vulcan among rustic herds
 And found on the hearth. With him marches
 A vast militia drafted in the field,
 Warriors from steep Praeneste,
 From the farms of Juno who guards the Gabii, 820
 From the cool Anio and Hernica's rocks,
 And men whom you feed, rich Anagnia,
 And you, Amasenus. Not all of these have
 Weapons or shields or clanging chariots.
 Most of them fight by slinging lead pellets. 825
 Some carry two spears and wear wolfskin
 Helmets. Their left foot is bare,
 The right protected by a rawhide boot.
 Messapus, breaker of horses, son of Neptune,
 Whom none may lay low with fire or steel, 830
 Calls to battle sedentary tribes, troops
 Long idle, and once again grips a sword himself.
 These are men of Fescennium
 And of Aequi Falisci; from Soracte's heights
 And the fields of Flacinia; near Ciminus' lake 835
 And the groves of Capena. They all marched
 To the beat and chanted praise to their king.

*Snowy swans high in the misty air,
 On their way back from feeding, issue
 Melodious cries from their outstretched throats,
 And the sound echoes from the Asian wetlands
 Far below.* 840

No one would think that bronze troops
 Were massing here, but that vast clouds
 Of raucous birds were pressing toward shore.

Next comes Clausus, of old Sabine blood, 845
 Leading a great army, and equal in stature
 To a great army himself, ancestor
 Of the Claudian clans that spread through Latium
 After Rome was given in part to the Sabines.

With him marched Amiternum's troops 850
 And the ancient Quirites, the whole band
 Of Eretrum and of olive-bearing Mutusca;
 Citizens of Nomentum and the inhabitants
 Of the Rosean country around Velini,
 And those who live on the cliffs of Tetrica 855
 And Mount Severus, in Casperia
 And Foruli, and by the river Himella;
 Those who drink the Tiber and Fabaris,
 Those sent from cold Nursia, Ortine troops,
 The Latin peoples, and those whom Allia 860
 (Name of ill omen) parts with its waters,

*Multitudinous as the foaming waves
 That roll on the Libyan sea, when Orion sinks
 Into the wintry water; or as dense as wheat
 Scorched by the sun in Hermus' plain 865
 Or in the golden fields of Lycia.*

Shields clang,
 Earth trembles under tramping feet.

Next, Halaesus,

Son of Agamemnon, Troy's nemesis,
 Yokes horses to his chariot, leading
 A thousand warlike tribes in Turnus' cause: 870
 Men who hoe the wine-rich Massic country;
 Men whom their Auruncan fathers sent
 From the high hills and the Sidicine plains;
 Men from Cales and the Volturnus' shallows
 Marching alongside tough Saticulans 875
 And Oscan bands. They were armed
 With smooth javelins, their shafts entwined
 With throwing-thongs. Shields protected
 Their left sides; their sickled swords
 Were for close combat.

Nor will you, Oebalus, 880

Pass by unsung. The nymph Sebethis
 Bore you to Telon when he was king

Of Teleboan Capreae and already old,
 But not content with his ancestral fields,
 His son even then extended his rule 885
 Over the Sarastrians, the Sarnus valley,
 Rufrae, Batulum, and Celemnna's fields,
 Where men throw spears in Teuton style,
 And all those under the walls of Abella,
 Rich in apples. Their headgear 890
 Is made from cork, but their shields
 Flash bronze, and bronze flash their swords.

Mountainous Nersae sent you also to war,
 Noble Ufens, a good man with a spear
 And from a tough breed of men, raised 895
 On Aequia's rocky soil and inured
 To hard days of hunting in the woods.
 They work the land in arms, and all their joy
 Is to bear away spoils and live on plunder.

Archippus, lord of the Maruvians, 900
 Sent a priest to war, helmet wreathed in olive,
 Umbro most brave, who could charm to sleep
 Vipers and hydras, with their venomous breath,
 And cure their bites. But he could not heal
 The bites inflicted by Dardanian spears, 905
 Nor did his entrancements or herbs culled
 On Marsian hills aid him with his wounds.
 For you wept Angitia's grove,
 For you the glassy wave of Fucinus,
 For you the clear lakes . . . 910

Virbius too went to war, Hippolytus'
 Beautiful son, sent forth by his mother,
 Aricia. He had grown up in Egeria,
 On the marshy shores where Diana's altar
 Stands rich in sacrifice. Hippolytus 915
 Had been undone by his stepmother's wiles
 And paid the price to his father in blood,
 Ripped apart by his own frightened horses.
 But he was called back to heaven's air

Under the stars by the Healer's herbs 920
 And Diana's love. Then the Almighty,
 Vexed that a mortal should rise from the shades
 To the light of life, blasted the Healer,
 Son of Phoebus, to the waters of Styx.
 But Diana in mercy hid Hippolytus 925
 And sent him away to the nymph Egeria
 And her sacred grove to live out his days there
 In the woods of Italy, alone and unknown
 Under the name of Virbius. This is why
 Horses are banned from Diana's temples 930
 And groves: panicked by a sea monster,
 They strewed youth and chariot along the shore.
 Still, his son was pushing his fiery stallions
 Along the plain, driving his chariot to war.

In the foremost ranks moved Turnus himself, 935
 Incomparable, sword in hand, head crowned
 With a plumed helmet bearing a Chimaera
 That breathed from her jaws Aetnean fire,
 Flames all the more fierce the more blood is shed.
 On his polished shield Io, horns uplifted, 940
 An emblem blazoned in gold—Io,
 Covered in bristles, already a heifer,
 With Argus her warden and her father, Inachus,
 Pouring his stream from a figured urn.
 A cloud of foot soldiers followed him, 945
 And shielded columns crowded the plain,
 Argive troops and Auruncan platoons,
 Rutulians and veteran Sicilians,
 Lines of Sarcanians and Labicians
 With painted shields; tillers of your glades, 950
 O Tiber, and the sacred shore of Numicius,
 Farmers from the Rutulian hills
 And Circe's ridge, whose fields are ruled
 By Jupiter Anxur and by Feronia,
 Gay in her greenwood, where the black swamp 955
 Of Satura lies and the cold Ufens
 Winds through valleys and down to the sea.

Last of all rode Camilla the Volscian,
Leading her mounted troops and squadrons
Flowering in bronze. This princess warrior 960
Had not trained her hands to women's work,
Spinning and weaving, but trained to endure
The hardships of war and to outrun the wind.
She could sprint over a field of wheat
And not even bruise the tender ears, 965
Could cruise above the open sea's waves
And never wet the soles of her feet.
All the young men, and their mothers too,
Flocked from their houses and left their fields
To watch her ride by, mouths open in wonder 970
At how the royal purple draped
Her smooth shoulders, how her hair
Was bound in gold, and how she carried
A Lycian quiver and an iron-tipped spear.

AENEID EIGHT

When Turnus raised the flag of war
From Laurentium's high citadel;
When the horns blared, and he whipped
His horses to a fury and clashed his arms,
There was an instant, spirited reaction. 5
All of Latium rose to swear allegiance.
Young men raged to fight. Their leaders,
Messapus and Ufens, with Mezentius,
Who held the gods in contempt, mustered troops
From all over and ransacked the wide fields 10
Of their farmers. They even sent Venulus
To great Diomedes' city to seek aid
And to announce that Trojans were settling
In Latium, that Aeneas had arrived
With his fleet and his vanquished gods, 15
Proclaiming himself king by divine right,
And that many tribes were joining
The Dardan hero as his name spread wide.
All to what end, should Fortune favor him,
Would be clearer to Diomedes himself 20
Than to either Turnus or King Latinus.

Thus Latium. And Aeneas, hero in the line
Of Laomedon, saw it all, and was tossed
On a great sea of troubles. His mind darted
This way and that, turning and shifting. 25

*Sunlight, or the radiant moon, reflected from water
Trembling in a bronze bowl, will glance and flit*

*All over a room—and then flash suddenly
Onto the coffered ceiling high above.*

It was night, and all over earth deep slumber 30
Held weary creatures of the air and field.
Father Aeneas, heart troubled by war,
Lay down on the riverbank under a cold sky
And drifted off at last to sleep. He dreamed
That Tiberinus, the old rivergod himself, 35
Lifted his head amid the poplar leaves
Draped in a fine, grey-linen mantle,
His hair crowned with shady reeds,
And spoke to him, calming his fears:

“Child of the gods, you bring us our Troy 40
Back from the enemy, and you preserve
Pergamum forever. You have been awaited
On Laurentine soil, in Latin fields.
Here your home is sure—do not draw back!—
And sure are your gods. Do not be frightened 45
By threats of war. All the swollen wrath of the gods
Has ebbed away. . . .
To assure you this is no empty dream,
I offer a sign. Lying under oaks
You will find a sow, near a hidden stream, 50
With a litter of thirty, a white mother
Lying on the ground and white young nursing.
Here shall be your city, and surcease from sorrow.
The sign foretells that in thirty circling years
Ascanius will found a city, glorious Alba. 55
My prophecy is sure. As to the present ills,
I will explain in brief how you may emerge
Victorious. On these shores Arcadians,
Descended from Pallas and led by King Evander,
Have built a city in the hills and called it 60
Pallanteum after their forefather Pallas.
They are ever at war with the Latin race.
These Arcadians you must take as allies.
I myself will conduct you straight upstream
So that your oars will overpower the current. 65

Now rise, Goddess-born, and as the stars set
 Pray to Juno and prevail upon her
 To end her angry threats. And when you win out,
 Pay tribute to me. I am he whom you see
 Gliding through my banks in full flow 70
 And cutting through the rich plowland—
 The blue Tiber, river most beloved by Heaven.
 Here is my great home, and my headwaters
 Flow from high cities.”

Thus the River,
 And he plunged into a deep pool, 75
 Seeking the depths. Night and sleep left Aeneas.
 He rose and, looking at the rising sun,
 Lifted water from the river with cupped palms
 In ritual fashion and prayed aloud:

“Nymphs, Laurentine Nymphs at the source 80
 Of all streams, and you, Father Tiber,
 With your sacred water—receive Aeneas
 And keep him from harm. Whatever spring,
 Whatever pool holds you, from whatever soil
 You flow forth in all your beauty, pitying 85
 My trials, you will be honored forever
 With my gifts, O horned Rivergod, lord
 Of Hesperian waters. Only be with me now,
 And confirm your divine presence.”

Thus Aeneas,
 And, choosing two galleys from his fleet, 90
 He picked out crews and equipped the men.

And then a sudden marvel met his gaze.
 Gleaming through the wood and as white
 As her milk-white litter, a sow lay outstretched
 On the green riverbank. Pious Aeneas 95
 Offered her to you, Juno most mighty,
 Setting her with her brood before your altar.

All the night long Tiber calmed his current,
 Flowing backward until the water stood so still

It might have been a pool or quiet lake
 Offering no resistance to the dipping oars. 100
 The crews cheered as the ships sped along
 And the well-caulked pine glided on the water.
 The waves wondered, and the woods too, unused
 To such a sight, the shields glittering on the water 105
 And the painted hulls floating upriver.
 The men rowed night and day, around the long bends
 And under changing trees, their oars cutting
 Through the green woods on the river's calm surface.
 The burning sun had reached heaven's meridian 110
 When they sighted walls off in the distance
 And a few scattered huts, which Roman might
 Has now raised to the sky but at that time
 Were King Evander's humble domain.
 They turned their prows and drew up to the town. 115

The Arcadian king was making sacrifice
 To Hercules that day, and to all the gods,
 In a grove outside the city. With him were
 His son, Pallas, all the men of rank,
 And the humble senate, offering incense 120
 As the blood and warm meat smoked on the altar.
 When they saw the tall ships gliding up
 Between the shady banks, and the crew
 Rowing noiselessly, they rose up in alarm
 And left the feast. But Pallas kept his nerve, 125
 And, ordering them not to break off the rites,
 He seized his spear and ran out to meet
 The strangers himself. Standing on a mound,
 He cried out to them:

“Men at arms,
 What has forced you to travel routes unknown? 130
 Where are you heading? What is your race,
 Your home? Do you come in peace or war?”

Then Father Aeneas, holding out a branch
 Of peaceful olive, spoke from his high stern:

“You see before you men of Troy, and arms
 At war with the Latins, who in their arrogance
 Have driven us to flight. We seek Evander.
 Tell him that Dardanians, men of rank,
 Have come to propose an alliance at arms.” 135

Pallas was stunned when he heard the name
 ‘Dardanian,’ and he said: 140

“Come forward,
 Whoever you are, and speak to my father
 Face to face, as a guest at our hearth.”

And he clasped Aeneas’ hand. Together,
 They left the river and entered the grove. 145

Then Aeneas addressed the king graciously:

“Noblest of the Greeks, it is my good fortune
 To make my prayer to you and offer boughs
 Hung with sacral wreaths. I have no cause to fear
 Your lineage as a Danaan lord
 And an Arcadian with ties to Atreus’ sons.
 My own nobility and heaven’s oracles,
 Our forefathers’ kinship and your fame,
 Which has spread throughout the world—all this
 Has bound me to you and brought me here,
 Consenting to Fate. 155

Dardanus, as the Greeks tell it,
 Was Ilium’s founding father, born of Electra,
 Who herself was the daughter of Atlas,
 Upon whose shoulders rests the celestial sphere.
 Your ancestor is Mercury, whom shining Maia
 Conceived and bore on Cyllene’s cold peak. 160
 Maia herself, if we can trust the tales,
 Was the child of Atlas, the same Atlas
 Who supports the star-studded sky. And so,
 Our bloodlines branch from a common source. 165
 Relying on this, I did not approach you
 Through ambassadors or artful overtures.

I have come myself and offer you my life,
 A suppliant at your door. The same Daunians
 Pursue us both in bitter war, thinking that 170
 If they drive us out nothing will stop them
 From subjugating all Hesperia
 And controlling the seas that wash her shores.
 Take my pledge and give me yours. Our hearts
 Are brave in war, our manhood tested.” 175

As Aeneas was speaking Evander
 Was watching him, scanning his face and eyes
 And entire body. Then he replied briefly:

“Bravest of the Teucrians, how gladly
 I receive you—and recognize you! 180
 How I recall your father’s words, the voice
 And the face of great Anchises!
 I remember it all—how Priam,
 Laomedon’s son, on his way to Salamis
 Stopped to see his sister Hesione 185
 And went on to visit cold Arcadia.
 I was young then, my cheeks just bearded,
 And I wondered at the Trojan princes,
 Wondered at Priam himself, but Anchises
 Towered above them all. My heart burned 190
 With youthful love. I yearned to meet him,
 To clasp his hand, and I did approach him
 And led him eagerly to Pheneus’ city.
 When he left he gave me a beautiful quiver
 With Lycian arrows, a cloak woven with gold, 195
 And a pair of golden bits that my Pallas now has.
 So the hand you seek is now joined with yours,
 And when tomorrow’s light has dawned
 I will send you forth with men and means.
 Until then, since you are here as friends, 200
 Celebrate with us this annual rite,
 Which may not be deferred, and join our feast.”

So saying, he ordered the table reset
 And arranged his guests on seats in the grass.

Aeneas, as guest of honor, he showed 205
 To a lionskin cushion on a maple throne.
 Then chosen youths and the priest of the altar
 Outdid each other serving roast beef, piling
 Baskets high with Ceres' bread, and pouring
 The wine of Bacchus. Aeneas and his Trojans 210
 Feasted on long chine and consecrated sweetbreads.

When they had satisfied their appetites,
 King Evander spoke:

“These solemn rites,
 This traditional feast, this altar sacred
 To a Power divine do not come to us 215
 From some empty superstition, ignoring
 The gods of old. No, my Trojan guest,
 Rescued from savage dangers, we observe
 This annual rite in memory of our deliverance.
 Look first at this rocky overhang, 220
 How the huge boulders are scattered,
 How the mountain stands in desolation
 And the crags have crumbled in avalanche.
 There was once a cave here, its depths
 Never fathomed by sunlight, the lair 225
 Of a half-human monster, an ogre named Cacus.
 The ground there always smoked with fresh blood,
 And nailed to the door hung human heads
 Moldering in decay. The monster's father
 Was Vulcan; it was his black fires Cacus belched 230
 As he moved his hulking form. Time at last
 Answered our prayers in the person
 Of a god, the mightiest avenger, Hercules,
 Glorifying in the slaughter of Geryon
 And driving that triform ghoul's huge bulls 235
 In triumph, filling the Tiber's valley with cattle.
 Cacus, whose fiendish mind could leave
 No crime undared or trick untried,
 Rustled four superb bulls from their corral
 And as many equally outstanding heifers. 240

He dragged these cattle by their tails to his cave
 So no one could track them back to him,
 Then he hid the animals in the rocky gloom.
 No one searching could find any telltale marks
 Leading to that cave. Amphitryon's son, 245
 Meanwhile, was moving the well-fed herds
 Out of their pens, rounding them up for the trail.
 The cattle lowed as they headed out,
 And the woods and hills were filled with their bellowing
 Until the echoes began to die away. 250
 And then one heifer lowed in response
 From the depths of the cave, undoing Cacus.
 The wrath of Hercules flared with black bile.
 He seized his weapons, his heavy, knotted club,
 And ran straight up the slope like the mountain wind. 255
 It was then we first saw Cacus afraid,
 Eyes shifting with terror. He flew to his cave
 Faster than the East Wind; fear lent wings to his feet.
 He shut himself in and broke the chains
 That held the giant rock suspended in iron 260
 By his father's craft. The rock dropped down,
 Blocking the entrance, at just the moment
 When Hercules arrived, raging mad.
 He scanned every approach, looking around
 And gnashing his teeth. Three times he traversed 265
 The Aventine Mount, three times he tried
 The rock-solid entrance, three times he sank down
 In the valley, exhausted.

On the cave's ridge

Stood an immense dagger of flint, tall
 Sheer rock, a perfect nesting place for vultures. 270
 It leaned left with the ridge's slope toward the river.
 The hero pushed from the right, shook it loose,
 Wrenched it up from its roots, and abruptly
 Heaved it forward. With that heave
 Heaven thundered, the banks below split apart, 275
 And the astonished river recoiled in terror.
 Cacus' immense lair lay open, revealing
 The shadowy depths of the cavern below,

*As if Earth itself were split apart
 By some unknown power, disclosing the Pit 280
 And the moldy horror loathed by the gods.
 The Abyss is laid open, and the pale ghosts
 Tremble at the light streaming in from above.*

Cacus was caught in the unexpected daylight.
 Pinned in by rock walls, he howled eerily 285
 As Hercules rained down upon him
 Everything he could throw—weapons,
 Branches, colossal millstones. Cornered,
 Cacus did the only thing he could, belching out
 Clouds of smoke (an amazing display) 290
 That enshrouded his subterranean home
 In blinding smog shot through with dark flames.
 Undeterred, Hercules hurled himself
 Into the inferno where the huge cave was choked
 With roiling smoke. He found Cacus there 295
 Spewing forth his fiery vapors in vain.
 Hercules gripped him in a knotted hold
 And squeezed until Cacus' eyes bulged out
 And his throat was drained of blood. Then,
 With hardly a pause, he tore off the doors, 300
 And the den was laid bare. The stolen oxen
 (A theft Cacus had denied) were exposed
 To the sky, and the gruesome carcass
 Was dragged out by the feet. Men could not get enough
 Of looking at those terrible eyes, that face, 305
 The brute's bristled chest and his throat's quenched fires.
 From that time on this has been a festival day
 Kept by every generation, foremost by Potitius,
 Who founded the rite, and the Pinarian house,
 Priests of Hercules. The hero himself 310
 Established this altar, which we will always call
 Mightiest, and always mightiest shall be.
 Come then, young men, wreath your hair with leaves
 In honor of these glorious deeds. Hold out your cups,
 Call on the god to share our feast, and pour the wine." 315

Thus Evander, wreathing his head with poplar,
 Whose green twilight shade is dear to Hercules.

The sacral goblet filled the king's hand, and all
Poured libation and prayed to the gods.

The great sky turned and evening came on. 320
The priests went forth, Potitius at their head,
Dressed in ritual skins and bearing torches.
They renewed the feast with welcome offerings
And heaped the altars with laden platters.
The Salii, leaping priests of Mars, chanted 325
In the glow of the altars, poplar weaving their brows,
One chorus of youths, another of elders,
And they sang the exploits of Hercules:
How in his crib he strangled the twin serpents
His stepmother sent; then how he tore down 330
Great cities in war, Troy and Oechalia;
How he performed a thousand hard labors
Under King Eurystheus by Juno's will.

“Unconquered hero, you slew with your hand
The cloud-born centaurs Hylaeus and Pholus, 335
The monsters of Crete, the huge lion
Beneath Nemea's high rock. The Stygian pools
Trembled before you; the watchdog of Orcus,
Stretched out in his cave on half-gnawed bones,
Trembled before you. No face of evil 340
Ever daunted you, not even Typhoeus
Towering in arms. Your wits did not fail you
When surrounded by the Hydra's swarm of heads.
Hail, true son of Jove, glory added to the gods!
Bless us with your presence, favor your rites.” 345

Such were their songs, and they capped it all
With the tale of Cacus, the fire-breathing monster.
The woodland rang, and the hills echoed their song.

The rites were over, and they all returned
To the city. The king, worn with age, 350
Walked with Aeneas and his son, Pallas,
And lightened the journey with conversation.
Aeneas ran his eyes over the entire landscape,

Charmed by the various locales. He asked for,
 And was delighted to hear, the stories 355
 Behind each one, the races of the men of old.
 King Evander, founder of Rome's citadel,
 Was speaking:

“These woods were once haunted
 By native Fauns and Nymphs, and a race of men
 Sprung from tough oak trees. They had no rules or arts, 360
 Did not know how to yoke an ox, or lay up stores
 Or manage them. They lived off trees and hunting.
 Then Saturn came down from highest heaven,
 Fleeing Jove's weapons, exiled from his realm.
 He brought together the unruly race, scattered 365
 Across the mountain slopes, and gave them laws.
 He called the area Latium, since he had hidden
 Safely there, a latent presence within its borders.
 The Golden Age, as men call it, existed
 Under his rule, so peaceful was his reign. 370
 Little by little a worse sort of people
 Rose up, dimmer and duller, and with them came
 Passion for war and love of possessions.
 Then came the Ausonians, the Sicilians,
 And the land of Saturn often changed its name. 375
 Then kings arose, and Thybris, harsh and huge,
 From whose name we Italians called
 Our river the Tiber, and the old Albula
 Lost its true name. As for myself,
 Fortune almighty and ineluctable Fate 380
 Drove me from my fatherland to follow
 The sea to its end, and set me down here.
 And the dread warnings of my mother,
 The nymph Carmentis, and of Apollo,
 August divinity, led me to this very spot.” 385

As Evander finished he pointed out the altar
 And what Romans call the Carmental Gate,
 An ancient tribute to the nymph Carmentis.
 This prophetic being first sang the greatness
 Of Aeneas' sons, and Pallanteum's glory. 390

Next he showed a vast grove, which Romulus
 Later would make a refuge; showed him too
 The Lupercal, a cave beneath a cold cliffside
 With the Arcadian name of Lycaean Pan.
 He showed him the wood of holy Argiletum 395
 And, calling the place to witness, recounted the death
 Of Argus, his guest. From here Evander led him
 To Tarpeia's home and the Capitol,
 Golden now, but then bristling with thickets.
 Even then the religious power of this place 400
 Awed the country folk; even then they shuddered
 At the woods and stones.

“This grove,”
 Evander cried, “this tree-crowned hill,
 Shelters a god, although which god it is
 We do not know. But the Arcadians believe 405
 They have seen Jupiter himself here, shaking
 His darkening aegis and gathering the clouds.
 Within the crumbling wall of these two towns
 You can see the relics and memorials
 Of men of old. This holy height was built 410
 By father Janus, and that by Saturn.
 Janiculum this was called, that Saturnia.”

Talking in this way they came to Evander's
 Humble dwelling and saw cattle
 Milling about in the Roman Forum 415
 And lowing in the fashionable Keels.
 When they reached his house Evander said:

“The conquering hero, Hercules, passed through
 This door; this palace had room enough for him.
 Dare to despise riches, my guest; make yourself, too, 420
 Worthy of godhood; do not scorn my poverty.”

He spoke, led immense Aeneas
 Under his low roof, and set him on a couch
 Spread with leaves and a Libyan bearskin.
 Night fell, enfolding the earth in dusky wings. 425

Venus, her mother's heart troubled
 By the very real Laurentine threat,
 Spoke to Vulcan in their golden bedroom,
 Breathing into her words immortal love:

“While the Argive warlords ravaged Troy 430
 And her walls doomed to fall in enemy fire,
 I asked no aid for the victims, no weapons
 Forged by your art. No, dearest husband,
 I did not wish to trouble you in vain,
 However much I owed to Priam's children, 435
 And however much I wept for Aeneas
 In his distress. Now, by Jupiter's commands,
 He stands in Rutulian territory. Now, therefore,
 I come, as suppliant to your sacred power,
 Begging arms, a mother for her son. Thetis 440
 Could sway you with tears, and Aurora.
 See the nations mustering, the walled cities
 Whetting steel to destroy my people!”

Vulcan hesitated, but when the goddess
 Wrapped her snowy arms around him 445
 And fondled him in her soft embrace,
 He felt the familiar heat flash though his bones,

*Like lightning splitting a thunderhead,
 A crackling flash in the rumbling sky.*

Venus felt it and smiled to herself. 450
 And Vulcan, chained by eternal love:

“Why reach so far back for reasons?
 What happened to your faith in me, Goddess?
 If you had been as anxious then,
 It would have been right for me to arm the Trojans. 455
 Neither the Father almighty nor Fate forbade
 That Troy stand or Priam live ten years more.
 Now, if your mind is set on war,
 All the care I can promise in my craft,
 All that can be done with iron or electrum, 460

All that fire and air can avail—well, stop praying
And just trust your powers!”

Saying this,
He gave her the embrace they both wanted
And melted into sleep on his wife’s bosom.

Vulcan woke in the middle of the night. 465

*In the waning darkness, when sleep
Gives way to rest, a housewife who subsists
On spinning and weaving stirs the embers,
Adding night to her workday, and has her women
Toil long hours by lamplight, so she may keep
Her husband’s bed chaste and rear her sons.* 470

So too the Lord of Fire, no slower at that hour,
Rose from his soft bed and went to his smithy.

There is an island off the Sicilian coast
Hard by Aeolean Lipare. Smoking rocks 475
Rise to a peak, and subterranean vaults
Thunder in its bowels, hollowed out
By Cyclopean forges. Strong hammer strokes
Echo from anvils, smelted lumps of iron
Hiss through caverns, fire pants in the furnace. 480
To this island, called Vulcania from its master’s name,
Down came the Fire Lord from heaven’s height.

The Cyclopes were forging iron in the vast cave,
Brontes, Steropes, and bare-armed Pyracmon.
They had just shaped a thunderbolt, part polished— 485
Like the many Jupiter hurls down from heaven—
Part still unfinished. They had twisted in three rays
Of pelting hail, three of watery cloud, and added
Three of red fire and winged South Wind.
Now they were blending in terrifying flashes, 490
Noise and fear, wrath with pursuing flames.
Elsewhere they were busy with a flying chariot
For Mars to use when he inflames men and cities.

And they bent over the petrifying aegis of Pallas,
 Burnishing it with golden scales of serpents, 495
 And polishing the goddess's breastplate,
 Which writhed with serpents around the severed head
 And rolling eyes of the Gorgon Medusa.

“Stop all work!” he cried. “Cyclopes of Aetna,
 Turn your minds now to arms for a hero. I want 500
 Strength, fast hands, master craftsmanship—
 And no delays!”

That was all they needed to hear.
 They divided the work equally and bent down to it.
 Bronze and gold flowed in streams of hot metal,
 And Chalyb iron, the raw material 505
 For so many wounds, was melted down in the furnace.
 They formed a great shield, one shield against
 All the weapons of the Latins, seven welded layers,
 Circle upon circle. Some worked the bellows,
 Others tempered the hissing bronze in the lake. 510
 The cave groaned with the thud of anvils.
 The Cyclopes' great hammers rose and fell
 In cadence, and they turned the metal with tongs.

While the Lord of Lemnos was busy
 On Vulcania, the gentle light of morning 515
 And the songs of swallows beneath the eaves
 Roused Evander from his humble home.
 The old man put on a tunic and strapped
 Tyrrhenian sandals on his feet, buckled on
 His Tegean sword, and flung back a leopardskin 520
 To hang from his left shoulder. Two hounds,
 One trotting ahead and one at his heels,
 Accompanied the hero as he left his threshold
 And made his way to Aeneas' lodging,
 Mindful of the aid he had promised the Trojan. 525
 Aeneas was up just as early. With him
 Walked Achates, as with Evander walked his son,
 Pallas. They clasped hands when they met and sat

In the courtyard, conversing freely at last.
The king began:

“Trojan commander— 530

For while you live I will never admit
That Troy’s realm has been conquered—
Our strength to aid you in war is weak
Compared to our great name. We Arcadians
Are hemmed in on one side by the river, 535
And on the other by Rutulians
Rattling their weapons around our walls.
But I propose to form a coalition,
To link with you an army of royal forces,
A salvation no one could have guessed. 540
The Fates must have called you here.

Not far

From where we sit is the city of Agylla,
Built of ancient stone in the Tuscan hills.
The Lydians, a warlike race, settled there
Long ago, and long it prospered, 545
Until an arrogant king, Mezentius,
Came into power and ruled with iron hand.
Why recount the tyrant’s acts of butchery?
May it fall on his own head and on his brood!
He would even bind living men to corpses, 550
Hand to hand and mouth to mouth, until
By slow torture the living met their death
In the putrefaction of that ghastly embrace.
At last the weary citizens rose in revolt,
Besieged the unspeakable monster 555
In his palace, cut down his men, and fired the roof.
In the mayhem Mezentius escaped
And found refuge on Rutulian soil
Under the protection of Turnus.
All Etruria has risen in righteous rage. 560
Their terms are extradition of the king
Or immediate war. I will make you
Commander of these thousands, Aeneas.
Their troopships line the shore and clamor

For the standards to advance. However, 565
 An old soothsayer holds them in check,
 Intoning Fate:

‘Chosen warriors,
 Flower of Maeonia’s ancient race,
 Just resentment sends you forth to war,
 Mezentius inflames your indignant rage. 570
 The gods forbid that any Italian
 Should be in command of so great a race.
 Choose leaders from abroad.’

The Etruscans
 Are encamped on the plain, in awe of heaven.
 Tarchon himself has sent me envoys 575
 With the crown and scepter of the realm,
 Inviting me to command the army
 And succeed to the Etruscan throne.
 But my old age, cold and slow, begrudges me
 Military command. I am too weak for war. 580
 I would urge my son to do it, but his mother
 Is Sabine, and so his blood is mixed. But you,
 Blessed by Fate in years and race, called by heaven,
 Do your duty, lead the Italians and Trojans both.
 Further, I will put Pallas at your side, Pallas, 585
 Our hope and comfort. Let him learn from you
 To endure the work of war. Let him observe
 All you do and respect you from his early years.
 To Pallas I will give two hundred cavalry,
 Arcadia’s finest, and he will give you 590
 As many more himself.”

Evander finished.
 Aeneas, son of Anchises, and loyal Achates
 Would have sat a long time, eyes fixed,
 Brooding on troubles of their own,
 But Venus gave them a sign. Lightning 595
 Flashed with thunder in the open sky,
 And everything suddenly seemed to reel.
 A Tuscan trumpet pealed through the sky.

They looked up as thunder split the heavens
 Again and again. In a clear patch of sky
 They saw arms gleaming like red fire 600
 Through the pure air and clashing in thunder.
 The others gaped with fear, but Aeneas
 Knew the sound, and the promise of his mother,
 And said:

“Ask not what the portents forebode,
 My dear host; in truth, do not ask. It is I 605
 Who am summoned by heaven. The goddess
 Who bore me foretold she would send this sign
 If war was near, and that she would aid me,
 Bringing through the air arms forged by Vulcan. 610
 Ah, the slaughter in store for the poor Laurentines!
 What a price you will pay me, Turnus! How many
 Shields and helmets and bodies of the brave
 Will you, Father Tiber, roll beneath your waves?
 Let them call for battle and break their treaty!” 615

With this Aeneas rose and rekindled the fire
 On Hercules’ altar, approaching with joy
 The Lar of yesterday and the small household altar.
 Evander and the Trojans, side by side,
 Sacrificed ewes ritually culled from the herd. 620
 Then Aeneas went to his ships and handpicked
 The best men on board to follow him to war,
 Leaving the rest to ride the current downstream
 And bring word to Ascanius of his father’s fortunes.
 The Teucrians bound for Etruscan fields 625
 Were given horses. Aeneas’ spirited mount
 Was caparisoned in a lionskin
 Tawny and glittering with claws of gold.

Rumor flew through the little town,
 Spreading the news that horsemen were storming 630
 To the shores of the Tyrrhenian king.
 Mothers redoubled their vows, their fear
 More immediate now, and the image
 Of the War God loomed larger.

Then Evander,
Clasping the hand of his departing son, 635
Clung to him and, weeping beyond measure:

“If only Jupiter could turn back the years
And make me what I was under Praeneste’s walls
When I cut down the enemy’s foremost ranks
And burned their shields in triumph. This right hand 640
Sent King Erulus down to Tartarus.
His mother, Feronia, had given him at birth
Three lives, three changes of armor,
So that he had to be faced three horrifying times
And laid low in death each time. Yet this right hand 645
Stripped him of all his lives and of his armor.
If I could be as I was then I would never be torn
From your sweet embrace, nor would Mezentius ever
Have heaped such scorn upon his neighbor’s head,
Or put so many to the sword, or widowed the town 650
Of so many of her sons.

You powers above,
And Jupiter, supreme ruler of the gods,
Pity the king of the Arcadians and hear
A father’s prayer. If it is your will
To keep my Pallas safe, if it is his destiny, 655
If I will see him and come to him among the living,
Then I pray for life. I can endure any trial.
But if, Fortune, you threaten some dire mischance,
Cut off my cruel life now—now, while fears
Are still unsure and hope uncertain, 660
While you, dear child, my late and only joy,
Are in my arms. Then no ill-omened words
Could wound my ears.”

As Pallas’ father
Poured forth these words at their last parting
He fell unconscious, and his servants 665
Lifted him up and bore him into the house.

The horsemen rode out from the open gates,
Led by Aeneas and loyal Achates

And the other foremost Trojans.
 Pallas himself rode in the column's center, 670
 Conspicuous in his cloak and figured armor,

*Like the Morning Star, loved by Venus
 As no other star, when it rises from Ocean,
 A sacred light in the sky melting the dark.*

On the walls mothers stood trembling, 675
 Eyes following the cloud of dust
 And the gleaming bronze squadrons
 Heading off through the brush by the shortest path.
 A shout went up, the column tightened,
 And the horses thundered across the plain. 680

Near Caere's cold stream stands a vast grove
 Steeped in religious awe. It lies in a hollow
 Ringed by dark fir trees that march up the hills.
 Rumor has it that the old Pelasgians
 Who first held Latium in ages past 685
 Dedicated the grove and a festal day
 To Silvanus, god of fields and flocks.
 Not far from this grove Tarchon encamped
 With his Tyrrhenians, who pitched their tents
 Throughout the fields. Their encampment 690
 Could be seen from the hilltops, and Aeneas
 Made his way there with his elite troops.
 They watered their horses and took their rest.

Venus, a brightness in the air, drew near,
 Bearing gifts through the clouds. She saw her son 695
 In the hidden valley, standing alone by a cold stream,
 And, making herself visible to him, she said:

“Here are the gifts I promised, forged to a wonder
 By my husband's skill. Now you need not hesitate,
 My son, to challenge the proud Laurentines 700
 Or engage Turnus in combat.”

The Cytherean spoke
 And went to receive her son's embrace.
 Then she set out before him under an oak tree
 The refulgent armor. Aeneas gloried
 In the gifts from heaven, in this high honor, 705
 And he could not satisfy his eyes as they moved
 From one part to another. He was lost in wonder
 As he turned each piece over in his hands
 And cradled it in his arms: the flaring helmet
 With its threatening crest, the lethal sword, 710
 The stiff, bronze corselet, as red as blood,
 Glowing from within like a cobalt thunderhead
 When it catches fire from the rays of the sun;
 Then the smooth greaves in electrum and gold,
 The spear—and the shield's ineffable design. 715

On it the Fire God had prophetically wrought
 The future of Italy, and Roman triumphs
 In the coming ages, every generation,
 In order, still to be born from the stock
 Of Ascanius, and all the wars they would fight. 720

On it he made the she-wolf, lying in Mars' green cave,
 With the twin boys playing as they suckled fearlessly
 At their mother's breast. Her sculpted head turned back
 To nuzzle each in turn and lick them into shape.

Close by he put Rome, and the Sabine women 725
 Carried off lawlessly from the seated crowds
 At the great Circus games.

And then sudden war
 Between the sons of Romulus and aged Tatius
 With his stern Cures.

Next, peace between them,
 The same kings standing armed before Jupiter's altar, 730
 Holding shallow bowls as they made their treaty
 Over a sacrificed sow. The roof
 Of Romulus' palace bristled with fresh thatch.

Not far from there, four-horse chariots

Were driven in opposite directions, and a man
 Chained between them had been torn apart, 735
 Mettus (you should have kept your word, Alban!).
 Tullus was dragging the traitor's entrails
 Through brambles spattered with drops of blood.

And there was Porsenna, besieging the city 740
 To restore by force the exiled Tarquin to Rome.
 Aeneas' descendants rushed on the sword
 For freedom's sake. You could see Porsenna
 Portrayed as scowling, portrayed as threatening,
 Because Cocles dared to tear down the bridge, 745
 And Cloelia broke free and swam the river.

At the top, Manlius, captain of the Tarpeian fort,
 Stood before the temple and held the high Capitol.
 And here the silver goose was fluttering
 Through gilded porticoes, cackling that the Gauls 750
 Were at the gate. You could see the Gauls
 Lurking in thickets, under cover of darkness
 And the shadows of night. Their hair was gold
 In the gloom, their cloaks shimmered
 With golden stripes, and their milk-white necks 755
 Were circled with gold. Each of them wielded
 Two Alpine pikes and a body-length shield.

And here he had forged the leaping Salii,
 The naked Luperci, their ritual caps bound with wool,
 The shields fallen from heaven, and the solemn procession 760
 Of chaste Roman matrons in cushioned chariots.

Far below he set the hells of Tartarus,
 The high gates of Dis, and the wages of sin.
 You, Catiline, were hung from the frowning
 Face of a cliff and trembled at the Furies 765
 While Cato, set apart, gave laws to the good.

These scenes were lapped by the swelling sea,
 Pure gold, yet the water was blue and flecked

With whitecaps. Circling dolphins picked out in silver
 Cut through the waves, and their tails flicked the spume. 770

In the center, bronze ships: the Battle of Actium.
 You could see all Leucate seething with War,
 And the waves glistening with golden fire.

On one side, leading Italy into battle,
 With the Senate, the People, the city's Penates, 775
 And all the great gods, stood Caesar Augustus
 On his ship's high stern, a double flame
 Licking his temples, and above his head
 Shone his father's star.

Elsewhere, Agrippa,
 Backed by winds and gods, towered over 780
 His fleet of ships, and on his brow gleamed
 The beaked Naval Crown, his proud insignia.

On the other side, Antony, Conqueror of the East,
 Fresh from the Red Sea, marshaled his armies,
 A rich *mélange* of all the Orient's might 785
 From Egypt to Bactria, and in his convoy—
 To his eternal shame—was his Egyptian wife.

The ships all rushed on at once, and the whole sea foamed,
 Ripped by the oars and the triple-pronged beaks
 As they made for deep water. You would think the Cyclades, 790
 Uprooted from the seafloor, were floating there,
 Or that high mountains crashed upon mountains,
 So massive the assault launched by seamen
 From one turreted ship upon another,
 Flaming pitch raining down, steel flying, 795
 As Neptune's fields turned crimson with blood.

Among them the Queen, rattling Egyptian timbrels,
 Called up her warships, still unaware
 Of the twin snakes at her back. Barking Anubis
 And monstrous gods of every description 800
 Fought against Neptune, Minerva, and Venus.
 Chiseled in iron at the eye of the battle

Mars raged, the Furies swooped from the sky,
 And exultant Discord, robe torn, strode forward
 Followed by Bellona with her bloody scourge. 805

Apollo looked down on all this from Actium
 And was bending his bow. In shock and awe,
 Egypt and India, all the Sabaeans and Arabs,
 Were in full retreat. The Queen herself
 Was calling for wind, spreading her sails, 810
 And hurrying to pay out the slackened ropes.
 The Fire God had made her pale as death
 Amid all the carnage, driven over the waves
 By winds from Apulia toward the mourning Nile.
 The great rivergod had opened all the folds 815
 Of his copious robe and welcomed the vanquished
 Into the sheltering waters of his azure lap.

But Caesar entered Rome in triple triumph
 And consecrated his immortal votive offering
 To the gods of Italy: three hundred great shrines 820
 Throughout the city. The streets rang
 With joyful festivities. At every temple
 Was a chorus of matrons; there were altars
 At every temple, and slaughtered steers
 Blanketed the ground before each altar. 825

Caesar himself, seated at the polished
 Marble threshold of Phoebus Apollo,
 Reviewed the gifts from the world's nations
 And hung them high on the temple's doorposts
 While the conquered peoples marched on past 830
 In long procession, each as different
 In their clothes and gear as in the tongues they spoke.
 Here the immortal blacksmith had fashioned
 The Nomads, and the loose-robed African people,
 The Leleges and Carians and the quivered Scythians. 835
 The Euphrates now flowed with a softer current,
 The Morini were here from the ends of the earth,
 The two-horned Rhine, the indomitable Dahae,
 And the Araxes, vexed at his stream being bridged.

Such was the design of the shield Vulcan made,
Venus' gift to her son. Aeneas was moved
To wonder and joy by the images of things
He could not fathom, and he lifted to his shoulder
The destiny of his children's children.

840

AENEID NINE

While Aeneas was admiring his shield,
Juno sent Iris down from heaven
To bold Turnus, who was sitting
In the sacred grove of his sire, Pilumnus.
And Thaumás' daughter, with pale-rose lips: 5

“Turnus, what no god dared promise you
Time in its turning has brought unasked!
Aeneas has left his town and his fleet
To visit Evander's Palatine realm.
Not only that, he has gone deep 10
Into Etruria to recruit the country folk,
All the way to Lydian Cortona.
What are you waiting for? Now is the hour
To call for your chariot. Quit stalling,
And take their camp by surprise.”

Iris spoke, 15
Rose into the air on wings, and in her wake
Left a huge arc beneath the clouds.

Turnus
Knew it was the goddess and, spreading
Both his upturned palms to the stars, implored:

“Iris, sky's glory, which god sent you to me 20
Down along the clouds? What is this sudden
Brightness in the air? The mists have parted,

And I see the stars that roam the sky's field.
Whoever you are that calls me to arms,
I follow the omen!"

And with these words 25
He went to the river, scooped up water,
And prayed to the gods over and over,
Burdening heaven's air with his vows.

And now the whole army was advancing
Over the open plain, rich in horses, rich 30
In embroidered robes and gold. Messapus
Rode point, Tyrrhus' sons brought up the rear,
And Turnus rode in the company's middle,

*Like the Ganges River rising high in silence
Fed by its seven solemn streams, or the Nile
Sinking into its channel after it has flooded
All the bottomland with its rich water.*

35

The Teucrians saw a sudden cloud of dust
Gathering on the plain and darkness rising.
Caicus shouted from the foremost rampart: 40

"Something big is rolling this way, black as night.
Every man to arms and on the walls!
The enemy is here!"

And with a roar
Every last Teucrian came inside the gates
And took his position on the wall, 45
Just as Aeneas had ordered when he left.
If anything should happen before the return
Of their general, the Trojans were not
To take the field but only hold the fort,
Protected by the walls and mound. Even if 50
Shame and anger prompted them to retaliate,
They were under orders to bar the gates
And await the enemy in the towers.

Turnus now was flying ahead
 Of his lagging column, twenty picked horsemen 55
 Riding with him, and arrived at the city
 Unexpectedly. He was mounted
 On a white-flecked Thracian stallion,
 And his golden helmet was plumed in crimson.

“Which of you men will be first with me 60
 To attack the enemy? Watch this!”

As he spoke

He rifled a javelin into the wind
 To start the battle and, towering on horseback,
 Scoured the plain. His company
 Cheered the throw and followed after him 65
 With bone-chilling screams. They were amazed
 That the Teucrians still lay up in camp,
 Unwilling to join battle on a fair field.
 Turnus rode wildly back and forth
 And around the walls, searching 70
 For a way in, but there was none to be found.

*A wolf lies in wait by a crowded sheep pen,
 Growling through midnight wind and rain.
 Huddled beneath their mothers, the lambs
 Keep bleating, and the wolf rages and snaps 75
 At the prey it cannot reach, tormented
 By long hunger, its jaws thirsting for blood.*

So too the Rutulian as he scanned the walls,
 His iron bones burning with grief and rage.
 How can he get in? By what strategy 80
 Can he flush the Trojans out onto the plain?
 The fleet lay close to one side of the camp,
 Hemmed in by mounds and the running river.
 Turnus attacked it, calling to his men
 To bring fire. He wrapped one huge hand 85
 Around a blazing pine, and his whooping comrades,
 Inspired by his sheer presence, stripped
 The campfires and armed themselves

With smoking torches. The lurid glare
 Spread toward the ships, and the god Vulcan 90
 Lifted the swirling ashes to the sky.

What god, O Muses, turned these flames
 Away from the Trojans? Who drove
 This conflagration from their ships?
 Tell the old tale as it has ever been told. 95

Long ago, when Aeneas was building his fleet
 On Phrygian Ida, preparing to sail the seas,
 The Berecynthian Mother of Gods herself
 Interceded with Jupiter:

“My son,
 Now Lord of Olympus, grant the prayer 100
 Of your own dear mother. Once I had a grove,
 Beloved through the centuries, a pine forest
 On the mountain’s crest, a sacred wood,
 Dim with dark fir and black trunks of maple.
 I gave it all gladly to the Trojan hero 105
 When he needed ships. But now I am anxious.
 Relieve my fear, let a mother’s prayer prevail:
 Battered and blasted, let these ships not fail.
 Let their birth in our hills win them this grace.”

And in reply, her son, who spins the stars: 110

“Mother, where are you summoning Fate?
 What do you want for these ships of yours?
 Should keels crafted by mortal hands
 Have immortal rights? Should Aeneas
 Pass through perils unimperiled? 115
 What god has such power? No,
 But one day, their duty discharged,
 As they lie moored in an Ausonian harbor,
 All the ships that have escaped the deep
 And brought their Dardanian captain 120
 To the fields of Laurentum I shall transmute,

Tearing away their mortal forms
And bidding them be goddesses
Of the great sea, like the Nereid Doto
Or Galatea, breasts shearing the brine.” 125

Jupiter spoke, and, ratifying his oath
By the black, swirling waters
Of his Stygian brother, he nodded assent
And with his nod made Olympus tremble.

And so the Fates parsed out their time, 130
And on the promised day Turnus’ outrage
Signaled the Mother to repel the fire
From her sacred ships. First, an eerie flash of light
Blinded the eye, and then, coming out of the east,
An immense cloud, circled by Ida’s mystic dancers, 135
Rushed across the sky, and the voice that fell
From the ocean of air sent shock waves through the ranks
Of Trojans and Rutulians alike:

“Do not trouble, Teucrians, to take up arms
In defense of my ships. Turnus will sooner 140
Burn up the sea than scorch my sacred pines.
Go free now, go, goddesses of the deep.
The Mother commands it.”

The ships at once
Ripped their cables free of the banks
And, dipping their beaks, dove like dolphins 145
Into the depths. And then each, a great wonder,
Rose as a mermaid and swam in the waves.

Awe shriveled the Rutulians’ souls. Even
Messapus panicked, and his horses shied,
Wide-eyed with fear. The river itself fell silent 150
As Father Tiber stepped back from the sea.
But Turnus did not lose his nerve. He responded
By seizing this chance to steel his men’s spirits:

“It is the Trojans these portents are meant for!
 Jupiter himself has taken away 155
 Their usual crutch. They’re as good as dead,
 Even without Rutulian sword and fire.
 With no escape by sea, no hope of flight,
 They have lost half the world, and we hold
 The other half, the land, with so many thousands 160
 Of Italy’s people taking up arms!
 The oracles these Phrygians boast of
 Don’t scare me one bit. Venus and Fate
 Were paid in full when the Trojans first touched
 The fields of Ausonia. And I have my own fate: 165
 To cut the heart out of a race guilty
 Of stealing my bride! It is not only
 The sons of Atreus who feel that pain,
 Not only Mycenae that gets to go to war.
 ‘Oh, but Troy has already suffered enough.’ 170
 One offense would have been enough—
 If only they didn’t deeply despise
 Every woman on earth. These are men
 Who put their hope in half-built walls,
 Puny ramparts that merely delay their death. 175
 Didn’t they see Troy’s walls, built by Neptune,
 Go down in flames?

But which of you,

My chosen troops, is ready to chop down
 This fence with me and terrorize their camp?
 I don’t need arms made to order by Vulcan, 180
 Or a thousand ships, to face the Trojans.
 They can have all the Etruscan allies they want,
 And they don’t have to fear stealth by night,
 Or theft of their Palladium—and we won’t skulk
 In the hollow belly of a wooden horse. 185
 No, I mean to ring their walls with fire
 In broad daylight, and I will make sure they know
 They are not dealing now with the youth of Greece,
 Whom Hector held off for ten long years.
 The better part of this day is done, men. 190
 Use what’s left for some well-earned rest,
 And rest assured we are preparing for war.”

Messapus was in charge of blockading the gates.
 He posted sentries along a ring of watch fires
 Encircling the walls. Fourteen Rutulians 195
 Captained these stations, and each was attended
 By a hundred men, purple-crested, gleaming in gold.
 They trotted to their posts, and when not on guard
 Lay in the grass draining bronze bowls of wine.
 The fires shone bright, and the sentries spent 200
 The sleepless night in games. . . .

The Trojans looked down on this from the wall.
 Although they held the high, fortified ground,
 They were anxious, restless, testing the gates,
 Building gangways out to the towers, 205
 Hauling up weapons. In command here
 Were Mnestheus and the intense Serestus.
 Aeneas had put them in charge of the troops,
 And the state as well, should adversity knock.
 The entire army camped out along the wall, 210
 Sharing duties, peril, and the watch by night.

Stationed at one of the gates was Nisus,
 Fierce in his bronze. His father
 Was Hyrtacus, and the huntress Ida
 Had sent him to be Aeneas' companion, 215
 Quick as lightning with a javelin or bow.
 Next to him was Euryalus. No one
 More beautiful followed Aeneas
 Or wore Trojan armor. Still a boy,
 His face showed the first hint of a beard. 220
 One love united them. Side by side
 They would charge into battle, and now
 They were on watch together at the gate.
 Nisus was speaking:

“Do the gods
 Put this fire in our hearts, Euryalus, 225
 Or do our passions become our gods?
 I've been eager to do battle, or to do

Some great thing. My mind just won't rest.
 You see how the Rutulians are getting careless?
 Just a few fires winking, the troops flat on their backs, 230
 Drunk and half asleep. Dead quiet for miles.
 This is what I'm thinking. Everyone,
 The elders and the people, is demanding
 That scouts be sent to summon Aeneas
 And brief him. Well, if they promise 235
 What I want for you (the glory will do for me),
 I think I can find beneath that mound
 A path that leads to the walls of Pallanteum."

And Euryalus, struck by a great love
 Of praise, said to his ardent friend: 240

"Are you refusing to let me join you
 In this supreme adventure, Nisus?
 Am I supposed to send you out alone
 Into danger like this? My father, Opheltes,
 The old warrior, didn't raise me that way 245
 During all our struggles with the Greeks,
 All the terror at Troy. Nor have I been that way
 With you, following great Aeneas
 To his utmost destiny. Before you one
 Who scorns the light, who believes that honor, 250
 Which you too strive for, is bought cheaply with life."

And Nisus:

"I have no doubts about you,
 Nor should I. No. And I pray that Jupiter,
 Or whichever god might look on this with favor,
 Will bring me back to you in triumph. But if, 255
 As does happen in business like this,
 Some god, or just bad luck, takes me down,
 I want you to survive me. Someone your age
 Is worthier of life, and I'll need someone
 To commit me to the earth after my corpse 260
 Is dragged out of battle, or perhaps ransomed—
 Or if circumstance prohibits the usual rites

To perform them in my honor by an empty tomb.
 And I would not want to be the cause of grief
 For your mother, who alone of many mothers
 Followed her boy and left Acestes' haven." 265

But Euryalus said:

“Stop offering excuses.
 I'm not going to change my mind. Let's get going.”

With that he roused the guards for the next watch.
 They took their positions, and Euryalus
 Went with Nisus to find the prince Ascanius. 270

All creatures throughout the land were asleep,
 Their cares forgotten.

Not so the Teucrican captains.
 They were deep in council, debating what to do
 And whom to send to bring word to Aeneas. 275
 They were standing in the middle of the camp,
 Leaning on their long spears, shields shouldered.
 Nisus and Euryalus burst in on them,
 Begging to be heard on urgent business.
 It was Iulus who came forward and welcomed
 The nervous pair. He asked Nisus to speak, 280
 And the son of Hyrtacus began:

“Please listen to us
 With open minds, men of Aeneas, and don't judge
 What we have to say by our age. The Rutulians
 Have succumbed to sleep and wine. We see 285
 A place to ambush them in the fork by the gate
 Nearest the sea. The fires have gone out there
 And black smoke rises to the sky.
 If you let us take this chance you will soon
 See us here again with spoils from a great slaughter. 290
 Then we can follow the path to Pallanteum
 And to Aeneas. On our hunting trips
 Down those dark valleys we have sighted
 The city's walls, and we know the whole river.”

Then Aletes, the grave old counselor, said: 295

“Gods of our fathers and of Troy,
 You do not intend after all to blot out our race,
 Not if you have brought us youths with such spirit
 And steady hearts.”

Saying this, he held them both
 By their shoulders and clasped their hands. Tears 300
 Flowed down his cheeks as he said:

“What rewards can match
 Such glorious deeds? The gods will give you
 The most precious rewards, the gods
 And your own good character. The rest Aeneas
 Will bestow upon you, as will young Ascanius, 305
 Forever mindful of service so great.”

And taking up his words, “No, I will go further,”
 Ascanius said: “My sole safety lies
 In my father’s return, and so, Nisus,
 By the great gods of the house of Troy, 310
 By the Lar of Assaracus,
 And by the inner sanctum of hoary Vesta,
 I implore you both and place in your hands
 My hope and my fortune. Call my father
 Back into our sight. Our gloom will be gone 315
 At his return. As for gifts, I will give you
 A pair of silver goblets, richly embossed,
 That my father got at the sack of Arisba,
 Two matching tripods, two great bars of gold,
 And an ancient bowl that he received 320
 From Sidonian Dido. And if it is our lot
 To take Italy and divide the spoils of war—
 You have seen the horse that Turnus rides,
 And his armor, all gold—that horse, that shield,
 And those crimson plumes I hereby set aside 325
 As your reward, Nisus. And besides this
 My father will give you twelve chosen matrons,
 Beautiful all, and men too, captives of war,

Each with his armor. And on top of this,
 Whatever land King Latinus holds. 330
 And you, Euryalus, revered in your youth,
 Which is close to my own, I welcome you
 With all my heart, with open arms,
 As my friend and companion in every deed.
 No glory will be mine that is not yours, 335
 In war and peace, in word and in action
 My greatest trust will be placed in you.”

And Euryalus answered him with this:

“Never shall a day prove me unfit
 For such valor; only let fortune fall 340
 In my favor. But more than all you offer
 There is one thing I ask. My mother,
 Of Priam’s ancient line, unhappy woman,
 Left Ilium’s land and Acestes’ city
 Rather than leave me. I now leave her 345
 Ignorant of whatever peril this may be
 And without telling her good-bye, because—
 I swear by Night and your own right hand—
 I could not bear a mother’s tears. So I beg you,
 Comfort her in her need and desolation. 350
 Let me hope this of you, and I will go
 More boldly into danger.”

The Dardanians
 Were moved to tears, Iulus most of all.
 This picture of a son’s devotion
 Touched his heart, and he said:

“Rest assured 355
 That all will be worthy of your great endeavor.
 Your mother will be mine, lacking only the name
 Creüsa. No small gratitude awaits
 The woman who bore such a son. Whatever
 The outcome of your action, I swear 360
 By this head, by which my father once swore,

That what I promise to you on your return
Will be there for your mother and family as well.”

And with tears in his eyes he unbuckles his sword,
The gold-crusted wonder forged by Lycaon 365
And fitted by him with an ivory sheath.
Mnestheus gives Nisus a shaggy lionskin,
And loyal Aletes swaps helmets with him.
They head out at once, and the whole company,
Young and old, escort them to the gate with prayers. 370
Iūlus, young and beautiful, but mature
Beyond his years, carefully gives them
Messages for his father, but the winds
Would scatter them all to the clouds above.

They leave, cross the trenches, and make their way 375
Through night’s shadows to the enemy camp,
Where soon they will be the death of many.
Everywhere they look they see drunken men
Asleep in the grass, chariots tilted upright,
Soldiers sprawled among wheels and reins, 380
Weapons and wine jars lying about.
The son of Hyrtacus was first to speak:

“This is it, Euryalus. Cover our rear
And keep your eyes open. I’ll lead,
And I’ll make a road of blood you can’t miss.” 385

Then he closed his mouth and addressed Rhamnes
With his sword. This proud man, propped
On a pile of blankets and snoring loudly,
Was a king himself and served King Turnus well
As his augur, but could not augur his way 390
Out of death. Nisus killed his three attendants first,
And Remus’ armor-bearer, and the charioteer,
Finding him at the horses’ feet, and then severed
The horses’ drooping necks. Then he decapitated
Rhamnes himself and left the trunk spurting blood. 395
The couch and the ground were soaked
With warm black gore. Nisus killed also

Lamyrus, Lamus, and young Serranus,
 A handsome boy who had played late that night
 But was mastered by Sleep, happy— 400
 If only he had played his game until dawn.

*A lion that has not fed rages through a sheep pen,
 Mad with hunger. As it mangles the flock,
 The weak animals stand dumb with fear,
 And the lion roars from its bloodstained mouth.* 405

So too Euryalus, burning with rage,
 Fell upon the faceless multitude.
 Fadus, Herbesus, and Abaris
 Never knew what hit them. Rhoetus, though,
 Was awake and saw it all, cowering 410
 Behind a large mixing bowl. As he rose
 Euryalus buried his sword in his chest
 Up to the hilt and then drew the blade out
 Drenched in death. Rhoetus belched forth
 His purpled life, bringing up wine 415
 Mixed with blood as Euryalus pressed on,
 Seething in the dark. He was approaching
 Messapus' troops and by the fire's dying light
 Was watching the tethered horses graze
 When Nisus, who felt his friend 420
 Was being carried away by blood lust, said:

“Let's get out of here. It's almost light.
 We've had our revenge, and we've cut a way
 Through the enemy lines.”

They left behind 425
 Whole sets of solid silver armor, bowls too,
 And beautiful carpets. Euryalus did take
 Rhamnes' gear, with his gold-studded sword-belt,
 Gifts that long ago wealthy Caedicus sent
 To Remulus of Tibur as a pledge of friendship.
 As Remulus lay dying he passed them on 430
 To his grandson, and then the Rutulians
 Took them as spoils of war. This gear Euryalus

Tore away and put on—all for nothing—
 And he put on his head Messapus' plumed helmet.
 Then the pair left the camp and ran for cover. 435

Meanwhile, a company of horsemen,
 Sent ahead from the Latin city
 While the rest of the troops halted on the plain,
 Rode up with a reply for Turnus—
 Three hundred strong, all under shield, 440
 With Volcens in command. The walls of the camp
 Were just ahead when off in the distance
 They saw the pair turning off on a path to the left.
 And in the dim shadows the helmet
 Euryalus thoughtlessly wore betrayed him. 445
 Volcens caught its gleaming reflection
 And shouted from the head of the column:

“Halt! Who are you? Why are you armed,
 And what mission are you on?”

They made no response

But hurried into the woods and trusted to night. 450
 The horsemen rode to block the crossways
 And seal the perimeter of the woods with guards.
 It was a wide and dense forest, with thickets
 Of dark ilex and brambles everywhere,
 And trails that glimmered through open patches. 455
 The dark branches and his ponderous spoils
 Hampered Euryalus, and the network of trails
 Confused and panicked him. Nisus got through
 In a blind rush and would have escaped the enemy
 And those regions later called Alban 460
 (At that time part of Latinus' pasture)
 When he stopped and looked back,
 To no avail, for his missing friend.

“Poor Euryalus, where did I leave you?
 How can I find you?”

And Nisus retraced 465
 His tangled path through the treacherous forest,

Wandering through the silent thickets
 Until he heard the horses and the telltale sounds
 Of men in pursuit. A few moments later
 A cry reached his ears, and he saw Euryalus. 470
 Misled by the terrain, betrayed by the night,
 And overpowered in the sudden tumult,
 Euryalus struggled desperately
 As the band dragged him away.

Nisus

Was at a loss. How could he possibly 475
 Rescue his friend? With what weapons, what force?
 Or should he charge right into their swords
 To a swift and beautiful death? Pumping
 His spear arm, he looked up to the moon and prayed:

“Be with me now, Goddess, and help me 480
 In my need, O daughter of Latona,
 Glory of the stars and guardian of groves.
 If ever my father brought you offerings
 On my behalf, if ever I myself hunted
 In your honor, hung sacrifices in your dome, 485
 Or fastened them to your temple’s roof—
 Guide my weapons through the air
 And let me break up that party over there.”

Nisus spoke, and put all of his weight
 Into the throw. The spear split the dark air, 490
 Hit a warrior named Sulmo in the back,
 And snapped. The splintered shaft
 Punched through to his chest, and Sulmo
 Spun around, hemorrhaging warm blood
 In heaving gasps until he collapsed 495
 Into cold death. The Rutulians looked around
 In every direction. Breathing more sharply,
 Nisus balanced another spear over his shoulder,
 And while they hesitated it went hissing
 Through both of Tagus’ temples 500
 And warmed itself deep in his cloven brain.
 Volcens seethed with rage but could not see
 Who threw the spear or where to unleash his fury.

“All right, then you will pay me with hot blood
For both their deaths.”

As he spoke 505

He went for Euryalus with drawn sword.
This was too much for Nisus. Out of his mind
With terror and no longer able to remain
Hidden in darkness or endure such pain,
He shouted:

“Me—I did it—turn your swords on me, 510
Rutulians! It was all my idea.
He couldn’t have done it, wouldn’t have dared,
I swear by the sky and the stars that see all.
He only loved his unlucky friend too much.”

Thus Nisus, but the sword, driven home with force, 515
Sliced through the ribs and gashed the white breast.
Euryalus rolled over, dead. Dark blood
Ran over his beautiful limbs, and his head
Sank down onto one shoulder,

As a purple flower cut by a plow 520
Droops in death, or as a poppy bows
Its weary head, heavy with spring rain.

Nisus rushed among them, going only
For Volcens. Volcens alone was his care.
The troops surrounded him, tried to push him back, 525
But he kept on coming, his sword
Flashing like lightning, until he buried the blade
Full in the face of the shrieking Rutulian
And, dying himself, deprived his enemy of life.
Then, pierced and slashed, he threw himself 530
Upon his lifeless friend and there finally
Rested quietly in easeful death.

Happy pair,
If my poetry has any power
Never shall you be blotted from memory,

As long as the house of Aeneas still stands
 On the Capitol's unmoving rock,
 And the Roman Father rules supreme. 535

The Rutulians went back to their camp
 Victorious and weeping, carrying their spoils
 And the lifeless body of Volcens. 540
 Their lamentation was still louder in the camp
 When they found Rhamnes' pale corpse
 And so many of their best men—Serranus,
 Numa—massacred. A great throng rushed
 To the dead and dying men. The ground 545
 Steamed with slaughter, and the foaming blood
 Ran in rivulets. Talking among themselves
 They recognized the spoils, Messapus' shining helmet,
 Other bits of gear won back with so much sweat.

Dawn left Tithonus in his saffron bed 550
 And showered new light over all the lands.
 When the sun streamed in and unveiled the world,
 Turnus, in full dress armor himself,
 Called his men to arms. The commanders
 Marshaled the bronze lines into battle formation 555
 And honed their anger with the latest reports.
 They fixed the heads of Nisus and Euryalus
 On upright spears—a soul-wrenching sight—
 And fell in behind them with a roar.

The Trojans

Formed up on the left flank of their walls— 560
 The river protected the right side—
 Manning the wide trenches. The troops
 Posted in the towers stood in stark grief
 At the sight of the transfixed heads they knew
 So well, heads now dripping with dark gore. 565

Meanwhile, Rumor winged her way
 With the news through the fearful town,
 Swift to the ears of Euryalus' mother.

Her bones turned to ice, the shuttle fell
 From her hands, and the thread unreeled. 570
 She flew out of the house, tearing out her hair,
 Her voice quavering in high lamentation,
 And in her madness made for the ramparts
 And front lines of battle, ignoring the men,
 The danger, the weapons flying, and then 575
 She filled the sky with her plaintive cries:

“Is this you I see, Euryalus, you,
 My last and only comfort in old age?
 How could you leave me alone like this?
 And when you were sent into danger, 580
 Not even to tell your poor mother good-bye!
 Now you will lie in a strange land,
 Prey to the dogs and birds of Latium,
 And I, your mother, did not bury you,
 Or close your eyes, or bathe your wounds. 585
 I did not shroud you with the robe I made for you,
 Working at the loom night and day
 To console an old woman’s sorrow.
 Where am I to go? What land now holds
 Your dismembered body? Is this all, my son, 590
 You bring back to me of yourself? Is this
 What I have pursued by land and sea?
 Rutulians! If you have any decency,
 Run me through, throw all your spears at me.
 Or you, our Father in heaven, be merciful 595
 And blast this hateful life into Tartarus,
 Since I cannot myself break life’s cruel bonds.”

Her speech stunned their souls. Too shaken to fight,
 The entire army gave way to grief
 Until Ilioneus and the weeping Iulus 600
 Had Idaeus and Actor gather up the poor woman
 And carry her indoors.

Trumpets sounded
 Their terrible bronze call, and the shouting
 That followed echoed in the sky. The Volscians

Locked shields and charged, determined 605
 To fill the trenches and pull down the palisade.
 One contingent attacked the Trojan lines
 Where they were thinnest and threw up ladders
 To scale the wall. The Trojans, experienced
 At defending walls, threw down on them 610
 Everything they could, thrusting with long poles
 And rolling down stones of deadly weight
 In an attempt to break their shield formation.
 The Volscians were doing well under its protection,
 But when the Teucrians rolled up a huge boulder 615
 And rolled it down where the enemy was thickest,
 The Volscians broke ranks and scattered,
 No longer willing to fight blind. Standing back,
 They now attacked the wall with javelins and arrows.
 Elsewhere, Mezentius, a grim sight, was hurling 620
 His Tuscan pine torches, and Messapus,
 Son of Neptune, breaker of horses,
 Was ripping down the rampart and calling for ladders.

Breathe into me, Muses, I pray, O Calliope,
 As I sing the slaughter and death Turnus dealt 625
 And whom each hero sent down to Orcus.
 Unroll with me the great scroll of war.

Looming above the plain there was a tower
 Connected to the wall by high gangways.
 The Italians concentrated their attack here 630
 And were doing their mightiest to topple it.
 Inside, the Trojans' defense was to hurl
 Stones and projectiles through open slits.
 Leading the way, Turnus threw a blazing torch
 That stuck in the tower's side. The fire, 635
 Fanned by the wind, burned posts and planks,
 Eating them away. The men trapped inside
 Panicked and edged back en masse
 To the tower's far side. Under the sudden
 Shift in weight the entire structure collapsed, 640
 And the whole sky thundered with the crash.

The men fell to the ground, dead and dying,
 Crushed by the mass, impaled by their own weapons
 And the splintered wood. Only two made it out,
 By the skin of their teeth, Helenor and Lycus. 645

Helenor, in the prime of youth, was the son
 Of a Lycymnian slave who had borne him
 Secretly to the Maeonian king. His mother
 Sent him to Troy, arming him as best she could
 With a naked sword and a blank shield 650
 As yet ungloried. When he found himself
 Surrounded by Turnus' thousands
 And hemmed in by the Latin lines, he charged.

*A wild beast hedged in by a circle of hunters
 Rages against them and, knowing it will die,
 Bounds into the air and onto their spears.* 655

So too Helenor ran to meet his death
 Where he saw the enemy was thickest.
 Lycus, though, a far swifter runner,
 Sprinted through a rain of weapons 660
 And reached the wall. He was trying
 To pull himself over the top, reaching
 For his friends' hands, when Turnus,
 Who had been following him with his spear,
 Laughed at him, saying:

"You thought 665
 You could get away, didn't you?"

And as he spoke
 He pulled Lycus down with a large chunk of the wall.

*Think of a hare, or a snow-white swan,
 In the talons of an eagle; or a wolf
 Snatching from the fold a bleating lamb.* 670

A shout went up, and the Rutulians
 Pressed on, filling the trenches with earth
 And throwing burning torches on the roofs.
 Ilioneus hit Lucetius with a huge craggy rock

As he was coming up to the gate with fire
 And laid him low. Liger killed Emathion, 675
 Good with a spear; Asilas killed Corynaeus,
 A skilled archer. Caeneus cut down Ortygius
 And himself fell to Turnus, who went on to kill
 Itys, Clonius, Dioxippus, Promolus, 680
 Sagaris, and Idas, the latter as he stood
 On the topmost tower. Capys then killed
 Privernus, who had just been nicked
 By Themilla's spear. Privernus panicked,
 Threw down his shield, and moved his hand 685
 To the wound, and Capys' arrow flew home,
 Punching deep into his left side, a fatal wound
 That tore through his lungs. Arcens' son stood
 In splendid armor, his embroidered mantle
 Dyed Iberian violet. Noble and handsome, 690
 He had been reared in a grove of Mars
 Near the Symaethus river and Palicus' altar.
 Seeing him, Mezentius dropped both his spears,
 Whirled his sling above his head three times,
 And split the man's head open with slugs of lead, 695
 Laying him out full length in the sand.

Then Ascanius, for the first time in war,
 Took aim with an arrow. Until this moment
 He had only shot at animals in the hunt,
 But now he shot and killed Numanus Remulus, 700
 Who had recently married Turnus' sister.
 Numanus was striding out from the ranks,
 Saying things both proper and improper.
 His newfound royalty had gone to his head,
 And he boasted loudly of his heroic stature: 705

"Shame on you, Phrygians! Twice now
 Your city has been taken. Aren't you getting tired
 Of being besieged and warding off death with walls?
 Look at the great heroes fighting us for our wives!
 What god, what insanity, has driven you 710
 To Italy? There are no sons of Atreus here,
 No lying Ulysses. No, just us, a tough breed.

We bring our newborn sons to the river
 To toughen them up in the ice-cold water.
 When they are boys they hunt day and night. 715
 They break horses for fun, and shoot arrows.
 But they know how to work and to do without,
 Whether it's busting sod or shaking cities in war.
 Our whole life is worn away with iron. We goad
 Our oxen with spear butts, and old age 720
 Doesn't slow us down either, or make us weak.
 We press helmets onto white hair, and we love
 To bring home new spoils and live on plunder.
 But you! You wear embroidered saffron
 And purple satin. You like to loaf and dance. 725
 Your tunics have sleeves and your heads bonnets.
 You are really Phrygian women! Go over
 To Dindymus, where they play those double pipes
 You are used to hearing. The tambourines
 Are calling you, and the Berecynthian 730
 Boxwood flutes of the Mother on Ida.
 Get out of here and leave war to men."

Ascanius did not take these boasts and taunts.
 Facing Numanus, he fit the arrow's notch
 To the horsehair string, drew it back, 735
 And paused to invoke Jupiter with vows:

"Almighty Jupiter, assent to my bold start
 And I will bring gifts yearly to your temple,
 Set before your altar an ox with gilded brow,
 White as the moon, head as high as its mother's, 740
 Already butting horns and scuffing the sand."

The Father heard and thundered on the left
 In the clear sky, and in the same moment
 The lethal bow twanged and the arrow whined
 As it bored through the air and Remulus' skull, 745
 Iron cleaving both of his temples.

"So you want
 To mock our valor with haughty words? This

Is the answer the twice-captured Phrygians
Give the Rutulians.”

Ascanius said no more.
The Teucrians cheered, and their spirits soared. 750

And in the high regions of the sky, Apollo,
His rich hair streaming, was looking down
From his seat on a cloud at the Ausonian lines
And the Trojan town. He addressed
The triumphant Iūlus in words such as these: 755

“This is the way to the stars, noble young hero,
Born of the gods and with gods to come in your line.
All destined wars will justly subside
Under the descendants of Assaracus.
Your fate is greater than Troy’s.”

Apollo spoke 760
And shot down from high heaven, parting
The gusty air. He found Ascanius
And then transformed himself into aged Butes,
Who had been Anchises’ armor-bearer
And trusted companion. Aeneas later 765
Assigned him to Ascanius. Apollo
Strode on exactly like the old man—
The same complexion, voice, white hair,
Even the harsh clank his armor made—
And he spoke these words to fiery Iūlus: 770

“Let it be enough, child of Aeneas,
That Numanus has fallen to your arrow
Unavenged. Apollo grants you this honor,
Your first, and is not jealous of your archery,
Which rivals his own. But now, my son, 775
Stay out of the war.”

While he was speaking
Apollo left the sight of men and vanished
Into thin air. The Dardanian princes

Knew it was the god, and as he flew off
 They heard the quiver rattle on his back. 780
 And so, in accordance with the will of Phoebus,
 They reined in Ascanius, eager as he was for war,
 And went themselves back to the fighting
 And put their lives on the line. A shout
 Ran all along the wall's perimeter, 785
 From tower to tower. They bent their bows
 And rifled javelins with leather thongs.
 Spears littered the ground, shields and helmets
 Clashed and rang. The battle surged,

Like lashing rain that comes out of the west 790
When the watery Goat Stars rise in the sky;
Or hail that showers into the sea
When Jupiter, bristling with southerly gales,
Stirs up a storm and explodes the clouds.

Pandarus and Bitias, tall as pine trees 795
 On their native Ida, were sons of Alcanor
 And the wood nymph Iacra, who bore them
 In a grove of Jupiter. Now they opened the gate
 Their captain had put them in charge of
 And, confident in their strength of arms, 800
 Waved the enemy in. They themselves stood
 On either side of the gate, sheathed in iron,
 Plumes rippling on their towering heads,

As twin oaks on the banks of the river Po,
Or the pleasant Athesis, lift their unshorn heads 805
Into heaven's air and nod their leafy crowns.

When they saw the entrance was clear,
 The Rutulians rushed in. They did not last long.
 Quercens and Aquicolus, a handsome warrior,
 And the daredevil Tmarus, and Haemon, 810
 Whose father was Mars, were all routed
 Along with their troops. They turned tail
 And ran, or lost their lives in the very gateway.
 The Trojans, their spirits rising,

Massed at the gate; engaging the enemy
 Hand to hand, they ventured farther out. 815
 Turnus was creating havoc of his own
 In another sector. When word reached him
 That the enemy had tasted blood
 And were leaving the gates wide open, he quit 820
 What he was doing and, his rage flaring,
 Ran to the Trojan gate and the twin giants.
 First out to meet him was Antiphates,
 Sarpedon's bastard son by a Mysian woman.
 Turnus killed him with a spear-cast, the hard 825
 Italian cornel gliding through the soft air
 To enter Antiphates' gullet and tunnel deep
 Into his chest. The dark, gaping wound surged
 With foaming blood, and the steel grew warm
 In the transfixed lung. Meropes next, 830
 Then Erymus and Aphidnus fell to Turnus,
 And then Bitias, eyes burning, rage in his heart.
 It was not Turnus' spear that undid Bitias—
 He would never have lost his life to a spear—
 But a whirling battle-pike of lead and iron 835
 That split the air like a bolt of lightning.
 Two layers of oxhide and a corselet
 Of double-plated gold could not withstand it.
 Bitias' gigantic frame collapsed. Earth groaned
 When he fell, and his shield crashed like thunder. 840

*A huge mass of rock falls on Baiae's shore
 As men construct seawalls, and as it falls
 It trails ruin behind it, crashing down
 Into the water to rest in its depths. The sea
 Churns with black sand, and the sound rumbles 845
 Through high Prochyta and Inarime's lava bed,
 Laid on Jove's orders above Typhoeus.*

And now Mars, the War God, multiplied
 The Latins' courage and twisted his sharp goads
 Deep in their hearts. But among the Trojans 850
 He unleashed black Terror and Panic.
 The Latins, with the War God in their souls,

Saw their chance and converged. . . .
 When Pandarus saw his brother crumple
 And how the day's fortunes were going, 855
 He put his shoulder to the gate and swung it closed,
 Leaving many of his comrades shut outside
 In the bitter fighting, but enclosing many
 With himself, and welcoming them
 As they rushed in. But in his madness 860
 He did not notice the Rutulian prince
 Bursting in among the streaming ranks
 And unwittingly shut him up in the town,
 Like a great tiger let into a sheep pen.
 A new light gleamed in Turnus' eyes, 865
 And his armor rang terribly. The bloody crests
 On his helmet quivered, and his shield
 Flashed with lightning. In one awful moment
 The Trojans recognized that hateful face,
 That massive form, and were thrown into a panic. 870
 Then gigantic Pandarus sprang forward
 Seething with rage for his brother's death
 And spoke out:

“This is not Amata's
 Bridal palace, or downtown Ardea.
 You are looking at the enemy's camp, 875
 And there is no way for you to escape.”

And Turnus, smiling calmly at the man:

“Bring it on, if you have the guts. You can
 Tell Priam there is another Achilles here.”

Thus Turnus. Pandarus threw his spear, 880
 Knotty and rough, with all his might,
 But the wind took it—Saturnian Juno
 Deflected the shot—and it stuck in the gate.
 And Turnus:

“Right! But don't think I'll miss.
 Nobody dodges my weapons.”

With that he leapt high 885

And put his weight into his sword, cleaving
 Pandarus' brow in two between the temples
 And splitting open his boyish face. He fell
 With a crash, and the earth trembled
 Under the impact of his enormous body. 890

Stretched on the ground in brain-spattered armor
 Pandarus lay dying, his neatly parted head
 Dangling equally to each of his shoulders.

The Trojans, terrified, beat a hasty retreat,
 And if it had occurred to the victorious hero 895
 To burst the gate's bars and let in his troops,
 That day would have been the last for the war
 And the Trojan people. But passion for slaughter
 Made him rage on.

First he took out Phaleris, and then Gyges, 900
 Hamstringing the latter. Seizing their spears
 He threw them at the backs of the escaping enemy.
 Juno multiplied his strength, and he dispatched
 Halys and Phegeus, piercing his shield;
 And then Alcander, Halius, Noemon, 905
 And Prytanis, who were up on the wall
 Urging men on. They never knew what hit them.
 When Lynceus, rallying his troops, made a move,
 Turnus came at him from the wall on the right
 And with one swipe of his flashing sword 910
 Severed the man's head, which came to rest
 Some distance away, still in its helmet.
 Amycus was next, a formidable hunter
 Who excelled in the art of poisoning arrows;
 And then Clytius, son of Aeolus, 915
 And Cretheus, dear to the Muses—
 The Muses' companion, Cretheus,
 Who was forever tuning his lyre,
 Setting verses to music, and singing
 Of horses, the arms of men, and war. 920

When word of the carnage reached them,
 The Teucrian captains Mnestheus and Serestus

Came forward to see their men scattered
 And their enemy within the gates.
 And Mnestheus, sharply:

“Where are you going? 925
 Do you have some other walls to protect you?
 Countrymen, shall one man, trapped inside,
 Slaughter a whole town unpunished? Send so many
 Of our best young men to Orcus? Cowards!
 Have you no shame, no pity for your country, 930
 For your ancient gods, for great Aeneas?”

This speech steeled their spirits. They halted
 In dense formation, and Turnus gave ground
 Step by step, making for the part of the town
 Bounded by the river. The Teucrians pressed him 935
 All the harder, shouting loudly and closing in.

*Hunters crowd around a savage lion,
 Their spears ready. The lion is wary
 But glares angrily as it gives ground,
 And although its valor will not allow it 940
 To turn its back it cannot, for all its desire,
 Break through the hunters and their spears.*

So too Turnus, hesitantly retracing
 His steps, his heart seething with rage.
 Even then he attacked twice, routing them 945
 Along the wall each time. But when
 The entire army gathered together,
 Juno did not dare give Turnus the strength
 To oppose them all, for Jupiter sent Iris
 Down from heaven with stern warnings for his sister 950
 That Turnus must leave the Teucrian camp.
 And so the hero could not hold his own
 With sword or shield, not with all the missiles
 Raining down on him. His helmet rang
 Incessantly, stones cracking the solid bronze open. 955
 The horsehair plumes were torn from his crest,
 And his shield could no longer withstand the blows.

The Trojans, and Mnestheus himself,
Struck like lightning, hurling spear after spear.
Sweat poured down Turnus' entire body 960
In black streams; his breath came in gasps;
And his arms and legs shook convulsively.
At last, in full armor, he dove headfirst
Into the river. Tiber welcomed him,
And buoying him up in his yellow water 965
He washed away the blood and floated Turnus
Back to his comrades on a gentle current.

AENEID TEN

Meanwhile, highest Olympus opened,
And the Father of Gods and Men called a council
In the starry halls from which he surveyed
All lands, the Dardan camp, and the Latin peoples.
The gods took their seats, and their lord began: 5

“Why have you gone back on your word,
Divine ones, and fight among yourselves?
I forbade Italy to go to war with Troy.
This quarrel thwarts my will. What fear
Has caused these humans to rush to arms? 10
There shall come a time (do not hasten it)
When wild Carthage will open the Alps
And pour down upon Rome. Then may they fight
And ravage each other. For now, cease your strife
And assent with good will to my covenant.” 15

Thus Jupiter, briefly. But golden Venus
Made no brief reply:

“Father Eternal, Power of the Universe—
For what else may we appeal to now?—
Do you see how insolent the Rutulians are, 20
How Turnus, swollen with pride,
Rides his chariot through the crowds,
Rushing into war with Mars at his back?
The Teucrians are no longer protected
By their walls. The fighting has moved 25

Inside the gates, and the trenches flow with blood.
 Aeneas, far away, does not know of these dangers.
 Will you never allow this siege to be lifted?
 A second army threatens the walls
 Of an infant Troy, and again there rises 30
 From Aetolian Arpi a son of Tydeus.
 I feel I myself will be wounded again,
 I, your child, will stop another mortal spear.
 If the Trojans have sought Italy
 Without your leave, abandon them 35
 And let them pay for their sin. But if
 They have followed all the oracles
 Given by gods above and shades below,
 How can anyone now subvert your will
 And establish destiny anew? 40
 Why should I even mention the fleet
 Burned on the shores of Eryx, or the storms
 Stirred up by Aeolus, or Iris
 Sent from the clouds? And now Juno
 Is mobilizing Hell—a sector 45
 Of the universe as yet untried—
 And Allecto is turned loose on the upper world
 And raves through the cities of Italy.
 I no longer care about empire, my hope
 While Fortune still smiled. Let those win 50
 Whom you want to win. If there is no country
 Your hardened wife will allow the Trojans,
 Then by the smoking ruins of Troy, I pray,
 Let me at least withdraw Ascanius, Father,
 Unscathed from war; let my grandson 55
 Survive! Aeneas, yes, may be tossed
 On unknown seas and follow Fortune's lead,
 But let me protect this child and rescue him
 From this terrible conflict. Amathus
 Is mine, high Paphus and Cythera, 60
 A shrine in Idalia. He can live out his life
 There, without weapons or glory. Let it be
 Your grand decision that Carthage crush Italy.
 Nothing then would hinder the Tyrian cities.
 But what good has it done him to survive the war, 65

Escape Greek fire, endure endless perils
 On land and sea, while his Teucrians sought
 To found a new Troy in Latium?
 Better to have settled on the dying ashes
 Where Troy once stood. You might as well 70
 Give them back their Simois and Xanthus
 And let them suffer forever Ilium's sorrows!"

Then regal Juno, furious:

"Why do you force me
 To break my silence and tell the whole world
 My heart's deep sorrow? Did any man or god 75
 Compel Aeneas to make war on the Latins?
 'He sought Italy at the call of the Fates.'
 Yes—driven on by Cassandra's raving.
 Did I advise him to leave his camp or entrust
 His life to the winds? To put a boy in charge 80
 Of their defenses at the height of war?
 To tamper with Etruscan loyalties
 Or stir up peaceful nations to war? What god,
 What cruel power of mine, undid Aeneas?
 Where is Juno in all of this, or Iris 85
 Sent from the clouds? It is indeed monstrous
 That Italians are burning your infant Troy,
 And that Turnus has taken a stand
 In his native land, Turnus, a mere grandson
 Of old Pilumnus and whose mother is only 90
 The goddess Venilia! But what about
 The Trojans torching the Latin people
 And pillaging their fields? Dragging a bride
 Away from her betrothed? Offering peace
 In one hand and arming ships with the other? 95
 You have the power to whisk Aeneas
 Away from the Greeks and substitute
 Empty mist for the man. You are as well
 Perfectly capable of turning their ships
 Into so many nymphs. But for us to help 100
 The Rutulians is disgraceful? You say,
 'Aeneas is far away and doesn't know.'

Let him be utterly ignorant and really far away!
 Paphus is yours, Idalium, high Cythera.
 Why bother with a city teeming with war 105
 Or with savage hearts? Is it because I
 Am toppling the tottering Phrygian state?
 Is it I? Or is it he who dumped the Trojans
 Right in front of the Greeks? What cause was there
 That Europe and Asia should rise up in arms 110
 And ravage their peace treaties in treachery?
 Was it I who led Paris, the Dardan adulterer,
 To rape Sparta? Did I arm the man
 And goad him on with lust? All this was you!
 It was then that you should have been afraid 115
 For your people. And now you come on late
 With your unjust complaints and petty bickering.”

Thus Juno’s plea, and all the celestials
 Murmured various assent,

a sound like wind
Rising in the forest with whispers and moans 120
That tell the sailors a great storm is coming.

Then the Father Almighty, the greatest power
 In the universe, begins, and as he speaks
 The high house of the gods grows silent,
 Earth’s foundations tremble, still goes the air, 125
 The winds are hushed, and the high seas calmed:

“Take my words to heart and keep them there.
 Since Ausonians and Teucrians cannot form
 An alliance, and your dissension has no end,
 I shall make no distinction between the hopes 130
 And fortunes of either, Trojan or Rutulian,
 Whether it be Italy’s fortune that holds the camp
 Or Troy’s tragic error and false prophecies.
 Nor do I absolve the Rutulians. The efforts
 Of each will bring suffering or success. 135
 Jupiter rules over all alike. The Fates
 Will find their way.”

And he nodded assent
 By his brother's Stygian waters, by the banks
 That seethe with black and swirling waters.
 Then Jupiter rose from his golden throne 140
 And the gods escorted him to the threshold.

Meanwhile, the Rutulians pressed on
 At every gate, intent on slaughtering men
 And ringing walls with fire. The Trojans
 Were penned inside with no hope of escape. 145
 They made a desperate stand on the high towers,
 Barely able to man the wall's perimeter.
 Asius, Thymoetes, the two Assaraci,
 Castor, and old Thymbris were in the lead.
 At their side were Sarpedon's two brothers 150
 Out of high Lycia, Clarus and Thaemon.
 Acmon of Lyrnesus, his whole body straining,
 Came up with a huge chunk of mountain,
 Himself as huge as his father, Clytius,
 Or Mnestheus his brother. They defended 155
 With spears and stones, notched arrows and fire.
 In their midst the Dardanian boy himself,
 Venus' most rightful care, his glorious head
 Unhelmeted glittered like a jewel
 Set in yellow gold to adorn neck or brow, 160
 Or as ivory gleams inlaid in boxwood
 Or Ocrian ebony: hair streaming over
 His milk-white neck encircled in gold.
 You also, Ismarus, your highborn kinsmen
 Saw inflicting wounds with poisoned arrows, 165
 You, Ismarus of Lydia, where men work rich fields,
 And the Pactolus irrigates them with gold.
 And Mnestheus was there, yesterday's hero,
 Exalted for driving Turnus from the wall;
 Capys too, who gave his name to Campania. 170

Thus the struggles of war. Aeneas, though,
 Was cutting through shallow seas at midnight.
 When he had left Evander and entered

The Tuscan camp, he met the king and announced
 His name and race, what he sought, what he offered. 175
 And he informed the king of the forces
 Mezentius was recruiting, and of Turnus'
 Violent heart. He spoke to him about the trust
 That could be placed in things human, and as he talked
 He entreated. Without delay Tarchon 180
 Joined forces and struck an agreement.
 Freed from the prophecy, the Lydians
 Boarded ship under divine ordinance
 And entrusted themselves to a foreign leader.
 Aeneas sailed in the flagship, Phrygian lions 185
 Crouched under her beak; above rose Ida,
 A sight most welcome to Trojan exiles.
 There sat great Aeneas, pondering
 The fortunes of war. And Pallas,
 Staying close to his left, questioned him, 190
 Now about the stars that guided them through the night,
 And now of his trials on land and at sea.

Now open Helicon, Muses, and chant
 The roll call of the men from Tuscan shores
 Who armed the ships and sailed with Aeneas. 195

At their head Massicus cut through the water
 In the bronze-plated Tiger. A thousand men
 Served under him, from Clusium and Cossae,
 Armed with quivers of arrows and deadly bows.

With him was Abas, whose entire contingent 200
 Bore dazzling arms, and his ship gleamed
 With a gilded Apollo. To this grim general
 Populonia had given six hundred warriors,
 And Ilvia three hundred, an island rich
 In the Chalybes' inexhaustible ore. 205

Third came Asilus, the great interpreter
 Between gods and men, a man to whom
 Sacrificial entrails revealed their meaning,

As did stars, birdsong, and prophetic lightning.
 He hurried a thousand men to war 210
 In close formation, bristling with spears,
 Men placed under his command by Pisa,
 A city born by the river Alpheus
 But transplanted in Tuscany.

Astur

Came next, second to none in looks, Astur 215
 Who trusted his mount and flickering weapons.
 Three hundred men, all of one mind,
 Followed him, whose homes were in Caere,
 In the plains of Minio, and in ancient Pyrgi,
 And who breathed the heavy air of Graviscae. 220

Nor would I pass you by, Cunerus,
 Bravest of the Ligurian warriors,
 Or you, Cupavo, with your few followers,
 Swan plumes on your crest, the insignia
 Of his father's form but a reproach to you, 225
 O God of Love. For they say that Cycnus,
 Grieving for his beloved Phaethon,
 Was singing in the shade of his sisters' poplars,
 And while he consoled his sorrow with music,
 Whitened not with age but downy plumage, 230
 And then left the earth, seeking the stars with his cry.
 Now his son with a band of men his own age
 Rowed the mighty Centaur, a looming figure
 That threatened the water with a massive stone
 While the ship's long keel furrowed the sea. 235

Great Ocnus, too, marshaled an army
 From his native shores. He was the son
 Of the seer Manto and the Tuscan river,
 And he gave you, Mantua, your city walls
 And his mother's name—Mantua, 240
 Rich in ancestry from many stocks,
 Three races of men, each with four peoples,
 And she herself the mistress of all,
 With her strong Tuscan blood.

From here too
 Were the five hundred men Mezentius armed— 245
 Against himself. The rivergod Mincius,
 Benacus' son, crowned with grey sedge, captained them
 Across the sea on their ships of war.

And on came Aulestes, ponderously,
 Surging through the water on a hundred oars 250
 That churned the marble surface of the sea.
 His ship was the Triton, whose conch alarmed
 The indigo waves. The figurehead was a man
 With a shaggy chest fronting the whitecaps
 But turning into scales and fins below the waist. 255
 The water murmured under the half-human form.

And so these captains with their thirty ships
 Sailed to Troy's aid, cutting the brine with bronze.

Day had left the sky, and the gracious Moon 260
 Was treading mid-heaven with steeds of the night.
 Aeneas, too anxious to sleep, sat at his post,
 Manning the rudder and trimming the sails.
 Halfway across, a band of his own company
 Met him in the waves: the nymphs whom Cybele 265
 Had transformed from ships to deities,
 Powers of the sea. They came swimming abreast,
 Equal in number to the brazen keels
 Once moored to Latin shores. They recognized their king
 From far off and encircled him in a dance.
 The most eloquent of them, Cymodocea, 270
 Swam behind the ship, grasped the stern
 With her right hand, and rose breast high
 While her left hand paddled the silent water.
 She spoke to Aeneas, who was caught by surprise:

“Are you awake, Aeneas, son of the gods? 275
 Wake, and haul in tight the sheets to the sails.
 We—pines from the sacred crest of Ida,
 Now nymphs of the sea—were once your fleet.

When the treacherous Rutulian attacked us
 With fire and sword we reluctantly broke 280
 Our mooring chains and have been seeking you
 Over the sea. The Great Mother, out of pity,
 Gave us this form and granted to us
 Divinity beneath the waves.

But your son,
 Ascanius, is hemmed in by wall and trench, 285
 Surrounded by Latins bristling for war.
 Arcadian horsemen, joined by brave Etruscans,
 Are in position. Turnus has resolved
 To keep these troops from reaching the camp.
 Rise, then, and with the coming Dawn 290
 Order your men to arms. Then take the shield
 That the Fire God gave you, invincible
 And rimmed with gold. Tomorrow's light,
 If you do not think my words are useless,
 Will look upon heaps of Rutulian dead." 295

Cymodocea spoke, and as she departed
 Gave the stern a push with a knowing hand.
 The tall ship sped over the water
 Faster than a javelin or a wind-swift arrow,
 And the other ships picked up their speed. 300
 The Trojan son of Anchises was astonished,
 But the omen lifted his spirits. Looking up
 At the vaulted sky, he said this brief prayer:

"Lady of Ida, Mother of the Gods,
 To whom Dindyma is dear, 305
 Turreted cities, and harnessed lions,
 Lead me now in battle. Fulfill this omen
 And be propitious, Goddess, to your Phrygians."

As Aeneas prayed the returning day
 Ripened with light and the darkness fled. 310
 He commanded his men to prepare to attack
 On his signal and to steel their hearts for battle.
 He stood on the high stern, and when he had
 The Trojan camp in sight he lifted his shield

High in the morning light. The Dardanians
 Shouted from the walls, new hope kindling fury,
 Javelins now flying thick from their hands,

*Like Strymonian cranes calling back and forth
 Under dark clouds. Their clamor pierces the air
 As they cry in triumph and ride the South Winds.*

Turnus and the Ausonian captains
 Did not know what to make of this
 Until they saw sterns facing the shore
 And the whole sea crawling with ships.
 The apex of Aeneas' helmet shot flames
 Into the sky, and his shield's golden boss
 Was a radiant bolt of fire, glowing

*As a comet glows, bloodred and baneful,
 In the dark, liquid night; or like Sirius rising,
 The star that brings drought and fever to men
 When it saddens the sky with its baleful light.*

But Turnus did not back off. Determined
 To seize the shore and drive the invaders into the sea,
 He raised his troops' courage with these scalding words:

“This is what you have been praying for, men—
 The chance to break the enemy's ranks. The war
 Is in your hands! Remember your wives,
 Remember your homes and your ancestors' glory.
 We will engage the enemy in the surf
 While they're still unsure of their footing.
 Fortune favors the brave!”

As Turnus spoke
 He decided who would lead the attack
 And whom he could trust to maintain the siege.

Meanwhile, Aeneas was landing his men.
 Crews were coming down gangways, leaping
 Into the shallows, vaulting down with oars.

Tarchon spotted a beach with low surf,
 Where the waves glided easily onto the sand.
 He made a quick decision, turned his prow,
 And implored his crews:

“You’re elite troops! 350

Lean on those oars and ram these ships
 Straight onto the shore! Cut the sand with the beaks
 And force the keels to plow up the beach.
 Shipwrecks won’t matter once we’re on land!”

Tarchon’s men took him at his word. Pulling hard, 355

Backs arched, they drove their ships through the foam
 And onto the Latin fields. Most of them made it,
 Their hulls coming to rest high on dry land.

But not your ship, Tarchon. Driving hard
 Into shallow water, it hung up on a sandbar, 360

Teetered there in the battering waves,
 And finally broke up, plunging its crew
 Into the breakers, where they floundered
 Among broken oars and floating benches
 While a riptide sucked their feet from under them. 365

Turnus wasted no time getting his army
 Onto the shore and making a stand
 Against the oncoming Trojans. Trumpets blared.

Aeneas attacked first, charging the Latin ranks,
 Field-hands mostly and raw recruits. 370

He ran them over—an omen of what was to come—
 Killing Theron, who more than other men
 Itched to face the hero. Aeneas’ sword
 Found the seams in Theron’s bronze armor,
 Crunched through the shirt’s stiff, gold embroidery, 375
 And drank from his slashed side.

Lichas was next.

Cut from his dead mother’s womb, as a child
 He was consecrated to you, Phoebus. Why
 Did you let him escape steel as a baby, but not now?

Aeneas moved on to Cisseus and giant Gyas, 380

Who were clubbing down troops. The weapons
 Of Hercules could not help them now, nor
 Their strong hands, nor their father, Melampus,
 Hercules' companion during all his labors.

Leaving them dead, Aeneas launched a javelin 385
 At Pharus, who was strutting and boasting,
 And planted it in the man's bawling mouth.

And you, poor Cydon, trailing after
 Your new joy, Clytius, with his downy, golden cheeks,
 You would have fallen under the Trojan's hand 390
 And lain on the ground most pitifully,
 Forgetful of your love for boys. But your brothers,
 All seven of them, children of Phorcus,
 Closed ranks around you and threw seven spears.
 Some glanced off Aeneas' helmet and shield, 395
 Some Venus diverted so that they only grazed
 The hero's body, who then called to Achates:

“Keep feeding me spears. I'm not going to miss
 A single Rutulian with these spears that quivered
 In Greek bodies on Ilium's plain.”

And he let fly a heavy shaft 400
 That crashed through the bronze of Maeon's shield
 And punched a hole through his corselet and chest.
 Maeon's brother Alcanor came to his aid,
 Supporting the fallen man with his right arm,
 Which Aeneas' next spear immediately pierced. 405
 The spear kept going and completed
 Its bloody course, leaving Alcanor to examine
 His own dead hand, dangling by sinews.
 Numitor, another brother, pulled the spear out
 And threw it at Aeneas, but his aim was off 410
 And it grazed the thigh of great Achates.

Now Clausus of Cures came to the front,
 Confident in his strength, his youth.
 He hit Dryops under the chin with a hard throw
 At some range. The spear pierced his throat 415
 As he was speaking and robbed him of voice

And life together. His forehead hit the ground,
 And clotted blood spewed from his mouth.
 Clausus went on to kill three Thracians
 Of Boreas' high race, and three more 420
 Far from their native Ismarus, and their father, Idas,
 Dispatching each of them in different ways.
 Halaesus joined him, and Auruncan bands,
 As Messapus, descendant of Neptune,
 Came driving up with his glorious horses. 425
 All of them fought to drive back the enemy
 In this battle on the very threshold of Italy.

*As clashing winds in the sky's great reaches
 Rise to battle, matched in spirit and strength,
 And will not yield, nor will clouds or sea,
 But all nature is deadlocked in struggle,* 430

So too the Trojan and Latin ranks
 Clashed together in hand-to-hand combat.

On another front, a river in torrent had strewn
 Boulders and bushes torn from its banks 435
 Across the debris. Pallas saw his Arcadians
 Turn and run before the pursuing Latins.
 Pallas' men were not used to fighting on foot,
 And the terrain, roughened by the flood,
 Had forced them, this once, to dismiss their horses. 440
 Pallas had only one hope left—to use
 Whatever words he could to restore their courage:

“Where are you running, my friends? I beg you,
 By your own brave deeds, by the name of Evander,
 By the wars you have won, and by my own hope, 445
 Which rises to match my father's renown—
 Do not put your trust in your feet!
 We have to hack our way through with swords.
 There, where the enemy is thickest,
 Is where your country calls you, with Pallas 450
 At your head! We are not fighting gods.

We are mortals under attack by mortals.
 We have as many lives and hands as they do.
 And now we have the ocean at our backs,
 The barrier of the sea, and no more land. 455
 Should we run across the sea all the way to Troy?"

Pallas spoke, and charged into the enemy lines.
 The first man unlucky enough to cross his path
 Was Lagus, who was trying to uproot a stone
 Of considerable weight. Pallas' spear 460
 Went into his spine just below the rib cage.
 He pulled the spear out from the bones
 Where it stuck and was ready for Hisbo,
 Who failed to take him by surprise, although
 This was his hope. As he rushed in from above, 465
 Hell-bent with rage at his companion's death,
 Pallas buried a sword in his wheezing lungs.
 He got Sthenius next, and Anchemolus,
 Of Rhoetus' ancient line, a man who had dared
 To sleep with his stepmother.

And you, too, 470

Larides and ThyMBER, twin sons of Daucus,
 Fell on the Rutulian plain. As boys
 You were indistinguishable from each other—
 A sweet perplexity to your parents—
 But Pallas made you easy to tell apart, 475
 Lopping off your head, ThyMBER, with Evander's sword,
 While your severed hand longed for you, Larides,
 Its dying fingers shifting their grip on your sword.

The spectacle of these glorious deeds shamed
 The Arcadians into battle. But Pallas was not done. 480
 His spear caught Rhoetus as he was flying past
 In his chariot, a chance shot, but a reprieve for Ilus,
 Whom Pallas had lined up with his long, hard throw.
 Rhoetus intercepted the spear in his flight
 From you, noble Teuthras, and your brother, Tyres, 485
 And rolled from his chariot,
 Heels kicking the Rutulian fields in death.

*Summer winds the shepherd has hoped for
 Begin to rise, and he sets fires here and there
 In the woods. Suddenly, the spaces between 490
 Are ablaze, and when Vulcan's battle-lines
 Have spread across the fields, the shepherd smiles
 As he sits and watches the reveling flames.*

So too your soldiers' valor converged,
 To your joy, Pallas.

Halaesus countered them. 495
 Collecting himself behind his shield, this bold warrior
 Brought down Ladon, Pheres, and Demodocus;
 Sliced off Strymonius' hand with bright steel
 And smashed in Thoas' face with a stone,
 Scrambling the bones with blood and brains. 500
 Halaesus' father, prophesying his fate,
 Had hidden the boy in the woods. Later,
 When his hollow, ancient eyes closed in death,
 The Fates laid their hands on Halaesus
 And marked him out for Arcadian spears. 505
 Pallas went after him, praying first:

“Father Tiber, grant to this iron,
 Which I am about to throw, safe passage
 Through Halaesus' ribs. Your oak
 Will hold this weapon and the hero's spoils.” 510

The god heard this prayer. While Halaesus
 Shielded Imaon he left his own chest exposed
 To the Arcadian spear.

Lausus,
 A major part of the Rutulian offensive,
 Did not allow his troops to be panicked 515
 By Pallas' killing streak. His first move
 Was to cut down Abas, a node of the battle,
 And then more youth of Arcadia
 Began to fall, Etruscans fell,
 And you Trojans too, you whose bodies 520
 The Greeks had not destroyed. The armies
 Closed on each other, closely matched,

Rearguard crowding front lines, so close
 The soldiers could not lift their weapons.
 On one side Pallas presses forward, strains, 525
 Confronted by Lausus, the young heroes
 Nearly equal in age, handsome beyond all,
 Neither destined to return to his homeland.
 But the Lord of Olympus did not permit them
 To meet face to face. Each was fated 530
 To fall soon to a greater adversary.

Turnus had a sister, the nymph Juturna,
 Who warned him now to bring aid to Lausus.
 The hero split the ranks with his swift chariot
 And called to his men:

“Stand down from battle. 535
 Pallas is mine, and mine alone.
 I only wish his father could watch.”

When Turnus said this, his men withdrew,
 And Pallas stood there, marveling
 At this arrogant command, amazed at Turnus. 540
 His eyes took in that giant frame. He scanned
 The whole scene with a fierce glare
 And made this response to the great Rutulian:

“The praise is mine soon, either for prime spoils
 Or a glorious death. My father can live 545
 With either fate. Away with your threats.”

And he strode out to the middle of the field.
 The Arcadians felt their blood turn to ice,
 And Turnus vaulted down from his chariot
 Ready to fight on foot in hand-to-hand combat. 550

*A lion, poised on a high vantage point,
 Has caught sight of a bull meditating battle
 And charges.*

This was how Turnus charged.
 When Pallas thought he was within spear range
 He began his own charge, hoping to balance 555
 This mismatch in strength with daring and luck,
 And he prayed to bright heaven:

“I beseech you,
 Hercules, by the welcome you received
 In my father’s house, come to me now
 And help me in my need. Let Turnus see me 560
 Strip the bloody armor from his dying limbs,
 Victorious over him as his eyes close in death.”

Hercules heard the boy’s prayer and stifled
 A heavy groan, shedding useless tears. Jupiter
 Addressed his son with fatherly words: 565

“Each has his own day. Brief is the time
 And irretrievable the life of every man. Yet,
 To lengthen fame by deeds is the task of valor.
 Under Troy’s high walls fell many sons of gods,
 My Sarpedon among them. Fate calls Turnus too, 570
 And he has reached the end of his allotted years.”

Thus Jove,
 Who then turned his eyes from the Rutulian fields.

Pallas threw his spear with all his strength,
 And his sword flashed from its sheath. The spear 575
 Flew on and struck the top edge of Turnus’ shield,
 Forced its way through and nicked his shoulder.
 Turnus shrugged and balanced his spear
 For what seemed an eternity. When he threw
 The iron-tipped oak at Pallas, he said: 580

“See if my spear goes in farther.”

No sooner spoken
 Than the spearpoint slashed through the center
 Of Pallas’ shield, with all its layers of iron,

Of bronze, all the folds of oxhide, and then pierced
 His corselet and burrowed into his chest. 585
 Pallas pulled the warm shaft out, but with it came
 His blood and his life. He fell onto the wound,
 Armor clattering, and his bloody mouth
 Struck the hostile earth. He was dying
 When Turnus, standing above him, said: 590

“Remember, Arcadians, to bring my words
 To Evander. I send him the Pallas he deserves.
 The honor of a tomb, the solace of burial
 I freely grant, but he will pay dearly
 For welcoming Aeneas.”

Turnus spoke 595
 And, bracing his left foot on Pallas' corpse,
 He tore away the massive belt engraved
 With crime—the sons of Aegyptus murdered
 By Danaus' daughters on their nuptial night,
 The rooms reeking with blood—the work 600
 Of Clonus, son of Eurytus, who chased it in gold.
 Turnus now exulted in this belt and gloried
 In its possession.

The mind of man
 Knows neither fate nor future doom
 Nor moderation when elated by fortune. 605
 The hour will come when Turnus will wish
 He had paid handsomely for an unharmed Pallas
 And will curse the day he won those spoils.
 But now Pallas was surrounded by his friends,
 Moaning and weeping as they bore him back 610
 Lying on his shield. O Pallas, you will go home
 To your father a great grief and great glory.
 This day brought you to war and took you from it,
 Yet you left behind mounds of Rutulians dead.

It was no vague rumor of disaster 615
 That reached Aeneas but sure intelligence
 That his men were inches from death
 And that it was time to rescue the Teucrians.

He mowed down everything before him
 With his sword, burning a broad path 620
 Through the enemy, seeking you, Turnus,
 Flush with slaughter. Pallas, Evander,
 Everything swam in Aeneas' eyes—the table
 He came to as a stranger, the right hands pledged.
 Four youths, sons of Sulmo, and four of Ufens, 625
 He took alive, to sacrifice them to the shades
 And pour their blood on the funeral flames.
 Then he took aim at Magus, who ducked
 As the spear trembled through the air above him,
 Then he fell in supplication at Aeneas' knees: 630

“By your father's ghost, and by your hopes
 For growing Iulus, spare my life for my own son
 And father. Buried deep inside my high house
 Lie talents of chased silver, masses of gold
 Wrought and unwrought. Troy's victory 635
 Does not turn on me, one life won't matter!”

He spoke, and Aeneas answered him:

“You can save all that silver and gold
 For your sons. Turnus did away with
 Such traffic in war when he took Pallas' life. 640
 This is the judgment of my father's spirit,
 Of great Anchises, and of Iulus my son.”

With these words, he grasped Magus' helmet
 With his left hand and, bending back
 The suppliant's neck, buried the sword 645
 Up to its hilt.

Close by was Haemonides,
 Priest of Phoebus and Trivia, head bound
 With a sacred band, shining in white robes
 And gleaming armor. Aeneas drove him
 Over the plain, and when the priest fell 650
 Bestrid the body and slaughtered it
 In his own great shadow. Serestus

Gathered up the armor and carried it off,
A trophy for Mars, who walks the lanes of war.

Caeculus, born of Vulcan's race, and Umbro, 655
From the Marsian hills, filled in the ranks.
The Trojan attacked furiously. His sword
Had already severed Anxur's left arm,
Which fell to the ground along with his shield—
Anxur had been talking big and hoped his strength 660
Would match his words, or perhaps he was just
Raising his spirits and had promised himself
A ripe old age—when Tarquitus, strutting
In gleaming arms, crossed paths with Aeneas.
The nymph Dryope had borne this man 665
To Faunus, who haunts the woods. The Trojan
Pinned his heavy shield and corselet together
With a hard spear-cast, and as the boy tried
To get some words of supplication out,
He sent his head whirling to the ground. 670
Then, as he rolled the warm torso over,
He said in a voice without a trace of pity:

“Lie there, you hulk. Your sweet mother will never
Heap earth above you back home in your country.
No, you will be left here for the vultures, 675
Or thrown into the sea, rolled by waves,
And hungry fish will nibble at your wounds.”

He caught Lucas and Antaeus next, two
Of Turnus' front-line men, and brave Numa,
And blond Camers, son of noble Volcens, 680
The richest man in all Ausonia
And ruler of silent Amyclae.

*Aegaeon, men say, had a hundred arms,
A hundred hands, and shot flames from fifty mouths
And chests, when against Jove's thunder he clanged 685
Fifty shields and drew as many swords.*

So Aeneas in triumph savaged the field
Once his blade grew warm. Even the horses

That pulled Niphaeus' chariot, when they saw
 The hero advancing in his rage, turned in terror, 690
 Spilling their master as they raced for the shore.

Meanwhile, Lucagus and his brother, Liger,
 Entered the combat zone in a chariot drawn
 By two white horses, Liger handling the reins,
 Lucagus swinging a sword. Aeneas 695
 Took exception to their ardor for battle
 And bore down on the duo, towering above them
 As he pumped his spear. Liger spoke:

“These aren't Diomedes' horses you see,
 Or Achilles' chariot, or the plains of Troy. 700
 Your war and your life now end in this land.”

Insane words from Liger, but Aeneas responded
 With no words at all. He let his javelin fly,
 And as Lucagus leaned forward with his sword,
 Stepping into the stroke with his left foot, 705
 The point came through the lower rim of his shield
 And punctured his left groin. He rolled to the ground,
 Dying, while loyal Aeneas offered him bitter words.

“Your horses didn't shy, Lucagus, or run
 From a shadow. No, you made a flying leap 710
 And deserted your team.”

And he seized the horses
 As Lucagus' brother bailed out and stood,
 A picture of misery, with outstretched hands:

“By the Trojan hero that you are,
 And by the parents who bore such a son, 715
 Spare this life and have pity on a suppliant.”

He had more to say, but Aeneas:

“That's not
 What you said before. Now die with your brother.”

And Aeneas' sword laid bare Liger's soul.

Such were the deaths the Dardanian leader 720
 Left in his wake, raging like a torrent
 Or a black whirlwind over the plain. At long last,
 Ascanius and the besieged Trojans
 Burst from the camp and left it behind.

Jupiter now turned to Juno and said: 725

“Dearest sister and wife, you were clearly right
 When you said Venus alone sustains the Trojans
 And not their own right hands alive to war
 Or their brave hearts enduring of peril.”

And Juno, submissively:

“My noble lord, 730
 Why do you provoke me when I am sick at heart,
 Terrified already of your stern commands?
 If my love possessed the force it once had—
 And still should have—you would not forbid me,
 Almighty One, to take Turnus from the war 735
 And keep him safe for his father, Daunus.
 As it is, let him perish and pay the Trojans
 With his innocent blood! And yet his name
 Is of our lineage, for Pilumnus sired him
 Four generations back. And he has been generous 740
 In heaping your temple's threshold with gifts.”

The Lord of Olympus briefly replied:

“If you are requesting a reprieve from death
 For this doomed youth, in complete awareness
 It is a respite only, with no further illusions, 745
 Take Turnus away from Fate and Doom.
 There is this much room for indulgence. However,
 If your prayers conceal an ulterior motive
 And you think the course of the war can be changed,
 You are badly mistaken.”

And Juno, weeping: 750

“What if you were to grant with your heart
 What you cannot bear to say, and Turnus’ life
 Were assured? Now doom is upon
 This guiltless man, if I am in my right mind. Oh,
 I would rather be deluded by a baseless fear! 755
 And you, who can, change your mind for the better.”

Juno said these things and launched herself
 Down from high heaven robed in clouds,
 Driving storms before her. She sought and found
 Ilium’s army and the camp at Laurentum. 760
 Then the goddess fashioned a phantom
 Out of mist and shadow, a strengthless image
 Of Aeneas, and she counterfeited
 Trojan weapons—a shield and a plumed helmet—
 For this wondrous apparition. Then she gave it 765
 Empty words, a voice without thought,
 And an imitation of Aeneas’ gait.

*It was like the flitting shapes of the dead,
 Or dreams that mock the slumbering mind.*

The phantom stalked the front ranks, exultant, 770
 And defied the enemy to come forth and fight.
 Turnus attacked it, hurling a spear
 That hissed through the air, and the phantom turned,
 Showing its back. Turnus thought he had Aeneas
 On the run and, drunk on empty hope, he shouted: 775

“Where are you going Aeneas? Don’t run out
 On your marriage. Come here. This right hand
 Will give you the land you sought through the seas.”

With cries like this he gave chase, brandishing
 His drawn blade, and did not see 780
 That the winds were blowing his joy away.

Moored to a rock ledge stood the ship
 That Osinius had sailed from Clusium,

Ladders down and gangway in place.
 The phantom of a terrified, fleeing Aeneas 785
 Hurried onto this ship to hide, and Turnus,
 Not a step slower, followed aboard,
 Taking the gangway in a single stride.
 He had barely touched the prow when Juno
 Snapped the cable, sweeping the unmoored ship 790
 Out with the tide. The phantom hid no longer
 But soared high to blend with a dark thunderhead.
 While Aeneas was challenging his absent foe
 And dealing death to all who crossed his path,
 The gale carried Turnus far out to sea. 795
 Ignorant of how things stood, and ungrateful
 For his reprieve, he looked back toward shore
 And, lifting his hands to heaven, prayed:

“Almighty Father, am I so unworthy,
 And is it your will I be punished like this? 800
 Where am I bound? What path is taking me—
 If this is me—so far from home?
 Where have I come from?
 Will I see the walls of Laurentium again?
 What about the men who followed me to war? 805
 I have abandoned them all—a disgrace beyond words!—
 To an ignominious death. I see them scattered now,
 Hear their groans as they fall. What can I do?
 How could the earth gape deep enough for me?
 Winds, take pity on me and drive this ship 810
 Aground on a reef—I implore you—push it
 Onto a shoal, where neither the Rutulians
 Nor Rumor herself will ever know my shame.”

As Turnus said these things his mind rocked
 Back and forth. Should he, because of his disgrace, 815
 Impale himself on his pitiless sword,
 Or dive into the waves and swim to shore
 To fight the Trojans again? He tried each way
 Three times, and three times great Juno
 Held him back, restraining him in heartfelt pity. 820

He glided on, cutting through the waves,
And the tide bore him back to his ancestral city.

Jupiter now prompted fiery Mezentius
To take the battle to the jubilant Trojans.
But it was the Tyrrhenians who responded, 825
Focusing all their hatred and all their weapons
On this one man. He took it all,

*Like a high cliff that juts out
Into the ocean, exposed to the winds' fury
And the pounding surf, enduring all the menace 830
Of sea and sky, but motionless itself.*

So too Mezentius, as he laid out on the ground
Hebrus, son of Dolichaon, and with him
Latagus and Palmus, a man fast on his feet.
Latagus he caught full in the face and mouth 835
With a huge slab of granite; Palmus, though,
He hamstrung and left him writhing slowly
While he gave his armor to Lausus, his son,
Along with the plumes to fix on his helmet.
Evanthes was next, the Phrygian, and Mimas, 840
The same age as Paris and his constant shadow
When they were boys. Theano bore him to Amycus
On the very night that Hecuba, pregnant
With a firebrand, gave birth to Paris.
Paris now sleeps in his ancestral city, 845
And Mimas rests in an unmarked grave
On Laurentium's shore.

*When a boar,
Driven from a mountain by dogs,
(It has lived for years on piney Vesulus,
Or has fed on reeds in the Laurentine marsh) 850
Reaches the hunters' nets, it halts and snorts
And raises its hackles. No one has the courage
To come near enough to vent his rage,
So they throw their javelins and shout at it*

*From a safe distance. The boar is undaunted
And turns in all directions, gnashing its teeth
As it shakes off the javelins stuck in its back.* 855

Just so, none of those who harbored
Righteous rage had courage enough to draw a sword
And face Mezentius, preferring instead 860
To launch spears and insults from a safe distance.

Acron, a Greek, had come from ancient Corythus,
Leaving his home and an unfinished wedding.
Mezentius saw him wrecking battalions,
Helmet's crest shining with his bride's purple. 865

*A lion that has not fed will range
The deep woods mad with hunger, until
He spots a timid roe or an antlered stag.
Mouth agape in exultation, mane bristling,
He crouches intently over the warm viscera,
And foul gore bathes his cruel jaws.* 870

So too Mezentius,
Charging into the massed enemy ranks.
Acron had no chance. He went down hard,
Hammering the black earth with his heels,
His splintered spear dyed red with his blood. 875
This put Orodes on the run. Mezentius,
Disdaining a cheap shot from the rear,
Caught up with Orodes and faced him man to man,
Besting him not with stealth but superior strength.
Then he planted his foot on the body, and, straining 880
To pull out his spear, he cried to his troops:

“Great Orodes is down, men, no small part of the war!”

Shouting in unison his men raised the victory cry,
But Orodes, breathing his last, said:

“I shall not die
Unavenged, and you, whoever you are, 885

Will not celebrate long. The same fate awaits you.
You too will soon lie dead in these fields.”

And Mezentius, with a sneering smile:

“Now die. As for me, the Lord of Gods and Men
Will see to my fate.”

And he pulled the spear out. 890
Iron slumber pressed hard on Orodes’ eyes,
And their light faded into everlasting night.

Now Caedicus cut down Alcathöus;
Sarcatur killed Hydaspes; Rapo—Parthenius
And tough Orses; Messapus both Clonius 895
And Lycaon’s son Ericetes, the former
As he sprawled on the ground unhorsed, the latter
As he advanced on foot. Agis, a Lycian,
Also advanced on foot but was struck down
By Valerus, who had his ancestors’ valor. 900
Salius killed Thronius and was killed by Nealces,
A good man with both a spear and a bow.

Stern Mars balanced the suffering and death.
Men on both sides killed and were killed,
Victor and vanquished, and neither side yielded. 905
Looking down from the high halls of Jove—
Venus sitting across from Saturnian Juno—
The gods pitied the senseless passion of men
While pale Tisiphone raged among thousands.

Still Mezentius, pumping his huge spear, 910
Stormed across the plain.

*Think of great Orion
Stalking on foot the deeps of Nereus, plowing
Through the water, shoulders above the waves;
Or hefting a mountain ash, his feet treading the earth,
His head shrouded in clouds.*

So too Mezentius, 915
 Gigantic in armor. Aeneas, spotting him
 In the distance, closed ground quickly.
 Mezentius waited for his noble opponent,
 Standing unperturbed in his immovable bulk.
 His eyes measured the space between them, 920
 And, when Aeneas was in range, he said:

“May this right hand, which is my god,
 And this spear, which I am about to throw,
 Come through for me now. Lausus, you yourself,
 Clad in the spoils torn from that robber’s corpse, 925
 Will be my trophy over Aeneas.”

He spoke
 And let fly. The spear hissed though the air
 And, glancing off Aeneas’ shield, pierced
 Antores under his ribs—noble Antores,
 An Argive companion of Hercules 930
 Who had joined Evander and settled
 In an Italian town. Now he lay dying
 With a wound meant for another, gazing
 At the sky and remembering sweet Argos.
 Then Aeneas threw. The hero’s spear 935
 Punched through the curved shield’s triple bronze,
 Through the inwoven linen and oxhide layers,
 And, losing speed, stuck low in the groin.
 Aeneas was glad to see the Tuscan’s blood
 And, drawing his sword, moved in eagerly 940
 On an anxious Mezentius. Lausus, watching,
 Groaned deeply for love of his father,
 And tears rolled down his face.

(Neither your death,
 Nor your heroic deeds—if antiquity
 Can confer belief in prowess so great— 945
 Nor you yourself, noble young man,
 So worthy of memory, will I leave in silence.)
 Mezentius gave ground, disabled and hobbled,
 Aeneas’ spear still stuck in his shield.

His son ran into the space between them, 950
 Hurling himself into battle, and just as Aeneas
 Brought his sword sweeping down,
 Lausus parried the blade from below
 And held the hero in check. His comrades
 Came up from behind with loud cries 955
 And held off the enemy with a hail of missiles
 Until the father, under the protection
 Of the son's shield, could make good his retreat.
 Aeneas raged, but took cover.

When the storm breaks

And pours down clouds of hail, every plowman 960
And farmer runs from the fields, and the traveler
Huddles under a riverbank or rocky ledge
While the rain falls on the lands. When the sun comes out,
They go on with the day's work.

So too Aeneas,
 Overwhelmed by javelins, endured the war cloud 965
 Until all its thunder was gone, but all the while
 He taunted Lausus and threatened him:

“You're headed for death, Lausus! Why rush it
 By daring what's beyond your strength?
 Your filial devotion is blinding you.” 970

But Lausus was much too wound up to think,
 And now the Dardanian leader's rage
 Was mounting higher, and the Fates
 Gathered up the last threads of Lausus' life.
 Aeneas drove his sword straight through 975
 The young body he faced and up to the hilt,
 The point piercing the shield (far too fragile
 To counter this threat) and the tunic
 His mother had woven of soft gold threads.
 Blood filled his chest; his soul left his body 980
 And sighed through the air to the shades below.

When Anchises' son looked on his dying face,
 So strangely pale, he groaned in pity
 And stretched out his hand. There shone in that face
 The image of his own devotion to Anchises. 985

“For all his sense of duty, what now, poor boy,
 Can Aeneas give you for such glorious deeds?
 What is worthy of so great a heart?
 Keep the arms in which you delighted,
 And, if it matters to you now, I commit you 990
 To the spirits and ashes of your ancestors.
 And may this comfort you in death's sadness:
 You fell by the hand of the great Aeneas.”

Then he scolded Lausus' men for hanging back
 And lifted their prince from the ground 995
 Where blood was fouling his finely bound hair.

Meanwhile, his father was washing his wound
 On the Tiber's bank, leaning back on a tree trunk.
 His bronze helmet hung from a branch nearby,
 And his heavy arms were at rest on the grass. 1000
 His men stood around him as he gasped for breath
 And tried to ease his sore neck. His combed beard
 Flowed down on his chest. He asked for Lausus
 Over and over and sent messengers
 To call him back and deliver the commands 1005
 Of his despondent father. But Lausus' men
 Were bearing him back on his armor, dead,
 A great warrior undone by a mighty wound.
 They wept as they came, and Mezentius'
 Foreboding heart knew their wail from afar. 1010
 He defiled his white hair with dust, lifted
 His hands to heaven, and, clinging to the corpse:

“Was life so sweet to me, Son, that I let you
 Face the enemy in my place—you,
 Whom I begot? Am I, your father, saved 1015
 By your wounds, alive through your death?
 Ah, now at last the bitterness of exile

Comes home to me, the wound is driven deep.
 I have stained your good name, my son,
 With my guilt—I, driven by resentment 1020
 From the throne and scepter of my fathers.
 The penalty I owe my native land
 And bitter countrymen is overdue.
 I should have given up my guilty life
 Through any kind of death. Now I still live 1025
 And have not yet left the light of day,
 But leave I will.”

As he spoke he raised himself
 On his injured leg, and though slowed by his wound
 He held his head high and called for his horse,
 His pride and solace, on which he rode 1030
 Victorious from every battle. Now he spoke
 To the grieving creature words such as these:

“Rhoebus, we have lived long, if anything
 Lasts long for mortals. Today either you will
 Bear off Aeneas’ head and bloody spoils 1035
 And avenge with me the suffering of Lausus
 Or, if we cannot find our way through force,
 You will die with me. For I do not think,
 My brave one, that you would endure
 A stranger’s orders or a Trojan lord.” 1040

He spoke, mounted, and settled into position,
 Loading both hands with whetted javelins.
 His head glittered with bronze and bristled
 With horsehair crests as he galloped off
 Into the thick of battle, his heart a seething mass 1045
 Of shame, and of grief verging on madness.

Three times his voice boomed out, “Aeneas!”
 Aeneas knew that voice and, filled with joy
 He prayed:

“May the Father of the Gods
 And Apollo on high make this happen! 1050

It's your move, Mezentius."

Having said this,
Aeneas moved forward with leveled spear.

But Mezentius:

"My son's gone,
And you try to frighten me? You murderer.
This was the only way you could destroy me. 1055
We do not fear death, nor do we hold back
For the gods. Break it off. I come to die,
But first I have these gifts for you."

He spoke,
And let fly with a javelin, then wheeling
In a circle, hit home with another, and another, 1060
But the shield's heavy gold withstood them all.
Three times he rode around a standing Aeneas,
Launching javelins as he circled to the left.
Three times the Trojan pivoted around
With a forest of spears on his shield's bronze skin. 1065
Then, weary of prolonging the fight—
And of plucking out javelins—and feeling the heat
Of this unequal combat, he considered his options
And struck suddenly, hurling his spear
Squarely between the war-horse's temples. 1070
The great stallion reared, pawing the air.
He threw his rider and then, falling himself,
Hit the ground headfirst, disjointing his shoulder
And entangling Mezentius. The Trojans and Latins
Lit up the sky with their cries. Aeneas ran up, 1075
Drew his sword, and standing over him cried:

"You're not so tough now, are you, Mezentius?"

The Tuscan lifted his eyes, drank in the bright air,
And, when he had recovered his senses, answered:

"Bitter enemy, why do you taunt me 1080
And threaten me with death? Killing me

Is no sin. I did not come into battle
For a truce. My Lausus did not seal such a pact
Between me and you. I ask only one thing,
If the vanquished have any claim to clemency: 1085
Let my body be covered by earth. I know
My people's hatred surrounds me. Guard me
From their rage; let me join my son in the tomb.”

Mezentius said these things and did not flinch
When the sword entered his throat 1090
And his life sluiced out in streams of blood.

AENEID ELEVEN

Dawn left Ocean and ascended the sky.
Aeneas yearned to devote these hours
To the burial of his dead, but as victor
He must fulfill his vows in the day's first light.
He erected the trunk of a mighty oak 5
High on a mound and clothed the wood
In the gleaming arms stripped from Mezentius,
A trophy to you, O great Lord of War.
He nailed up the crests dewy with blood,
And the breastplate pierced a dozen times. 10
On its left side he bound the shield of bronze
And hung from its neck the ivory sword.
Then, surrounded by the army's generals,
He exhorted his triumphant comrades:

“Well done, men. We have nothing to fear now. 15
These are the spoils of a high and mighty king;
This is Mezentius, done by my own hands.
We march now to Latium and Latium's king.
Prepare your arms with a will and look forward
To battle, so that when the gods give us the nod 20
To raise our standards and lead our men
Out of camp we will not be delayed
By poor logistics or lack of resolve.
But now we must commit to earth
The unburied bodies of our comrades— 25
Their only honor in Acheron below.
Go, and dignify with final rites

Those noble souls who with their blood
 Have claimed this land for us. But first
 Send Pallas to Evander's mourning city, 30
 Pallas, whom, brave though he was,
 A black day has plunged into bitter death."

Aeneas wept as he spoke, and walked back
 To the threshold where Pallas' lifeless body
 Was laid, watched by old Acoetes. This man 35
 Had once been Evander's armor-bearer.
 Now, a sadder duty, he accompanied
 His beloved ward in death. All around
 Stood the funeral party, the Trojan throng
 And the women of Ilium, their hair unbound. 40
 When Aeneas entered the great doorway
 They beat their breasts, and their lamentation
 Filled the room and rose to the stars.
 Aeneas looked at Pallas. His head
 Was propped on a pillow, and his face 45
 Was white as snow. His smooth breast
 Gaped with the wound from an Ausonian spear.
 Aeneas' tears welled up as he spoke:

"Was it you, poor boy, that Fortune begrudged
 To look upon my realm and ride in triumph 50
 To your father's home? This was not the pledge
 I gave Evander when he embraced me
 At my departure, sending me forth with you
 To win great empire, and warning me in fear
 That our enemy was a tough breed of men. 55
 And now he might very well, in vain hope,
 Be making vows and heaping the altars high
 While we in sorrow bestow empty honors
 Upon his dead son, who owes no more
 To any of the gods above. Pitiable man, 60
 You will see the bitter funeral of your son!
 Is this our return, our awaited triumph,
 My solemn pledge? But you will not,
 Evander, look upon a son routed
 By shameful wounds, nor as a father 65

Pray for death because your son chose life
 Before honor. Ah, Ausonia, what a hero
 You have lost, and, Iūlus, what an ally!"

Aeneas ended his lament and ordered them
 To lift the piteous corpse. He chose 70
 A thousand men to attend the funeral
 And share the father's tears, small solace
 For sorrow so great but a grieving father's due.
 A wicker bier was quickly fashioned
 Out of arbuté shoots and sprigs of oak 75
 And covered with a canopy of leaves.
 They lifted him high onto this rustic bed,

*Like a flower plucked by a young girl,
 A tender violet or drooping hyacinth,
 Still glowing and beautiful, but no more 80
 Does Mother Earth sustain its life.*

Then Aeneas brought out two purple robes
 That Sidonian Dido had made for him
 With her own hands, a labor of love,
 Embroidering them with stiff threads of gold. 85
 He draped one of them around the youth
 As a final honor, veiling the locks of hair
 That the fire would burn. He heaped up
 Many prizes from the Laurentine battle
 And ordered that these spoils be carried 90
 In a long procession. He added horses
 And armor stripped from the enemy,
 And he bound the hands of the captives he meant
 To offer to the shades, sprinkling the flames
 Of the funeral pyre with sacrificial blood. 95
 He charged the captains to bear tree trunks
 Covered with enemy weapons and infixed
 With the enemies' names. Old Acoetes
 Was led along, disfiguring his breast
 With his fists, his face with his nails, 100
 And prostrating himself full-length on the ground.
 They led Pallas' chariot too, spattered

With Rutulian blood. Behind it
 The war-horse Aethon, insignia laid aside,
 Walked weeping, his face wet with big tears. 105
 Two men carried Pallas' spear and helmet;
 The rest of the armor Turnus, as victor, held.
 There followed behind an army in mourning,
 Teucrians, all the Tuscans and Arcadians,
 With arms reversed. When the entire retinue 110
 Had advanced far ahead, Aeneas halted
 And with a deep groan spoke once more:

“War’s grim duty calls me to other tears.
 Hail for evermore, most noble Pallas,
 And forever farewell.”

Saying no more, 115
 He turned his steps toward the walls of the camp.

And now the envoys from Latium arrived,
 Shaded with olive and asking for a truce.
 They requested Aeneas to return the bodies
 That lay on the field and allow them burial. 120
 They pleaded that there could be no quarrel
 With men who had lost the light of heaven,
 Nor with men once called their hosts and kin.
 Aeneas could hardly refuse this request
 And generously granted it, adding: 125

“What undeserved ill fortune, Latins,
 Has entangled you in a war so terrible
 That you turn away from us, your friends?
 You request peace for the war dead. Gladly
 I would grant it for the living as well. 130
 I would never have come had not Fate
 Assigned me a home here, nor am I at war
 With your people but with your king,
 Who broke our alliance and trusted instead
 To Turnus’ arms. It would have been more just 135
 For Turnus himself to face this death.
 If he wanted to end the war by force

And drive out the Trojans he should have
Fought me with these weapons. Only one of us
Would have lived, whether by heaven's grace
Or his own strong hand. Go now, 140
And place your countrymen on the pyre."

Then aged Drances, who hated Turnus
And always denounced the younger man,
Answered in turn:

 "Trojan hero, great in glory, 145
Greater in arms, how may I sing your praises?
Should I marvel first at your justice
Or your prowess in war? We will indeed
Gratefully bear these words to our city
And, if Fortune allows, unite you with our king, 150
Latinus. Let Turnus make his own alliance!
We will be pleased to raise your destined walls
And carry on our shoulders the stones of Troy."

Drances spoke, and all murmured their assent.
They set the truce at twice six days, 155
And in that settled peace Trojans and Latins
Roamed the wooded ridges side by side.
Tall ash trees rang under two-edged axes;
They felled pines whose crests swept the stars,
Cleaved oak and fragrant cedar ceaselessly, 160
And hauled the wood away in groaning carts.

Rumor took wing and heralded this sorrow
To Evander, filling his city with the news,
Rumor, who had just announced the triumph
Of Pallas to all of Latium. The Arcadians 165
Hurried to the gate, holding ritual torches.
The road gleamed with the long line of flames
Stretching through the fields. The Trojans
Advanced to meet them, and the mourners
Joined companies. When the women saw them 170
Approach their houses, their shrieks inflamed

The grieving city. Nothing could hold Evander back.
 As soon as the bier was set down he flung himself
 On Pallas and clung to him weeping and groaning,
 Until at last he could speak through his anguish: 175

“This is not what you promised your father, Pallas.
 No, you said you would be extra cautious
 In committing yourself to the God of War.
 I knew very well what the first taste of glory
 Could do, how sweet the first battle could be. 180
 But how bitter were the first fruits of your youth,
 How hard the first lessons of war! My prayers
 Were heard by none of the gods! O, my sainted wife,
 How happy in the death that saved you from this grief!
 But I have by living destroyed my destiny. 185
 A father should not survive his son. If only
 I had marched to war as an ally of Troy
 And fallen beneath Rutulian fire!
 If only I had given up my life, and this procession
 Were bringing me, not Pallas, home! 190
 I would not blame you, Trojans, nor our pact,
 Nor our hands joined in friendship. This fate
 Was owed to my white hair. But if an early death
 Awaited my son, it will comfort me that he fell
 After slaying thousands of Volscians 195
 And while leading the Trojans into Latium.
 Yes, my Pallas, I could think you worthy
 Of no other funeral than loyal Aeneas does,
 And the mighty Phrygians, the Tuscan captains,
 And the entire Tyrrhenian army. 200
 They bear great trophies of the men you killed.
 And you also, Turnus,
 Would now be just a great standing trunk
 Decked with arms, if your strength of years
 Had been like his. But why do I, poor wretch, 205
 Keep the Trojans from war? If I drag out
 A life hateful to me with Pallas gone,
 The reason is your right hand, Aeneas,
 Which you know owes Turnus to my son
 And to me, his father. That is the only field 210

Of honor left to you, the only fortune.
 I do not ask for joy in life—I do not ask
 For the impossible—but only to bring word
 Down to my son among the shades below.”

Dawn lifted her gentle light for weary mortals, 215
 Bringing back all their labors. Father Aeneas
 And Tarchon had set up funeral pyres
 On the curving shore. Here they each brought
 The bodies of their men, each in the manner
 Of their forebears, and, when the smoky fires 220
 Were lit beneath, high heaven was buried
 In the darkening gloom. Three times they circled
 The burning pyres in their gleaming bronze;
 Three times on horseback they rounded
 The mournful death-fires and wailed aloud. 225
 Earth was showered with tears, their armor
 Glistened with tears. The cries of men
 And the trumpets' blare mounted to heaven.
 Some cast upon the fire spoils stripped
 From slain Latins—helmets, ornate swords, 230
 Bridles, and chariot wheels. Others burned
 Offerings familiar to the dead—their own shields
 And luckless weapons. All around, many cattle
 Were sacrificed to Death. Bristling hogs
 And stock taken in raids had their throats cut 235
 Over the flames. Then, all along the shore,
 Men watched their comrades burning
 And kept vigil over the charred pyres, unable
 To tear themselves away until dewy night,
 Studded with blazing stars, rolled up the sky. 240

Elsewhere, the Latins built their own pyres
 For their own innumerable dead. Some
 They interred in the earth; others they lifted
 And carried to neighboring farms or sent home
 To the city. The rest, a huge mass 245
 Of confused slaughter, they burned
 Without distinction. Everywhere the wide fields

Outshone each other with clusters of fires.
 When the third dawn dispelled the sky's cold shadow,
 Mournfully they raked the ash-clotted bones 250
 From the pyres and heaped warm earth above them.
 The lamentation inside Latinus' rich city
 Now reached a crescendo. Here mothers
 And their sons' widows, here the loving hearts
 Of sorrowful sisters and boys bereft of fathers 255
 Cursed the terrible war and Turnus' marriage.
 They wanted him to decide the issue in combat,
 The very man who laid claim to Italy's realm
 And its highest honors. Drances weighed in
 And fiercely affirmed that Turnus alone 260
 Was summoned to battle. At the same time,
 Many voiced a different opinion,
 In favor of Turnus. The queen's great name
 Protected him, and many a tale
 Of Turnus' prowess supported the hero. 265

The crowning touch for all this turmoil
 Was the arrival of gloomy envoys
 Reporting the response of great Diomedes.
 Nothing had been gained. Their gifts of gold
 And all their prayers had netted nothing. 270
 Latium must look elsewhere for military aid
 Or sue for peace with the Trojan king.

Latinus sank under his burden of grief.
 Aeneas was a man of destiny. The gods
 Were angry. He stared at the fresh graves. 275
 Then he issued a royal command
 For his councilmen to convene in his palace.
 They streamed through the city's streets
 And assembled under the king's roof.
 In their midst, eldest in years and first in state 280
 Sat Latinus, his brow furrowed. He summoned
 The envoys who had just returned
 From the Aetolian city, and he demanded
 A full report from each in turn. Silence reigned.
 And then Venulus, as ordered, began to speak: 285

“Citizens, we have seen Diomedes
 And his Argive camp. We completed
 Our journey, overcame all perils,
 And grasped the hand by which Ilium fell.
 He was still building his city, Argyripa— 290
 Named after his father’s race—as victor
 In the fields of Iapygian Garganus.
 We entered, were given permission to speak,
 Presented our gifts, told him our names,
 The name of our country and its invaders, 295
 And the purpose of our visit to Arpi.
 He listened, and replied with calm demeanor:

‘Sons of Saturn and ancient Ausonia,
 A people blessed, what has disturbed your peace
 And leads you to provoke a dangerous war? 300
 All of us who profaned Ilium’s fields with steel
 Have suffered for it. I do not mention
 What we endured in the war itself
 Beneath Troy’s high walls, or the heroes drowned
 In the Simois river. No, I mean 305
 All the unspeakable punishments
 Inflicted upon us throughout the world
 For our transgressions. Even Priam
 Would take pity on us. Witness Minerva’s
 Baleful star, the cliffs of Euboea, 310
 Avenging Caphareus. After the war
 We were driven to distant shores,
 Menelaus as far as the pillars of Proteus.
 Ulysses has seen the Cyclopes on Aetna.
 Then there is Neoptolemus’ kingdom, 315
 Idomeneus’ devastated home,
 And Locrians living on Libya’s shore.
 Even the Mycenaean, Agamemnon himself,
 Had scarcely crossed his threshold when he fell
 By his evil wife’s hand—the Conqueror of Asia 320
 Undone by a lurking adulterer.
 To think that the gods begrudged me the sight
 Of my longed-for wife and lovely Calydon,
 Never to return to my country’s altars!

I am still pursued by dreadful portents. 325
 My lost comrades have taken wing to the sky
 Or haunt the rivers as birds—O my people!—
 And fill the cliffs with their tearful cries.
 What else should I have expected,
 Insanely assaulting celestial bodies 330
 And profaning the hand of Venus with steel?
 No, do not urge me into such battles.
 I am not at war with the Trojans, not since
 Pergamum's towers fell, and I find no joy
 In remembering these ancient troubles. 335
 The gifts that you bring me from your country,
 Take them to Aeneas instead. I have faced
 His steely weapons, fought him hand to hand.
 Trust me to know how big he looms up
 Above his shield, how he throws his spear 340
 With whirlwind force. If Ida's land had borne
 Two more like him, the Dardanians
 Would have invaded Argos, and all Greece
 Would be in mourning, the tables turned.
 In all the time we spent besieging Troy, 345
 It was only Hector and Aeneas
 Who held us off, until the tenth year.
 Both were preeminent in courage and arms.
 Aeneas was first in loyalty. Join him
 In peace; beware of meeting him in war.' 350

You have heard, my lord, Diomedes' reply,
 And his counsel on this momentous war."

The envoys had just finished when troubled murmurs
 Rippled through the Ausonian assembly,

Like the sound that comes from a pent-up stream 355
That has been blocked by boulders; the current churns,
And the close banks echo the rushing water.

When they had calmed down, Latinus spoke
 From his high throne. After calling on the gods,
 He said:

“I wish we had already decided
 This crucial issue, Latins. It is not good
 To be holding council when the enemy
 Sits outside our walls. This war, my countrymen,
 Is ill-omened. We are fighting a race of gods,
 Invincible men, unwearied in battle, unable
 Even when beaten to release the sword. 365
 If you had any hope for Aetolian aid,
 Dismiss it. Each is his own hope, but you see
 How slender is ours. Your complete ruin
 Is before your eyes. You can reach out and touch it. 370
 I do not blame anyone. What valor could do
 Has been done. We have given all we have.
 Now listen, and I will briefly lay out
 My opinion as to what we should do.
 There is an ancient tract of land I own 375
 Beside the Tuscan river, stretching westward
 Even beyond Sicania. Auruncans
 And Rutulians work the fields, plowing
 The hillsides and grazing the rough slopes.
 Let this entire region, with a belt of mountain pine, 380
 Be ceded to the Trojans in good will, on just terms,
 With an invitation to share our realm.
 Let them settle there, if that is their heart’s desire,
 And build a city. But if they have a mind
 To seize other lands and can leave our soil, 385
 Let us build twenty ships of Italian oak,
 Or, if they can fill more, the timber lies
 Hard by the sea. They themselves can prescribe
 The number of vessels and their design.
 We will provide bronze, labor, and shipyards. 390
 Further, to bring word of this and seal the pact,
 It pleases me to send a hundred envoys,
 Latin nobles, holding boughs before them
 And bearing gifts—talents of gold and ivory,
 A throne and robe, insignia of our realm. 395
 Take counsel now and save our weary state.”

Then Drances, hostile as ever, bitter
 With secret envy of Turnus’ glory,

A wealthy man and a silver orator
 But cold in battle; respected in council 400
 But prone to faction; of noble lineage
 On his mother's side but with a lowly father—
 This Drances rose, and with these words
 He magnified their anger and built their rage:

“This is no mystery you consult us on, 405
 My good king, and needs no voice from us.
 Everyone knows what is called for here,
 But we all mumble in our beards. Let one man
 Dismiss his pride and give us freedom to speak,
 The man through whose perversity 410
 And ominous generalship (I will speak out,
 Even if he threatens me with death)
 So many of our shining leaders have fallen
 And the whole city is sunk in grief while he
 Shakes his fist at heaven and attacks the Trojans, 415
 Knowing he can bolt whenever he pleases.
 Add one more gift for the Dardanians,
 One more, my excellent lord, and let no man
 Prevent you by force from giving your daughter,
 As a father may, to a peerless husband 420
 In a worthy marriage, an eternal covenant
 And a bond of peace. But if the fear in our hearts
 Is so great, we should entreat the prince himself,
 Implore him, to renounce his own rights
 And defer out of grace to country and king. 425
 You, the source and cause of Latium's ills,
 Why do you so often hurl its citizens
 Into harm's way? There is no safety in war.
 We ask for peace, Turnus, and we ask you
 For the one inviolable pledge of peace. 430
 I first, whom you imagine to be your enemy
 (Which I do not deny), I am here before you
 On bended knee. Pity your people,
 Put down your pride, admit defeat, and withdraw.
 We have seen enough death and desolation. 435
 But if glory is everything to you, if you feel
 Such strength in your heart, or if a royal dowry

Is so dear to your heart, be bold and shout
 A fearless heart to the enemy. O yes, please,
 So that Turnus can have his royal bride, 440
 Let our worthless lives, the unburied
 And unwept masses, be strewn on the field!
 But you, my friend, if you have any might,
 Any of your fathers' fighting spirit,
 At least look your opponent in the eye!" 445

Turnus' rage now burst into flames.
 He groaned, and then erupted into speech:

"You always have a full supply of words
 Whenever battle calls for action, Drances,
 Always first in line when council is called. 450
 But there is no need to fill the council house now
 With those big words that fly out of you
 While you are safe behind our fortress walls
 And the trenches have not yet filled with blood.
 Go ahead, thunder in eloquence, your usual style, 455
 And accuse me of cowardice, Drances—
 When and if you have created mounds
 Of slaughtered Teucrians and left fields everywhere
 Marked with your trophies. Give it a try,
 See what live valor can do. One thing is sure: 460
 We have no shortage of enemies. Our walls
 Are surrounded by them. What are you waiting for?
 Are we going to attack, or will your God of War
 Always be your windy words and flying feet?
 I should admit defeat? You watch your tongue, 465
 You dirty liar. Who's going to say I'm beaten
 When he sees the Tiber swollen with Trojan blood,
 Evander's house and all his line laid low,
 And his Arcadian troops stripped of their armor?
 Bitias and giant Pandarus didn't think 470
 That I was beaten, or the thousand men
 I sent to hell in one fighting day, even though
 I was cooped inside the enemy's walls.
 No safety in war? You fool. Sing that song
 For the Trojan's head—and your own property. 475

Go on, keep throwing everyone into a panic,
 Touting the prowess of a twice-conquered people
 And running down Latinus' army.
 Now the Myrmidons tremble before Phrygian arms—
 There go Tydeus' son and Achilles of Larissa— 480
 And Aufidus flows back from the Adriatic Sea.
 What about when he pretends, the cunning bastard,
 To fear my threats just to make me look bad?
 You will never lose your pathetic life—don't worry—
 By my right hand. Keep it, you gutless wonder. 485

Now, Father, to return to your great question.
 If you put no further hope in our arms,
 If we are so utterly lost and ruined
 After one setback, and Fortune cannot return,
 We should sue for peace with outstretched hands. 490
 But, O, to have any of our familiar valor!
 The luckiest man on earth, and the finest,
 Is the man who, to avoid such a sight,
 Has fallen in death and bitten the dust.
 But if we still have resources, and sound troops, 495
 And the cities of Italy are still behind us,
 If the Trojans too have paid for glory in blood
 (They too have suffered casualties, the storm
 Was the same for everyone), why do we falter
 So ingloriously at the first steps? Why do we 500
 Tremble before the trumpet sounds? Time
 And the shifting tide of events have improved
 Many situations. Fortune revisits many a man,
 First mocking him and then setting him
 Upon firmer ground. The Aetolian in Arpi 505
 Will not help us, but Messapus will,
 As will the prosperous Tolumnius,
 And the leading men of many a nation.
 Latium and Laurentium will send their best,
 And we have Camilla too, leader 510
 Of the glorious Volscians, with her cavalry
 And squadrons flowering in bronze.
 But if I am called out to single combat
 By the Trojan, and this is your pleasure,
 And I am so great an obstacle 515

To the common good, know that Victory
Has not deserted these hands of mine
With such loathing that I would refuse to dare
All that I have for a hope so high.

I will face him with spirit even though 520
He comes on like great Achilles himself
And wears armor made by Vulcan's hands.

To all of you and to Latinus,
Father of my bride, I, Turnus, second
In valor to none of my ancestors, 525
Dedicate my life. Aeneas calls me out?
I pray that he does, and that it is not Drances
But I who appease the gods with death,
If they are angry, or win glory for valor.”

While the Latins fought among themselves 530
And debated an uncertain future, Aeneas
Was moving his troops from the camp.

A messenger rushed through the general uproar
In Latinus' halls and filled the city
With great alarm: Teucrians and Tuscans 535
Were sweeping down from the Tiber River
In battle formation and covering the plain.

The townspeople were stunned and then,
Bitten by the danger, gave way to panic.
Shaking with fear they called for weapons, 540
The young raged for weapons while their fathers
Wept and moaned, and a great din arose,
A discordant roar that rose to the sky,

*As when flocks of birds settle in a grove,
Or when by the fish-filled stream of Padusa 545
Raucous swans call out among clamorous pools.*

Turnus seized the moment and cried:

“Right, convene a council, citizens,
And sit there praising peace. The enemy
Is attacking our kingdom!”

And he rushed out
From the high halls issuing commands: 550

“Volusus, get the Volscian squadrons armed
And lead out the Rutulians. Coras, you
And your brother, and you, Messapus, deploy
The cavalry on the plain. Post some guards 555
At the city gates and man the towers. The rest
Are going into battle under my command.”

The whole city rushed to the walls. Latinus,
Overwhelmed by this grim turn of events,
Quit the council and abandoned his plans. 560
He blamed himself for not warmly welcoming
Dardanian Aeneas and adopting him as a son
For the good of the city. Details set to work
Digging trenches in front of the gates
And hauling stones and stakes. A horn sounded 565
Its bloody signal for battle. Mothers and boys
Ringed the walls: the final struggle
Summoned them all. The queen herself rode
With a throng of women to the temple of Pallas
On the high citadel, bearing gifts, 570
And at her side, eyes lowered modestly,
Was the maiden Lavinia, the cause
Of all this misery. The women went up
And filled the temple with clouds of incense.
Their sad voices drifted down from the threshold: 575

“Mistress of War, Tritonian Maiden,
Break the spear of the Phrygian marauder
And lay him out on the ground before our gates.”

Meanwhile, Turnus armed himself for battle,
And every move he made was an act of passion, 580
Strapping on the flashing bronze breastplate,
Sheathing his calves with gold, and, head still bare,
Buckling the sword to his side. He shone
Golden as he ran down from the high citadel,
His exultant mind already engaging the enemy. 585

*A horse has broken his halter and bolted
 Out of his stall, free at last, and now gallops
 Over the plain, making for the mares in pasture
 Or his accustomed swim in the river.
 He holds his head high and whinnies with joy,
 Mane streaming like wind on his shoulders.* 590

Camilla, with her army of Volscians,
 Rode to meet him, and when she reached the gates
 The warrior queen leapt down from her horse.
 Following her lead, her troops dismounted 595
 And slid to the ground. Then Camilla spoke:

“Turnus, if the brave can trust themselves,
 I commit myself to face Aeneas’ cavalry
 And ride alone against the Tuscan horsemen.
 Let me try my hand at the first encounter 600
 While you stay on foot to guard the city walls.”

And Turnus, eyes fixed on this formidable woman:

“Glory of Italy, how can I ever give you
 Sufficient thanks? But since your spirit
 Outmatches all I could say or do to repay you— 605
 Yes, share the work with me. That dog Aeneas,
 As rumor has it and scouts confirm,
 Has sent his cavalry ahead to scour the plain.
 He himself has crossed the ridge and is now
 Marching on the city through the mountain pass. 610
 I am concealing units under the canopy
 On the forest road to block both ends of the gorge.
 Muster the troops and wait for the attack
 By the Tuscan cavalry. With you will be
 Messapus, a good man, the Latin troops, 615
 And Tiburtus’ squad. You’re in command.”

He spoke and with similar words encouraged
 Messapus and the other allied captains,
 And then he moved out against the enemy.

There is a jagged valley, a perfect place
 For stratagems of war, both sides walled
 With dark forest. It can be reached only
 By a narrow path through a deep gorge,
 A difficult approach. High above,
 Among the mountain peaks, lies a plain
 Invisible from below, a safe staging area
 From which to launch sorties right or left,
 Or to take a stand and roll down boulders.
 Turnus hurried there by familiar roads
 And lay in wait in the treacherous woods.

Diana, meanwhile, in the halls above,
 Addressed Opis, one of her sacred sisterhood,
 With these sorrowful words:

“Camilla

Is entering this bloody war, Opis,
 And girding herself with our weapons in vain,
 Camilla, whom I love as no other.
 This is no new love for me, no sudden
 Sweet infatuation on Diana’s part.

Metabus was driven from his throne
 By his subjects’ hatred of his tyranny,
 And as he was fleeing ancient Privernum
 In the heat of battle he took with him
 His infant daughter to share his exile.
 Casmilla, her mother’s name,
 Was changed by Metabus into Camilla.
 Holding her to his chest he headed out
 To a lonely stretch of mountain forest
 With armed Volscians closing in on him
 From every side. Blocking his flight
 Was the Amasenus, which had flooded its banks
 After a heavy storm. As the fugitive
 Prepared to swim he was held back
 By love and fear for his precious burden.
 Quickly weighing his options, he settled on this:
 He was holding in his hand a huge spear

With a hard, burly shaft of seasoned oak,
 And to this shaft he fastened his daughter,
 Swaddled in the bark of a forest cork tree,
 Binding her tightly to the balance point.
 Then, cradling the spear in his huge right hand, 660
 He cried out to heaven:

‘Lady of the Woods,
 Gracious daughter of Latona, this child
 I, her father, vow to your service. Yours
 Is the first weapon she grasps as suppliant,
 Flying through the air to escape her foe. 665
 Accept her as yours, Goddess, I implore you,
 As I commit her now to the perilous air.’

He spoke, drew back his arm, and hurled the spear,
 Sending poor Camilla flying over the loud
 Rushing water on the whistling shaft. Metabus, 670
 Hard pressed, entrusted himself to the river
 And emerged triumphant to pluck from the turf
 The spear and the girl, his gift to Diana.
 No cities welcomed him into their walls—
 Not that he in his wild state would have accepted. 675
 He lived among shepherds in the lonely hills,
 And there, amid the woods and rugged lairs of beasts,
 He nursed his child on a wild mare’s milk,
 Pressing the teats into her tender lips.
 As soon as the baby could take her first steps, 680
 He put into her hands a little sharp spear
 And slung on her back a quiver and bow.
 Instead of gold for her hair and a trailing robe,
 A tigerskin hung from her head and shoulders.
 Even then she hurled her childish spears 685
 With tender hands and twirled her leather sling
 Around her head to bring down snowy swans
 And Strymonian cranes. Many a mother
 In Tyrrenian towns prayed for her
 To marry her son, but she was always content 690
 With Diana alone, inviolate in her love
 For her weapons and her chastity. O,

That she had not been swept up in this war
 Or tried to challenge the Teucrians!
 She would still be my dear companion. 695
 But now, since bitter Fate presses her hard,
 Glide down from heaven, Nymph, to Latium,
 Where battle is joined under an evil star.
 Take these, and draw from the quiver
 An avenging arrow. With this in his throat 700
 May anyone, Italian or Trojan,
 Who violates her sacred body with a wound
 Pay me an equal penalty in blood.
 Then in a hollow cloud I will bear the poor girl,
 Body and armor all unspoiled, away to the tomb 705
 And lay her to rest in her fatherland.”

Diana spoke, and Opis swooped down
 Through the light air of heaven,
 Shrouding herself in dark, whirling wind.

The Trojans now were approaching the walls 710
 With the Etruscan leaders and their squadrons
 Of mounted troops. The war-horses neighed
 And pranced, swerving all over the plain,
 Fighting their reins, and the field was spiked
 With lifted iron spearpoints flashing light. 715
 Advancing toward them, the swift Latins,
 Led by Messapus, by Coras and his brother,
 And by Camilla, the warrior princess,
 Came into view, pumping their spears.
 The sound of horses and men intensified, 720
 And then both armies halted, standing
 Within a spear-cast of each other. Then,
 With a sudden shout, both sides charged,
 Spurring on their furious horses. Weapons
 Showered down as thick as snowflakes 725
 And their shadows darkened the sky.

Tyrrhenus and Aconteus, spears leveled,
 Were first to charge each other and first to fall.
 Their horses collided chest to chest

With a deafening crash, crippling both. 730
 Aconteus was flung off like a thunderbolt
 Or a stone shot by a catapult
 And scattered his life into the air.

This sent a tremor through the battle-lines,
 And the Latins, shields on their backs now, 735
 Turned their horses toward the city walls.
 The Trojans gave chase, Asilas in the lead.
 When the Latins were almost to the gates
 They shouted and wheeled their horses around,
 Reins pulling their supple necks, and then 740
 The Trojans turned and let their horses run.

*Picture the sea surging in and ebbing.
 A huge swell rushes to shore, breaking
 Over the rocks in a foaming arch of water
 And drenching the farthest reach of sand,
 Then seething back over the rolling stones 745
 As the shallows recede and leave the shore dry.*

Twice the Tuscans drove the Rutulians
 Back to the city, their shields slung behind.
 But when they met for the third time, the lines 750
 Interlocked, and they fought man to man.
 The battle became a welter of bodies, weapons,
 The groans of the dying, horses floundering
 On their slaughtered riders and dying themselves,
 Knee-deep in blood.

Orsilochus shot his spear 755
 At Remulus' horse, too afraid to confront
 The rider himself, and left the steel
 Just beneath its ear. The horse reared in agony,
 Pawing the air and unseating Remulus,
 Who rolled to the ground. Catillus took down 760
 Iollas and Herminius, a man of huge stature
 And with courage to match. His blond head bare,
 Chest and shoulders unarmored, unafraid of wounds,
 He was an enormous target. Catillus' spear
 Came quivering through his broad torso 765

And doubled him over, transfixed with pain.
 Everywhere you looked, blood ran dark
 As struggling men killed each other with iron,
 Seeking through wounds a glorious death.

And in the center of all this slaughter 770
 Camilla raged, an exultant Amazon,
 One breast bared for battle, a quiver on her back.
 Whipping javelins from her hand, or wielding
 A heavy battle-axe for hours on end,
 Diana's golden bow clanging on her shoulder. 775
 And when she was forced by pressure behind
 To withdraw, she turned in her saddle,
 Bow in hand, and took aim as she fled.
 Around her were her handpicked companions,
 Virgin Larina and Tulla, and Tarpeia 780
 Slicing the air with her bronze battle-axe,
 Daughters of Italy whom godlike Camilla
 Chose as her glory in both peace and war.

*Think of Amazons in Thrace tramping across
 The Thermodon's streams following Hippolyte 785
 As they go to war with emblazoned weapons;
 Or gathered around Penthesilea, daughter
 Of Mars, when she returns in her chariot,
 An army of women howling in triumph
 As they leap exultantly with crescent shields. 790*

Whom did you strike down first, fierce girl,
 Whom last? How many dying bodies
 Did you leave on the earth?

Euneus was first,
 Clytius' son, whose exposed chest
 Camilla ripped through with her long pine spear. 795
 He fell, coughing up blood and chewing
 The crimson dust as he writhed on his wound.
 Then she brought down Liris, and Pagasus
 On top of him. Liris was falling from his horse,
 Which had just been hit, clutching at the reins, 800

Of the Ligurians while Fate allowed him
 His deceitful life. When this man saw
 He could not escape combat by outriding
 Or outmaneuvering the princess warrior, 840
 He resorted to a clever ruse, saying:

“What’s so great about a woman who relies
 On a strong horse? Why don’t you meet me
 On a level field and fight me on foot,
 Hand to hand? You’ll soon find out 845
 Who is deceived by windy vanity.”

Camilla, furious, burned with indignation.
 She handed her horse’s reins to a comrade
 And, wholly unafraid, confronted the man
 On foot, with equal arms, a naked sword 850
 And plain light shield. Thinking he had won
 By guile, Aunus’ son pulled his horse around
 And spurred him into a willing gallop.

“You Ligurian fool, your slippery tricks
 Aren’t going to work this time; cunning 855
 Won’t get you home safe to lying Aunus.”

She spoke, and with feet like lightning
 She intercepted the horse, seized the reins,
 And took her vengeance in his hated blood.

A falcon, sacred to Mars, swoops down 860
From a high rock and overtakes a dove
Flying in a cloud. Clutching her
In his hooked talons he rips her to pieces,
And gore and torn feathers drift from the sky.

The Father of Gods and Men saw these things 865
 With all-seeing eyes as he sat on Olympus.
 He roused Tyrrhenian Tarchon to battle,
 Inflaming him with spite and rage. And so
 Tarchon rode through the murderous lanes of war

Shouting encouragement to his faltering troops,
 Calling each man by name, and rallied them: 870

“What are you afraid of, Tyrrhenians?
 Where’s your sense of shame? Are you just lazy,
 Or is this rank cowardice? Letting a woman
 Scatter you like this and drive you back! 875
 Why do you think we carry these swords?
 You’re not lazy when it comes to the nightly
 Wars of love, when the flute signals
 Bacchic dances. You’re waiting for the cups
 To be set on the table for the feast, aren’t you? 880
 This is what you like. You can hardly wait
 Until the priest announces the sacrifice
 And the fattened ox calls you to the deep groves!”

And he spurred his horse into the melee,
 Ready to die. He came at Venulus 885
 Like a cyclone, tore him from his horse,
 And holding him to his chest with one hand
 Urged on his horse and carried the man off.
 The Latins cheered when they saw this,
 And Tarchon bolted over the plain carrying 890
 Arms and the man. He snapped off the iron point
 Of Venulus’ spear and groped around
 For an unarmored patch of his captive’s skin
 Where he could inflict a mortal wound.
 Venulus struggled, keeping Tarchon’s hand 895
 Away from his throat, meeting force with force.

*A golden eagle soars on an updraft
 Carrying a snake she has caught, her talons
 Entwined around it. The wounded serpent,
 Writhing sinuously, scales bristling, lifts 900
 Its hissing mouth high, but the eagle
 Keeps attacking her struggling victim
 With her hooked beak, and her wings beat the air.*

So Tarchon carried off his prey triumphantly
 From the Tiburtine army. His Maeonians 905

Followed their chief's shining example
 And ran forward. Arruns, marked by Fate,
 Circled Camilla warily, looking for a chance
 To use his javelin. Whenever she attacked
 In her fury, Arruns crept up from behind, 910
 Stalking her silently; whenever, victorious,
 She stepped out of battle, Arruns
 Stealthily turned his horse in her direction,
 Circling, probing, looking for an opening,
 And always pumping his unerring spear. 915

It happened that Chloerus, a Trojan
 And formerly a priest of Cybele,
 Resplendent in his Phrygian armor,
 Was charging ahead on his foaming stallion.
 This horse was caparisoned in a skin plated 920
 With bronze scales and buckled with gold.
 Chloerus himself shone in exotic purple
 And shot Cretan arrows from a Lycian bow,
 Golden the bow, and golden his helmet,
 And the rustling folds of his saffron cloak 925
 Were clasped with gold. The tunic he wore
 And his Asian leggings were finely embroidered.
 Camilla wanted either to hang these weapons
 As spoils in a temple or to wear the gold herself.
 In any case she singled out Chloerus 930
 And chased him down like a huntress,
 Oblivious to all else and raging recklessly
 Through the ranks of men with a woman's passion
 For booty and spoils. Arruns saw his chance
 And finally sprang into action, spear in hand, 935
 As he prayed to heaven in words such as these:

"Lord God Apollo, guardian
 Of holy Soracte, where we your votaries
 Pass through the fire in our faith
 And walk with bare feet over the embers, 940
 Grant that this disgrace be effaced by our arms.
 O Father Almighty!
 I seek no plunder, no spoils,

No trophy for this woman's defeat.
 Other feats will bring me fame. 945
 If only this dread plague falls beneath my blow,
 I will return inglorious to my fatherland."

Apollo heard his prayer, and in his heart
 Granted half of it and scattered half to the winds.
 Arruns would defeat Camilla, yes, and lay her 950
 Low in death, but his high fatherland
 Would never see his return. That prayer
 The winds bore away to the southern storms.
 And so, as the spear flew from his hand
 And hissed through the air, all the Volscians 955
 Turned their eyes and hearts to their queen,
 But she herself noticed neither air nor sound
 Nor weapon coming out of the sky
 Until the spear transfixed her bared breast,
 And drank her virgin blood from deep within. 960
 Her comrades hurried around her in alarm
 And caught their mistress as she fell. Arruns,
 More frightened than any of them, ran away
 In mingled joy and fear, unwilling to trust
 His own spear or face Camilla's weapons. 965

*Having killed a shepherd, or a great steer,
 A wolf will run before men can come after him
 With their hostile spears. Aware
 That he has done something reckless,
 He loses himself in the trackless mountains, 970
 Tucking his quivering tail beneath his belly.*

So too Arruns in his panic wanted only
 To be out of sight, and to this end
 He plunged into the thick of battle.

Camilla's dying hand pulled at the spear, 975
 But the iron point was stuck deep in her ribs.
 Drained of blood, she sank back; the chill light
 Sank in her eyes; and her face, formerly
 So radiant, turned pale in death.

Or wore our quiver on your shoulder.
 But your queen has not left you dishonored
 In the hour of death, and your doom 1015
 Will be renowned among the nations.
 Nor will you be disgraced as one unavenged.
 Whoever violated your body with a wound
 Will pay with his life.”

At the foot of the mountain
 Stood the great burial mound of Dercennus, 1020
 A Laurentine king of old, shaded by ilex.
 The beautiful goddess touched down here
 And from the high barrow spotted Arruns.
 When she saw him swelling with pride
 In his gleaming armor, she cried: 1025

“Why are you going off? Turn your steps
 This way, come over here to die,
 And receive for Camilla your just reward—
 Not that you are worthy of Diana’s arrows.”

Thus the Thracian nymph, and she pulled 1030
 From the gilded quiver a feathered arrow
 And stretched the bow deliberately
 Until its curving tips were almost touching,
 Her left hand up against the arrow’s metal point,
 Right hand and bowstring back against her breast. 1035
 Arruns heard the arrow whirl through the air
 At the same moment that it pierced his chest.
 He gasped his life away in the nameless dust,
 Forgotten by his comrades, and Opis
 Winged her way to high Olympus. 1040

Their commander lost, Camilla’s light cavalry
 Was the first unit to retreat. The Rutulians
 Then withdrew, as did the fighter Atinas.
 Scattered captains and abandoned troops,
 Seeking safety, wheeled their horses around 1045
 And galloped back toward the city walls.
 None of them could stop the Trojan onslaught

Or even stand against it. They slung
 Their unstrung bows on their sagging shoulders,
 And their horses' hooves pounded the crumbling plain. 1050

A dark cloud of dust rolled to the walls,
 And in the watchtowers mothers beat their breasts
 And raised their cries to the stars.

The first group to race inside the open gates
 Was followed so closely by the enemy 1055

That their ranks mingled, and far from escaping
 A piteous death they were sliced open

On the very threshold of their native city
 And gasped out their lives under the shelter
 Of their own homes. Some closed the gates 1060

And did not dare open them for their friends
 No matter how much they pleaded.

The slaughter was heartbreaking, citizens
 Rushing on the defenders' swords. Shut out
 Before the eyes of their weeping parents, 1065

Some were stampeded into the trenches
 While others charged blindly at the stout gates
 And battered the strongly barred doors.

Even the mothers defended the walls,
 Rivaling Camilla out of love of their country, 1070

Hurling missiles from their trembling hands—
 Oak poles and seared stakes in place of hard steel.
 Each burned to die first defending the walls.

Meanwhile, Acca brought her grim message
 To Turnus, still in the forest, and filled his mind 1075

With a picture of immense devastation:
 The Volscian ranks destroyed, Camilla fallen,
 The enemy advancing relentlessly,

Sweeping everything before them in triumph,
 And the panic that had spread to the town. 1080

Raging—and this was the stern will of Jove—
 Turnus abandoned the ambush in the hills

And left the forest. He had just reached the plain
 And was out of sight when Father Aeneas

Entered the open pass, scaled the ridge, 1085
 And came out from the shadows of the wood.

So both men marched rapidly toward the city
With all their troops, no great distance apart.
Aeneas saw on the plain ahead clouds of dust
Tramped up by the Laurentine army, 1090
And at the same moment Turnus became aware
Of Aeneas' advance, heard the marching feet
And the snorting horses. They would have
Joined battle at once, but the rose-red Sun
Was already bathing his weary team 1095
In the western waters. And so as day ebbed
And night was coming on, one army encamped
Before the city, and the other strengthened its walls.

AENEID TWELVE

When Turnus saw that the Latin forces
Were beaten down, saw that his promises
Had now come due and that all eyes
Were on him, his pride hardened to iron
And his spirit burned.

A lion prowling 5
The fields around Carthage is wounded in the chest
By hunters and only then wakens to war.
Tossing his shaggy mane with joy, he snaps
The spear and roars with bloodstained mouth.

So too the fury mounting in Turnus. 10
He stormed to King Latinus and said:

“I’m not waiting. There is no need
For Aeneas and his cowards to recant.
I’ll meet him in single combat. Draw up
The pact, Father, and begin the rites. 15
Either this arm pitches the Asian tramp
Into Tartarus, with the Latins watching,
And my sword restores our nation’s honor—
Or he rules with Lavinia as his bride.”

And Latinus, steady and calm, replied: 20

“The more spirited you, our champion, are,
The more heroic, the more carefully must I

Ponder, and weigh every chance. You have
 Your father Daunus' kingdom and all the towns
 You have taken in war. Nor do I, Latinus, 25
 Lack gold or influence. There are in Latium
 Other brides of noble birth for you,
 Now listen to me hard, and take this to heart.
 All the oracles and augurs forbade me
 To wed my child to any of the suitors 30
 She had in the past. But I was overcome
 By love for you and our ties of kinship,
 Overcome by the tears of my sorrowful queen,
 And I broke all bonds. I betrayed my child's betrothed
 And took up impious arms. From that day on, 35
 You see, Turnus, how I have been beset by war
 And the burdens you, above all, must bear.
 Defeated twice in battle, we can scarcely guard,
 Even within our walls, the hopes of Italy.
 The Tiber still flows warm with our blood, 40
 The great plains are white with our bones.
 Why do I waver? What madness possesses me?
 If with Turnus dead I am ready to accept
 The Trojans as allies, why not end the struggle
 While he is still unharmed? What will they say, 45
 Your Rutulian kinsmen, the rest of Italy,
 If—Fortune avert my words—I deliver you
 To death while you ask to marry my daughter?
 Give some thought to war's hazards, pity
 Your aged father, sorrowing in Ardea!" 50

Latinus' words did nothing to dispel
 Turnus' fury. The very attempt
 Inflamed his rage and made it mount higher.
 When he could speak again, he had this to say:

"For my sake, sire, do nothing for my sake, 55
 And permit me to purchase fame with death.
 I too can throw spears, Father, and when I strike
 Blood flows from the wound. His goddess mother
 Won't be there for him, lurking in mist,
 To hide his womanly flight in a cloud." 60

But the queen, reeling with horror
 At the new rules of engagement, wept
 And raved for death as she clung to the man
 Betrothed to her daughter:

“By these tears

I beg you, Turnus, by any reverence you have 65
 For your beloved Amata—you are my only hope,
 The only comfort of my sad old age,
 And on you depend the honor of Latinus
 And the declining fortunes of our house—
 This one thing I beg of you: 70
 Do not commit yourself to this combat.
 Whatever fate awaits you in battle
 Awaits me also, and together with you
 I will leave this hateful light before I see
 Aeneas as my captor and my son.” 75

Lavinia heard her mother’s words, tears
 Stinging her cheeks, and the blood
 Ran to her face,

*Like crimson dye
 Staining Indian ivory, or the blush
 Of white lilies mingled with roses.* 80

Turnus stared at the girl, distraught
 By his love for her. Then, more avid
 Than ever for war, he turned to Amata
 And said briefly:

“Don’t pester me with tears
 Or be a bird of ill omen as I go off to battle, 85
 Mother. Turnus cannot delay his death.

Idmon, take this message to the Phrygian,
 A message he will not be glad to hear:
 As soon as tomorrow’s Dawn, riding
 In her crimson chariot, reddens the sky, 90
 Let him not lead his Teucrian troops
 Against the Rutulians. Let Teucrian arms

And Rutulians rest. We will decide the war
 With our own blood. On that field
 Let Lavinia be wooed and won as bride!” 95

Turnus spoke and ran back into the palace.
 He called for his horses and smiled to see them
 Neighing and prancing, horses Orithyia herself
 Had given to Pilumnus, glorious animals
 Whiter than snow, faster than the wind. 100
 The grooms were drumming on their chests
 With cupped palms and combing their manes.
 Turnus strapped on his shoulders a corselet
 Plated with gold and pale bronze. He hefted
 A shield, put on a crimson-crested helmet, 105
 And slung on the sword that the Lord of Fire
 Had made for Daunus, dipping the white-hot steel
 In the waters of Styx. His spear was leaning
 Against a column in the middle of the hall,
 A spear taken as spoil from Auruncan Actor. 110
 Turnus gripped the stout spear, shook it
 Quivering, and cried out:

“Spear that has never
 Failed my call, the hour has come! Actor
 Once bore you mightily; now you are in the hand
 Of Turnus. Grant that I lay the Phrygian eunuch 115
 Out on the ground, rip away his corselet,
 And grind into the dirt his pretty hair, crisped
 With curling irons and dripping with myrrh!”

By these furies Turnus was driven. His face
 Burned and spat sparks, and his eyes shot flames. 120

*When a bull prepares to fight, he bellows
 Horrifically and, concentrating his anger
 In his horns, charges a tree trunk and spars
 With the wind or scatters sand with his hooves.*

Aeneas too was like this, a fierce presence 125
 In the armor his mother had given him.

He whetted his soul for war, and he fanned
 His anger, glad that the war would be settled
 On the terms offered. Then he comforted
 His comrades and Iulus, who was sad and afraid, 130
 Reminding them of his destiny. And he ordered
 That a firm and clear response be conveyed
 To King Latinus, declaring the terms of peace.

Dawn scattered radiance on the mountaintops
 As the horses of the Sun rose from the sea 135
 Breathing light from flared nostrils.

Rutulians

And Trojans had measured the field for combat
 Before the city walls and in its center
 Were preparing sod altars to their common gods.
 Priests in vestments, verbena on their brows, 140
 Were bringing springwater and fire.
 The Ausonian army marched out from the gates
 In close formation. Opposite them,
 All the Trojan and Tyrrhenian troops
 Streamed forward, variously equipped, 145
 But each armed with steel as if for battle.
 Amid these thousands the captains rushed,
 Resplendent in gold and purple: Mnestheus,
 Of the house of Assaracus, brave Asilas,
 And Messapus, breaker of horses, 150
 In the line of Neptune. They all withdrew
 To their own side, stuck their spears in the earth,
 And rested their shields against them. Then,
 Eagerly pouring forth, the mothers,
 The unarmed masses, and feeble old men 155
 Sat on rooftops and towers and stood on the gates.

Juno was watching all this from the hill
 Now called Alban (unnamed at that time
 And without fame or glory). She gazed out
 Over the plain at the double lines 160
 Of Laurentum and Troy, and at Latinus' city.
 Then she abruptly addressed, goddess to goddess,

Turnus' sister, mistress of still water
And sounding rivers, an honor Jupiter,
Lord of the Sky, had bestowed upon her 165
In return for taking her virginity:

“Nymph, glory of rivers, my heart's delight,
You know how I have given you preference
Over all the Latin girls who have climbed
Into Jove's thankless bed. You alone 170
I have gladly given a place in heaven.
Learn now, Juturna, your sorrow,
And do not blame me. While Fortune
Seemed to allow it, and Fates permitted
Latium to prosper, I protected Turnus 175
And your city. Now I see him facing
A destiny he does not deserve; his doom
Is upon him, and the fatal stroke is near.
I cannot look upon this ordained combat.
If you dare to help your brother now, 180
Go on; it becomes you. It may still be
That better fortune will befall the damned.”

At this, Juturna wept profusely
And three times, four times, her hand
Beat her lovely breast. But Juno cried: 185

“This is no time for tears. Hurry,
And if there is any way at all
Save your brother from death,
Or renew the war and strike the treaty
From their hands. I, Juno, order you to dare.” 190

With this exhortation Juno left her,
Her mind stunned and her heart in pain.

And now the kings came forth. Latinus rode
In a four-horse chariot of impressive size.
Around his brows shone twelve golden rays, 195
Insignia of his ancestor the Sun.
Turnus drove a white pair and brandished

A brace of spears with broad iron heads.
 From the camp opposite came Aeneas,
 Father of the Roman race, his starry shield 200
 And celestial arms a blaze of glory,
 And with him was Ascanius, Rome's second hope.
 A priest in immaculate vestments brought
 A young boar and an unshorn sheep
 And set them beside the blazing altars. 205
 The heroes faced the rising sun,
 Sprinkled the victims with salted meal,
 Cut the forelocks, and poured libations
 From shallow bowls upon the altars.
 Then pious Aeneas, sword in hand, prayed: 210

“I call to witness the Sun, and this land
 For which I have endured many trials,
 And the Father Almighty, and you, his consort,
 Saturnia—kinder at last now, Goddess, I pray—
 And Mars in his glory, father of all war. 215
 And I call upon the springs and rivers,
 And the Powers of the air and the blue sea:
 If victory falls to Turnus the Ausonian,
 The vanquished will withdraw to Evander's city.
 Iulus shall leave this land, and Aeneas' sons 220
 Will never return to renew this war
 Or challenge this realm with the sword.
 But if Victory grants that we win the field
 (As I think shall be, and may the gods so confirm)
 I will not demand that Italians be subject 225
 To Teucrians, nor seek dominion for myself.
 Let both nations, unconquered, commit
 To everlasting peace under equal laws.
 I will ordain rites and gods. Latinus,
 My father-in-law, will retain command. 230
 Authority will remain with my father-in-law.
 For me the Teucrians will raise my city walls,
 And Lavinia will give the town her name.”

Latinus spoke next. Looking up to heaven
 He stretched his right hand to the stars, saying: 235

“By these same Powers I too swear, Aeneas,
 By Earth, Sea, and Stars, by Latona’s twins
 And two-faced Janus, by the lords
 Of the world below and the shrines of Dis.
 May the Father of all, who sanctions treaties 240
 With his thunderbolt, hear my words.
 I touch the altars and swear by the fires
 And gods between us: the day will not dawn
 That will break this peace and truce for Italy,
 However things may fall; nor shall any power 245
 Change my will, though it may drown Earth
 In flood and dissolve Sky into the Abyss.
 Sooner will this scepter I hold sprout leaves
 And branch again, though it has been cut
 At the root, bereft of its mother, and the axe 250
 Has pared off leaf and twig. Once it was a tree,
 But now the craftsman’s hand has sheathed it
 In bronze for the elders of Latium to bear.”

With such words they ratified the treaty
 In the presence of the leaders. Then 255
 They cut the throats of the consecrated beasts
 Over the flames, tore out the living entrails,
 And piled the altar high with platters of meat.

But it had long seemed to the Rutulians
 That the fight was not fair. Their hearts 260
 Were filled with doubt, and all the more when they saw
 The ill-matched combatants up close.
 Turnus added to their dismay
 By walking quietly, like a suppliant
 Approaching an altar with downcast eyes, 265
 His cheeks hollow, youthful body pale.
 When his sister Juturna saw the talk
 Begin to spread and the whole crowd waver,
 She entered their midst disguised as Camers—
 A man of noble birth whose family had a name 270
 For valor, and who was himself a warrior—
 Entered their midst and, knowing well
 The ways of men, let drop a few choice words:

“Aren’t you ashamed, Rutulians, to risk
 One man’s life when we have an army like this? 275
 Aren’t we their match in numbers and strength?
 Look, this is all of them: Trojans, Arcadians,
 And the superstitious Etrurians, who hate Turnus.
 Even if only every other man of us fought,
 There would barely be enough of them. 280
 Turnus’ fame will lift him to the gods,
 Upon whose altars he has sworn his life,
 And shall be kept alive on the lips of men.
 But we, our country lost, will become slaves,
 We who today lounge around in the fields.” 285

This brought their feelings to the boiling point,
 And a murmur rippled through the ranks.
 Not only the Rutulians but the Latins too
 Were transformed, and the Laurentines.
 Those who had been hoping for rest and safety 290
 Now wanted their weapons, prayed for the truce
 To be broken, and pitied Turnus’ unjust fate.
 Juturna showed them something more,
 A sign in high heaven, none more potent
 To confuse the minds of the sons of Italy 295
 And cheat them with its portent. Flying across
 The red sky, Jupiter’s bird, a golden eagle,
 Was chasing a clamorous flock of shorebirds,
 When it swooped down suddenly to the water
 And snatched in its talons a noble swan. 300
 The Italians snapped to attention and saw,
 To their amazement, all of the birds
 Turn in flight with a rush of wings
 That darkened the sky, pursuing their enemy
 Until the eagle, overcome by the attack 305
 And the swan’s sheer weight, dropped its prey
 Into the stream and took refuge in the clouds.

The Rutulians greeted this omen with a shout.
 They were ready for battle. Tolumnius,
 The augur, took the lead and cried: 310

“This is what I have been praying for!
 I accept, I acknowledge the gods. With me,
 With me as leader, take up your weapons!
 You’ve suffered enough, like these frail birds,
 Harassed by a shameless foreign invader 315
 Who has been ravaging your shores.
 He too will take flight and spread his sails
 Far out to sea. Now close ranks with one heart.
 Your king has been seized. Fight to defend him!”

With that Tolumnius ran forward 320
 And rifled his spear at the enemy lines.
 Men could hear the hiss of the cornel shaft
 As it split the air. A thundering shout
 Went up from the crowd and their hearts raced
 As the spear flew on. Fate had it 325
 That nine brothers stood in its path,
 Beautiful boys born to Arcadian Gyllipus
 By his faithful Tuscan wife. One of them,
 Especially handsome in his gleaming armor,
 Was hit by the spear, which pierced his ribs 330
 Just above the buckle of the stitched belt
 That cinched his waist and laid him out
 On the yellow sand. His brothers,
 A spirited band, were stung with grief
 And rushed blindly ahead, some with swords drawn 335
 And others with spears. A Laurentine column
 Charged out to meet them, and these were countered
 By a flood of Trojan and Agylline troops,
 And Etruscans in their emblazoned armor—
 All with one passion, to let cold steel rule. 340
 The altars were stripped bare. The sky seethed
 With javelins, and the iron rain fell hard.
 Sacred vessels and fire were carried off,
 And Latinus himself fled, bearing away
 His defeated gods, the truce null and void. 345
 Men were reining their chariots or leaping
 Onto horseback, ready with drawn swords.

Messapus, in his zeal to overturn the truce,
 Drove his horse straight at Aulestes,

An Etruscan. This man, a king
 And wearing a king's insignia, backed away, 350
 Tripped, and fell head and shoulders
 Onto an altar behind him. Messapus
 Was over him in a flash, spear in hand,
 And although Aulestes, poor wretch, 355
 Pleaded long, came down hard on him
 With his beam of a spear and said:

“He's had it, one of our better victims
 For the great gods.”

The Italians

Crowded around and stripped the body 360
 While it was still warm. Corynaeus
 Was in their path, and as Ebysus came up
 To hit him he snatched up a charred brand
 From an altar and shoved it in Ebysus' face,
 Igniting his huge beard, which gave off a stench 365
 As it burned. Corynaeus followed this up
 By clutching the hair of his bewildered foe
 In his left hand and coming up hard with his knee
 To bring him down, where he finished him off
 With a sword stroke to his side.

Podalirius

Had chased down the shepherd Alsus 370
 As he was rushing through a hail of weapons
 And now towered over him with naked sword.
 But it was Alsus who, with a swing of his axe,
 Cleaved through his enemy's brow and chin, 375
 Spattering his armor with gore. Iron slumber
 Pressed hard on Podalirius' eyes,
 And their light was shrouded in eternal night.

But steadfast Aeneas, head bare, stood
 Stretching out his unarmed hand and calling 380
 In a loud voice to his men:

“Where are you going?
 What is this sudden surge of strife? Hold in your rage!

The truce has already been struck, its terms set.
 I alone have the right to fight. Let me do it,
 Forget your fears; this hand will make the treaty true. 385
 These rites have already given Turnus to me!”

As Aeneas was saying these things an arrow
 Whistled through the air toward him
 In a long falling arc, shot by whose hand
 No one knows, nor whether it was pure chance 390
 Or some god who brought the Rutulians
 This glory. Credit for the deed is hidden,
 And no one boasted of wounding Aeneas.

When Turnus saw Aeneas withdraw
 And his captains in disarray, he burned 395
 With new hope. He called for his horses
 And arms, bounded into his chariot,
 And proudly took the reins in his hands.
 That chariot ride brought death to many,
 Many he rolled over half-alive, crushing 400
 Entire platoons under hooves and wheels,
 And picking off those who tried to escape
 With spear after spear.

Bloodstained Mars

*Thunders with his shield to rouse men to war
 As he gives his frenzied horses free rein 405
 Along the icy Hebrus river. They run so fast
 Over the open plain that not even the Winds
 Can keep up, and the land of Thrace moans
 With the beat of their hooves. Along with the god
 Drive his satellites, the dark shapes of Terror,
 And of Rage and Treachery. 410*

So too Turnus,
 Whipping his foaming, sweat-glazed horses
 Through the lanes of battle, trampling his foes.
 Pity those killed under the flying hooves
 As they splashed through the blood and kicked up sand 415
 Mingled with gore.

Sthenelus fell to Turnus
 At long range; Thamyrus and Pholus
 In close encounters. He also killed from a distance
 Glaucus, and Lades, whom their father, Imbrasus,
 Had raised in Lycia and equipped 420
 With matched sets of arms, one for close combat,
 The other for fighting from wind-swift horses.

Elsewhere, Eumedes rode into battle,
 Dolon's famous son, named after his grandfather
 But with the heart and hands of his father, 425
 Who at Troy dared to ask as his reward
 For going as a spy to the Danaan camp
 The horses of Achilles. Diomedes
 Gave him a quite different reward, and Dolon
 No longer aspired to Achilles' horses. 430
 When Turnus saw his son far off on the plain
 He sent a spear after him through empty space
 And then, catching up with the man, halted
 His team and jumped from his chariot.
 Standing over the fallen, dying Eumedes, 435
 Turnus planted a foot on his neck, wrested
 The sword from his hand, and reddened
 The shining blade deep in his throat, saying:

“Take a good look, Trojan, at these fields,
 The Hesperia you came to conquer in war. 440
 Lie there and measure out every acre. This
 Is the reward for those who try me with a sword,
 And this is how they build their city walls.”

Then, with a cast of his spear, Turnus sent
 Asbytes to keep Eumedes company 445
 And added Chloereus, Sybaris, Dares
 And Thersilochus, and then Thymoetes,
 Who fell from the neck of his bucking horse.

*The North Wind roars on the deep Aegean
 And drives the waves shoreward, and where the wind 450
 Swoops down clouds scud through the sky.*

Wherever Turnus cut his path, the ranks fell back
 And men turned and ran. His own momentum
 Carried him on, and as his chariot
 Split the air his plume streamed in the wind. 455
 Phegeus could not bear to face his onslaught.
 Half out of his mind, he threw himself
 In front of the chariot and, grabbing the reins,
 Wrenched aside the frothing jaws of the horses.
 While he was dragged along hanging from the yoke, 460
 Turnus' broad lance found his unguarded side
 And ripped through the double-plated corselet,
 Just grazing the skin. But as Phegeus
 Twisted around and tried to engage his sword,
 The turning wheel whirled him over 465
 And onto the ground. As Turnus passed by
 He swung his blade between the lower rim
 Of Phegeus' helmet and the upper edge
 Of his breastplate, slicing off his head,
 And left his maimed body to lie in the sand. 470

While Turnus was dealing death all over the plain,
 Mnestheus and loyal Achates, with Ascanius
 At their side, led Aeneas into the camp,
 Bleeding and limping as he leaned on his spear.
 He grit his teeth as he struggled to extract 475
 The head of the broken shaft. He called for
 The most direct approach, telling them
 To cut into the wound down to the dark recess
 Where the point was lodged and send him back
 Into battle.

And now Iapyx was there, 480
 Iasus' son, dearest of all to Phoebus Apollo.
 The god, deeply in love with the boy,
 Had offered to give him all of his arts:
 Prophecy, the lyre, his own swift arrows.
 But Iapyx, whose father was dying, 485
 Wanted to put off his fate and to that end
 Preferred to know the virtues of herbs
 And the skills of a healer, and to practice,
 Without glory, the silent arts.

Aeneas leaned

On his great spear, chafing at the delay, 490
 Surrounded by a crowd of warriors,
 His sad Iulus among them. The hero stood
 Unmoved by their tears. The aged physician
 Tucked up his robes in Paeonian fashion
 And treated Aeneas with his healing hands 495
 And Phoebus' potent herbs, but all in vain.
 In vain he pulled at the arrow with forceps,
 With no good fortune, no help from Apollo.
 Panic and rout were spreading more widely
 Over the plains; war's horror was upon them. 500
 The sky was a solid wall of dust; the horsemen
 Were closing in fast; spears and arrows
 Rained down on the camp; and the iron noise
 Rose to heaven with the cries of men fighting
 And of men falling under the fist of Mars. 505

Then Venus, shaken by her son's
 Undeserved pain, plucked from Cretan Ida
 A stalk of dittany with downy leaves
 And purple flowers, an herb wild goats eat
 When shot with an arrow. This herb 510
 Venus brought down, her face shrouded in mist.
 She steeped the plant in a gleaming cauldron
 Full of river water to bring out its hidden
 Medicinal virtues and sprinkled in juices
 Of healing ambrosia and fragrant panacea. 515
 Not knowing what he had, old Iapyx
 Was bathing Aeneas' wound with this water.
 Suddenly, all the pain went out of his body,
 The wound stopped bleeding, the arrow
 Slipped out easily in the healer's hand, 520
 And all of Aeneas' old strength returned.

“Hurry and bring the man his weapons!
 Why are you standing there?”

Iapyx said this,
 And he was the first to fire them up for battle:

“This did not happen by any human power,
Nor was it my art that saved you, Aeneas. 525
A greater power, a god, is at work here
And is sending you back to do greater deeds.”

Aeneas was hungry for the fight. Impatient
Of any delay, he clapped golden greaves 530
Onto his shins and started handling a spear.
As soon as his breastplate was strapped on
And his shield was fitted to his side,
He put his arms around Ascanius, kissed him
Lightly through his helmet, and said: 535

“Learn how to be a man from me, my son;
Learn good fortune from others. Today my hand
Will defend you in war and lead you
To great rewards. When you come of age,
See to it that you remember the example 540
Of your kinsmen, and that your father, Aeneas,
And your uncle Hector enliven your soul.”

Aeneas spoke and then moved through the gates,
Huge himself and brandishing a massive spear.
Close by his side were Antheus and Mnestheus, 545
And behind them the entire army poured out,
Emptying the camp. The plain boiled
With blinding dust, and the shocked earth trembled
Under the tramping feet.

From the wall opposite
Turnus saw them coming; the Ausonians saw them, 550
And a cold shudder ran through their bones.
Before any of the Latins, Juturna
Heard the sound, knew it, and turned and fled.
Aeneas was flying, and his dark line of troops
Was drawn in his wake over the open plains. 555

*When a storm breaks at sea, and the rain cloud
Moves toward land, pity the farmers,
Whose prescient hearts know what is coming
And shudder. Trees will be brought down,*

*Crops ruined, everything scattered. The winds
Run before it and their howls carry shoreward.* 560

Just so the Trojan commander brought his troops
Up to the front, and they massed around him.
Thymbraeus landed his sword on Osiris,
Mnestheus killed Arcetius, Achates Epolo, 565
Gyas Ufens. Even Tolumnius fell,
The augur who was first to hurl a spear
In the enemy's face. A shout split the air,
And the routed Rutulians turned around
In a cloud of dust and ran through the fields. 570
Aeneas didn't bother with these fugitives,
Or even with those who opposed him,
On foot or mounted. Turnus alone
He tracked through the thickening gloom,
Turnus alone he called out to combat. 575

Juturna, in her deep distress,
Knocked Turnus' driver, Metiscus,
Out of the chariot and left him behind.
The warrior goddess assumed his form,
His voice and armor, and took the rippling reins. 580

*A black swallow flits through the mansion
Of a wealthy lord, winging her way
Through the high halls to scavenge
Scraps and crumbs for her chirping nestlings,
Then twittering in and out of the porticoes 585
And about the courtyard pools.*

So too Juturna
Guided the horses through the enemy ranks
And flew in the chariot all over the field,
Giving them glimpses of her exultant brother,
Now here, now there, never allowing him 590
To lock up in combat but always flitting away.
Still, Aeneas kept tracking Turnus down
Through the winding maze of war, calling him,
Calling, and when he spotted him, sprinting

To match the horses' speed, only to have 595
 Juturna wrench the chariot aside.
 What could he do? He was all at sea,
 His mind pulled in contrary directions.
 Meanwhile, Messapus, treading lightly
 And carrying two javelins tipped with steel, 600
 Rifled one of them at him with deadly aim.
 Aeneas went down to one knee and crouched
 Behind his shield as the spearhead sheared
 The crest from his helmet. He felt a sudden
 Surge of anger at this treacherous attack. 605
 He saw Turnus' chariot pulling away.
 Calling to witness Jupiter himself
 And the altars of the broken treaty,
 Aeneas plunged into the general combat
 And, with Mars at his back, began to kill 610
 Indiscriminately, giving his rage free rein.

What god could now unfold for me
 So many bitter deaths, which poet could tell
 Of all the captains who met their many dooms
 Driven over the plain now by Turnus, 615
 Now by the Trojan hero? Did it please you,
 Jupiter, that nations destined to live
 In everlasting peace should clash so harshly?

Aeneas, in the first combat that halted
 The Trojans' onrush, paused only briefly 620
 To take out Sucro, driving his steel
 Through the rib cage, where death comes most quickly.
 Turnus unhorsed Amycus and his brother, Dioces,
 And then advancing on foot struck down one
 With his long spear, the other with his sword; 625
 Then hanging their severed heads from his chariot,
 He bore them off dripping dewdrops of blood.
 Aeneas sent to their deaths Talos, Tanais,
 And brave Cethegus, three in one assault,
 And then dispatched the shocked Onites, 630
 A Theban whose mother was Peridia.

Turnus' next victims were the brothers sent
 From Apollo's Lycian fields, and Menoetes,
 An Arcadian who hated warfare, in vain.
 This man had been a humble fisherman 635
 Near the pools of Lerna. He had no patrons,
 And his father tilled a rented plot of land.

*Like fires set on different sides of a wood,
 A dry thicket of crackling laurels;
 Or like rivers roaring down a mountainside,
 Each destroying everything in its path,* 640

So Aeneas and Turnus swept through the battle,
 Each of them seething with rage within,
 Hearts bursting, neither yielding an inch,
 And all their desire was to wound men with steel. 645

Murranus was boasting of his ancient lineage
 Stretching back to Latin kings, when Aeneas
 Hit him with a huge stone that pitched him
 Headfirst over his car, where he was trampled 650
 By horses who did not remember their master.
 Hyllus was charging forward with insane fury
 When Turnus rifled a spear at his golden brow.
 The point pierced his helmet and stuck in his brain.
 And you, Cretheus, bravest of the Greeks,
 Your right hand did not save you from Turnus; 655
 Nor did Cupencus' gods protect him
 When Aeneas came. He put his chest in the way
 Of Aeneas' spear, and the slight reprieve
 His bronze shield offered did not help him much.
 You also, Aeolus, fell at Laurentum 660
 And spread your body out in its fields,
 You, whom the Argive army could not lay low,
 Nor Achilles, destroyer of Priam's realm.
 Here was your end. Your home was in Lyrnesus
 Under Mount Ida; in Laurentum is your grave. 665

Now, all up and down the lines, both armies
 Engaged—all the Latins and all the Trojans:

Mnestheus and intense Serestus;
 Messapus, breaker of horses, and brave Asilas;
 Tuscan troops and Evander's Arcadians, 670
 Each doing his utmost, each at his limit,
 No rest, no respite in the vast, open conflict.

Aeneas' mother now put it in his mind
 To advance on the walls, attack the town
 With abrupt force, and throw the Latins 675
 Into confusion at the sudden slaughter.
 Tracking Turnus through the lanes of battle,
 He swept his eyes in every direction
 And saw the city untouched by the war,
 Quiet and at peace. At once a vision 680
 Of a greater conflict burned in his mind.
 Summoning Mnestheus, Sergestus,
 And brave Serestus, he climbed up a mound
 To which the rest of the Trojans came at a run,
 Still holding their spears and shields. Aeneas, 685
 Standing on this height, addressed them:

“I want no delay in carrying out my orders—
 Jupiter is on our side—and I don't want anyone
 Holding back because the decision is sudden. 690
 That city, the cause of this war, the heart
 Of Latinus' realm, unless they surrender
 And submit to our rule—that city
 I will today overthrow and lay its smoking roofs
 Level with the ground. Am I supposed to wait
 Until Turnus feels like doing battle with me, 695
 Until he comes back for more, beaten though he is?
 This is the crux of this accursed war, men.
 Bring torches and reclaim the treaty with fire!”

They outdid each other in their eagerness,
 Formed a wedge, and advanced to the walls en masse. 700
 Ladders and torches appeared from nowhere.
 One group stormed the gates and cut down the guards,
 Others darkened the sky with their javelins.

Aeneas himself stood at the foot of the wall,
 Stretched out his hands, and in a great voice
 Accused Latinus, calling the gods to witness 705
 That he was being forced into battle again,
 That the Italians had twice become his foes,
 Twice broken a treaty. Inside the walls
 Strife arose among the anxious citizens. 710
 Some wanted the city gates thrown open
 To the Dardanians and called for the king
 To be dragged to the walls. Others brought arms
 And marched out to defend their city.

*A shepherd has followed bees to their hive
 In tunneled pumice and filled it with smoke.
 Anxious for their realm, the bees scurry
 This way and that through their wax fortress
 And with loud buzzing hone their rage.
 The black stench billows through their halls,
 The hollow rock resounds with a blind hum,
 And the smoke comes out into the empty air.* 720

There was more grief for the weary Latins,
 And it shook the city to its very foundations.
 When the queen saw the enemy coming 725
 Into the town, the walls breached, roofs aflame,
 And no Rutulians, no troops of Turnus
 Opposing them, the poor woman believed
 That he had perished in battle. In her distress
 She cried out that she was the cause and origin 730
 Of all these evils, and said many other things
 In her frenzied grief. Determined to die,
 She tore her royal robes and from a high beam
 Hung a noose for her hideous death.
 When the Latin women found her dead, 735
 First her daughter Lavinia tore out
 Her golden hair and scored her cheeks,
 Then all of the people around her raved,
 And the house resounded with their laments.
 The sad news spread through all the city. 740
 Minds and hearts sank. Latinus went about

With rent garments, dazed by his wife's death
 And his city's ruin, his white hair grimed with dust.

During all this time, Turnus was pursuing
 A handful of stragglers at the edge of the plain, 745
 Moving more slowly now, less and less happy
 With his horses' brilliance. The wind carried to him
 Unseen terrors in the clamor from the town.
 Then, as he listened intently, a puzzle of sound
 Struck his ears, the murmur of suffering. 750

“What are all these cries coming from the city?
 It must be bad if I can hear it from here.”

Distracted, he drew in the reins and stopped.
 His sister, who still looked like Metiscus
 And as such was steering the chariot, 755
 Faced him and said:

“Let's keep after the Trojans
 Out here, where we are already winning.
 There are other troops to defend the town.
 Aeneas is taking it to the Italians now,
 And we should be dealing death to the Teucrians. 760
 You'll kill just as many here, with no less honor.”

To which Turnus replied:

“I knew it was you
 Long ago, Sister, when you entered this war
 And tricked us into breaking the truce,
 And you don't fool me now, Goddess. But why 765
 Come down from Olympus and endure all this?
 So you can see your brother's miserable death?
 What can I do? There are no guarantees.
 I saw Murranus before my own eyes,
 Calling me as he went down. No one 770
 Meant more to me—Murranus,
 A mighty man undone by a mighty wound.
 Poor Ufens died so he wouldn't have to see
 My disgrace. The Trojans have his body and arms.

And now I should allow our homes destroyed 775
 (The final touch) and not refute Drances?
 Turn tail and let this land see Turnus in flight?
 Is it so bad to die? Shades below,
 Be good to me, since the will of heaven
 Has turned against me. I will go down to you 780
 Holy in spirit, innocent of any guilt,
 And never unworthy of my great forebears.”

He had scarcely finished when Saces,
 His face wounded by an arrow, came riding up
 On a panting horse through the enemy lines, 785
 Calling Turnus by name and imploring him:

“Turnus, you are our last hope. Pity your people.
 Aeneas is storming in battle and threatening
 To throw down the Italians’ topmost towers
 And destroy them utterly. Torches are already 790
 Flying to the roofs. The Latins are turning
 All eyes to you, Turnus. King Latinus himself
 Mutters about whom to call his son
 And to which alliance he should turn. Moreover,
 The queen, who put all her trust in you, is dead 795
 By her own hand, gone from the world of light.
 Only Messapus and Atinas are holding the gates,
 Surrounded by squadrons bristling with steel,
 While you wheel your chariot in an empty field.”

Turnus was stunned by this changed picture 800
 Of his fortunes. He stood rooted in silence,
 His great heart roiling with shame, with grief
 Verging on madness, with frenzied love
 And undeniable courage. When the shadows
 Parted, and light returned to his mind, 805
 He swept his blazing eyes toward the walls,
 Furious, and looked back from his chariot
 At the great city.

Flames were spiraling skyward
 From story to story, about to catch a tower—

A defensive bulwark he himself had built,
Set on wheels and hung with high gangways. 810

“Now, Sister, the Fates triumph at last.
Stop holding me back. We will follow
Where God and cruel Fortune call us.
My mind is made up. I will meet Aeneas 815
And bear death’s bitterness. No longer,
Sister, will you see me shamed. But first,
Allow me to rage with furious rage.”

Turnus spoke, leapt down from his chariot,
And careened madly through the enemy lines, 820
Leaving his sorrowing sister behind.

*Think of a stone crashing down a mountain,
Either a storm has washed it free, or time
In its passing has loosened it, and now
The shameless mass of rock sweeps down 825
The steep slopes and bounds over the earth,
Rolling along with it trees, herds, and men.*

So too Turnus scattering the ranks
In his rush to the walls, where the ground
Was most soaked with blood and the air 830
Whined with spears. Turnus lifted his hand,
Had their immediate attention, and spoke:

“Fall back, Rutulians; and you, Latins,
Hold your fire. Whatever fortune is here
Is mine. It is better for your sake 835
That I alone make good the treaty
And settle the issue with steel.”

And the troops made room for him in the middle.

When Father Aeneas heard Turnus’ name,
He left the walls and left the high fortress, 840
Jettisoned everything he had been doing,
And in great exultation clashed his weapons.
The sound was like thunder, and the hero

*As vast as Mount Athos, vast as Eryx,
Vast as Father Apennine himself* 845
*With his shimmering oaks, when he roars in joy
And lifts his snowy head toward heaven.*

Now every last man turned and stared—
Every Rutulian, Trojan, and Italian soldier,
Both those high on the walls and those below 850
Who were battering the walls—and they all
Took off their armor. Latinus himself
Was lost in wonder that these two great men,
Born in different parts of the world, had met
And now would settle the issue with steel. 855
As soon as the field was cleared out on the plain
They sprinted forward, threw their spears from afar,
Then waded into battle with a clash of bronze.
Earth groaned. Sword struck sword with stroke
After stroke, luck and valor blending into one. 860

*In great Sila, or high on Taburnus,
Two bulls have locked horns in mortal combat.
The keepers fall back in fear, and all the cattle
Stand in silent dread, the heifers musing
On who will be lord of the entire herd.* 865
*The bulls butt heads with tremendous force
And gore each other, bathing their backs
And shoulders with blood, and the whole grove
Resounds with their bellowing groans.*

So too the Trojan and Daunian heroes 870
Clashed shield against shield and filled the sky
With crashing thunder. Jupiter himself
Held up his balanced scales and placed on them
The destinies of each man to determine whom
The battle doomed, whose weight sank down to death. 875

Turnus, thinking he could get away with it,
Sprang forward with sword lifted high
And put all of his weight into a sweeping stroke.
A shout went up from both armies, Trojans

And Latins both straining to see, expectant,
 But the treacherous sword only splintered 880
 In mid-stroke. When Turnus saw
 That his right hand held an unfamiliar hilt
 He fled, faster than the East Wind.
 The story is told that when Turnus 885
 First mounted his chariot he neglected,
 In his haste, to bring his father's sword,
 And snatched up instead the blade of Metiscus,
 His charioteer. This served him well enough
 When he was chasing down Teucrian stragglers, 890
 But when it came up against the divine armor
 Forged by Vulcan, the mortal blade
 Shattered like brittle ice into fragments
 That glittered on the yellow sand.

Turnus

Ran like a madman this way and that 895
 Across the plain, weaving in circles.
 The Teucrians closed in, confining him
 Between the walls and the desolate marsh.
 Aeneas, though his knees were slowed
 By the arrow wound and he was not at full speed, 900
 Nevertheless stayed hot on his heels.

*A hunting hound has caught a stag
 Hemmed in by a stream, or by crimson feathers
 That hunters use to hedge in game. The dog
 Runs and barks and worries the stag, 905
 Who in terror of the snares and the high bank
 Runs back and forth in a thousand directions.
 But the keen Umbrian hound stays close,
 Mouth gaping wide. The hound almost seizes it,
 And snaps its jaws shut as if it had seized it, 910
 But bites only the empty air.*

Another shout arose,
 Echoed by the banks and pools, and the sky thundered
 With the tumult below. While Turnus ran,
 While he was in full flight, he reproached the Rutulians,
 Calling them by name, and clamored for his sword. 915

Aeneas, though, promised instant death
 For anyone who came near and made them tremble
 By threatening to level their town. Wounded,
 He pressed on as they ran in loops, circling five times
 And doubling back he unwove all their circuits, 920
 For they were not running for some trivial prize
 At games but for the lifeblood of Turnus.

There was a bitter-leaved wild olive tree,
 Sacred to Faunus, out on the plain,
 Revered of old by mariners. Onto this tree 925
 They would attach their offerings
 To the Laurentine god and in its branches
 Hang their votive garments. But the Teucrians,
 With no regard for the tree's sanctity,
 Had cut it down so that they could fight 930
 On an open field. The spear Aeneas had thrown
 Was stuck in the tough roots of this tree,
 And the Trojan now stooped to pull it out
 So he could take down with this weapon
 The man he could not catch on foot. 935
 Turnus, out of his mind with fear, cried out:

“Have pity on me, Faunus and Mother Earth.
 Hold fast the spear, if ever I have honored you,
 Whom the men of Aeneas now profane in war.”

He spoke, and the gods heard his prayer. 940
 Aeneas struggled long with the pliant root
 But could not with all his strength force open
 Its stubborn grip. And while he struggled,
 Juturna, transformed again into Metiscus,
 Ran up and handed her brother his sword. 945
 Venus, outraged at the nymph's audacity,
 Came and plucked the spear out from the root.
 The two heroes, weapons and spirits restored,
 One trusting his sword, the other towering
 With his spear, both panting for breath, 950
 Stood face to face in the arena of War.

Meanwhile, the Lord of Olympus
 Addressed Juno as she watched the fighting
 From a golden cloud:

“Juno, my wife,
 How will it end? What remains at the last? 955
 You yourself know, and you admit that you know,
 That Aeneas, the hero of his country,
 Is destined to be exalted to the stars.
 What are you preparing? With what hope
 Do you cling to the chill clouds? Was it right 960
 That a god be profaned by a mortal’s wound?
 That the sword be returned—Juturna could never
 Have done it without you—which Turnus had lost,
 Or that strength increase in the vanquished?
 Desist, and yield at last to my prayers, 965
 Lest your great grief consume you in silence,
 Lest your bitter woes return to me often
 From your sweet lips. We have come to the end.
 You have had the power to pursue the Trojans
 Over land and sea, to kindle a terrible war, 970
 To disfigure a home and blend bridals with grief.
 I forbid you to attempt more.”

Thus Jupiter;
 And thus Saturn’s daughter, with downcast eyes:

“It was because I knew that this was your will,
 My mighty lord, that with great reluctance 975
 I left the earth and left Turnus. Otherwise,
 You would not see me sitting here alone
 On my airy throne enduring all, right or wrong.
 No, I would be standing cinctured in flame
 In the front lines of battle, dragging the Trojans 980
 Into mortal combat. As for Juturna,
 Yes, I persuaded her to help her brother,
 And for his life’s sake I sanctioned daring deeds
 But not to shoot the arrow, not to bend the bow.
 I swear to this by the implacable water of Styx, 985
 The one inviolable oath for the gods above.

And now I yield, and quit this loathsome war.
 I have one solemn request of you, something
 Not prohibited by Fate, for Latium's sake
 And for your people's majesty. When soon 990
 (Let it be) they make peace with happy weddings,
 And form alliances with laws and treaties,
 Do not command the native Latins
 To change their ancient name, nor become
 Trojans and be called Teucrians, nor to change 995
 In language or in dress. Let Latium be,
 Let Alban kings rule through the ages,
 And let the Roman stock be strong
 In Italian manhood. Troy has fallen.
 Let the name of Troy be fallen too." 1000

Smiling at her, the world's Creator said:

"You are Jove's true sister, and Saturn's child.
 The waves of wrath that roll deep in your breast!
 Come, dismiss the fury that was aroused in vain.
 I grant your request, and I willingly relent. 1005
 The Ausonians will keep their native tongue
 And ancestral ways; as their name is now,
 So shall it be. The Teucrians shall be absorbed
 In the body at large. I will establish
 Their sacred rites and laws and make them all 1010
 Latins, with a single tongue. From them shall rise
 A race blended with Ausonian blood
 That you shall see surpass both gods and men
 In faith and loyalty. And no nation
 Shall be more zealous in Juno's worship." 1015

The goddess nodded, happy to assent,
 Then left the cloud and departed from the sky.

This done, the Father pondered how
 To withdraw Juturna from her brother's side.

There are twin fiends, whom men call Dirae, 1020
 Born to the Night Goddess in the same litter

As hellish Megaera. Their mother wretched
 The heads of all three with coiling snakes
 And gave them wings to ride the winds.
 These two Dirae attend the throne of Jupiter 1025
 And whet the fears of feeble mortals
 When the grim monarch visits them
 With disease and death, or terrorizes
 Guilty cities with war. Jove sent one of them
 Down from high heaven with instructions 1030
 To appear as an omen before Juturna.
 The fiend flew down to earth in whirling wind,

*Like an arrow speeding from a bowstring
 Into a cloud bank, a poisoned arrow
 Shot by a Parthian archer, a Parthian 1035
 Or a Cydonian, an incurable shaft
 Whining unseen through the flitting shadows.*

Thus the child of Night, speeding to earth.
 When she came in sight of the Trojan ranks
 And the troops of Turnus, she suddenly shrank 1040
 Into the shape of an owl, the small bird
 That often perches at night on tombs
 And deserted rooftops, singing its late,
 Unwelcome song through the shadows.
 So transformed, the fiend flits and screams 1045
 Before the face of Turnus, her dark wings
 Beating his shield. A strange, numbing dread
 Washed through Turnus' body; his hair
 Bristled with fear; his voice stuck in his throat.

His sister, Juturna, recognized from afar 1050
 The harsh whisper of the Dread One's wings.
 She tore out her unbound hair, her nails
 Clawed her face, and she pounded her breast
 With her fists. Then she cried out to her brother:

"How can your sister help you now, Turnus, 1055
 And what is left for my own hard life? Nothing
 I can do will prolong the light for you.

Can I oppose this terrible portent?
 Now at last I quit the field. Don't try to scare me,
 You ill-omened vultures! I am already afraid. 1060
 I know the beating of your wings,
 The sound of death, and I do not mistake
 The haughty commands of Jupiter.
 Is this how he compensated me
 For my lost virginity? Why did he give me 1065
 Life everlasting? If I could only die
 I could end this sorrow, go through the shadows
 At my poor brother's side. I, immortal!
 Nothing can be sweet without you, Brother.
 What ground can gape deep enough 1070
 To send a goddess to the deepest shades?"

So saying, Juturna covered her head
 With a sea-grey veil, and moaning profusely
 The goddess plunged into the river's depths.

Aeneas kept the pressure on, rocking 1075
 His tree of a spear, and cried savagely:

"What's the delay now, Turnus? Why are you still
 Holding back? This isn't a footrace, you know;
 It's hand-to-hand combat with cold steel.
 Go ahead, change yourself into all sorts of shapes, 1080
 Collect all your courage and skill, fly away
 High on wings if you want, up to the stars,
 Or sink into the hollow earth—I'll get you still."

And Turnus, shaking his head:

"You don't scare me,
 Big-mouth. The gods scare me, and having Jupiter 1085
 As my enemy."

Turnus said no more.
 Looking around he saw a huge stone
 Lying on the plain, a stone ancient and huge
 Set in place to settle boundary disputes.

Twelve chosen men could scarcely lift it 1090
 Onto their shoulders, as men are now,
 But the hero scooped it up quickly, rose
 To his full height, and with a burst of speed
 Hurling it at his adversary. But as he ran
 He did not know himself, did not know who he was 1095
 As he moved toward the immense stone, lifted it,
 And sent it flying. His knees buckled,
 His blood was like ice. The stone itself,
 Rolling through empty air, fell short
 And did not deliver its blow.

In dreams, 1100
When night's weariness weighs on our eyes,
We are desperate to run farther and farther
But collapse weakly in the middle of our efforts.
Our tongue doesn't work, our usual strength
Fails our body, and words will not come. 1105

So too Turnus. However bravely he tried
 The Dread One would not let him win through.
 Shifting images spun through his mind.
 He looked at the Rutulians, and the town,
 Frozen with fear. He saw death closing in 1110
 And trembled, nowhere to escape, no way
 To attack his enemy. He could not see
 His chariot, or his sister, the charioteer.

While Turnus faltered Aeneas' fatal spear
 Quivered in the light. Seeing his chance 1115
 He put all his weight behind a long-range throw,
 And his weapon flew with deadly force,
 Faster than a stone hurled by a catapult
 And with a sound louder than thunder.
 Roaring through the air like a black tornado 1120
 It tore through Turnus' seven-ply shield,
 Ripped open his corselet, and with a hiss
 Sliced through his thigh. Huge Turnus
 Sank down on one knee. The Rutulians
 Leapt up with a shout, and the woods and hills 1125

Echoed their groans. Humbled, Turnus
Lifted his eyes to Aeneas
And stretched forth his hand in supplication:

“Go ahead, use your chance. I deserve it.
I will not ask anything for myself, 1130
But if a parent’s grief can still touch you,
Remember your own father, Anchises,
And take pity on Daunus’ old age,
I beg you. Give me, or if you prefer,
Give my dead body back to my people. 1135
You’ve beaten me, and the Ausonians
Have seen me, beaten, stretch out my hand to you.
Lavinia is yours. Let your hatred stop here.”

Aeneas stood there, lethal in his bronze.
His eyes searched the distance, and his hand 1140
Paused on the hilt of his sword. Turnus’ words
Were winning him over, but then his gaze shifted
To the fateful baldric on his enemy’s shoulder,
And the belt glittered with its familiar metalwork—
The belt of young Pallas, whom Turnus had killed 1145
And whose insignia he now wore as a trophy.
Aeneas’ eyes drank in this memorial
Of his own savage grief, and then, burning
With fury and terrible in his wrath, he said:

“Do you think you can get away from me 1150
While wearing the spoils of one of my men?
Pallas
Sacrifices you with this stroke—Pallas—
And makes you pay with your guilty blood.”

Saying this, and seething with rage, Aeneas
Buried his sword in Turnus’ chest. The man’s limbs 1155
Went limp and cold, and with a moan
His soul fled resentfully down to the shades.

Glossary of Names

Acestes (A-kes'-teez): A Trojan who became a king in Sicily.

Achaeans (A-kee'-unz): General name for the Greeks.

Achates (A-ka'-teez): Companion of Aeneas.

Acheron (A'-ker-on): River in the Underworld.

Achilles (A-kil'-eez): A central character in Homer's *Iliad*. Son of Peleus and Thetis; killer of Hector.

Actium (Ak'-tee-um): A promontory in northwestern Greece near which Octavian defeated Antony and Cleopatra in 31 B.C.E.

Aeneas (Ee-nee'-as): Principal character in the *Aeneid*; Trojan warrior in Homer's *Iliad*. Son of Venus and Anchises; leader of the Trojans after the fall of Troy.

Aeneas Silvius (Ee-nee'-as Sil'-vee-us): Descendant of Aeneas; a future king of Alba Longa.

Aeolus (Ee'-oh-lus): God of the winds.

Agamemnon (A-ga-mem'-non): King of Mycenae; leader of the Greek army during the Trojan War. He was killed by his wife, Clytemnestra, when he returned home.

Agenor (A-gen'-or): Ancient king of Tyre; ancestor of Dido.

Agrippa (Ag-rip'-a): Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa; son-in-law of Augustus and commander under Augustus.

Ajax (Ay'-jax): Son of Oileus; a Greek warrior in Homer's *Iliad*. He attacked Cassandra during the fall of Troy and was later punished for sacrilege toward the temple of Pallas.

Alba Longa (Al'-ba Lon'-ga): City founded by Ascanius in the Alban hills of Italy.

Allecto (A-lek'-toh): One of the Furies; bringer of war and wrath.

Amata (A-ma'-ta): Queen in Italy; the wife of Latinus and mother of Lavinia.

Amazons (A'-ma-zonz): Women warriors. They were allies of the Trojans.

Anchises (An-keye'-sez): Son of Capys; father of Aeneas by Venus. He escaped Troy on the shoulders of Aeneas.

Andromache (An-dra'-ma-kee): Wife of Hector.

Anna (An'-a): Sister of Dido.

Antenor (An-tee'-nor): Trojan prince who founded Patavium.

Antony (An'-toh-nee): Marc Antony; rival of Octavian. He was defeated at the battle of Actium in 31 B.C.E.

Apollo (A-pol'-oh): Son of Jupiter and Latona; brother of Diana. Patron god of music and prophecy; associated with the lyre and archery.

Arcadia (Ar-kay'-dee-a): Region in the Peloponnesus of Greece known for pastoral practices.

Arethusa (Ar-a-thoo'-za): Nymph who was transformed into a fountain at Syracuse in Sicily.

Argos (Ar'-gos): City or district in the northeastern Peloponnesus of Greece. The name "Argives" is derived from this city and refers to the Greeks.

Argus (Ar'-gus): Hundred-eyed monster charged by Juno with the task of watching over the cow Io. Killed by Mercury.

Ascanius (As-kay'-nee-us): Son of Aeneas and Creüsa; also called Iulus. He eventually founds Alba Longa.

Assaracus (As-ar'-ak-us): A king of Troy; son of Tros; great-grandfather of Aeneas.

Astyanax (As-teye'-a-nax): Son of Hector and Andromache. Killed during the fall of Troy.

Atlas (At'-las): Titan who holds up the sky; son of Iapetos.

Augustus (A-gus'-tus): Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus Augustus; adopted by Julius Caesar. First Roman emperor; ruled from 27 B.C.E. to 14 C.E. He assumed the name Augustus in 27 B.C.E.

Ausonia (Ow-soh'-nee-a): Italy.

Avernus (A-ver'-nus): Lake near Cumae in Italy near which was said to be an entrance to the Underworld.

Bacchus (Bak'-us): God of wine; son of Jupiter and Semele. Also Liber in Latin. Greek Dionysus.

Baiae (Beye'-eye): Seaside town near Naples.

Belus (Bel'-us): A king of Tyre; father of Dido.

Briareus (Bree'-ar-ee-us): Hundred-handed giant; also known as Aegaeon.

Brutus (Broo'-tus): Lucius Junius Brutus; expelled the last Tarquin king from Rome in 510 B.C.E.

Cacus (Ka'-kus): Son of Vulcan. A giant who was killed by Hercules.

Caesar (Seez'-ar): Gaius Julius Caesar; a Roman statesman and general who adopted Octavian. Killed in 44 B.C.E.

Camilla (Ka-mil'-a): Warrior woman allied with Turnus. She was the leader of the Volscians.

Capitol (Kap'-it-ol): Top of the Capitoline Hill in Rome on which stood the temple to Jupiter Optimus Maximus.

Carthage (Kar'-thaj): City on the northwest coast of Africa; historically a rival of Rome. According to legend it was founded by Queen Dido after she fled her brother's violence.

Cassandra (Ka-san'-dra): Daughter of Priam and Hecuba. A prophetess whom no one believed.

Catiline (Kat'-a-lin): Lucius Sergius Catilina; a Roman conspirator who was exposed by Cicero in 63 B.C.E.

Cato (Kay'-toh): Marcus Porcius Cato; a conservative Roman statesman who strongly urged the destruction of Carthage.

Celaeno (Sel-eye'-noh): Chief of the Harpies.

Centaur (Sen'-tar): Half-man, half-horse mythological creature belonging to a race fathered by Ixion.

Cerberus (Ker'-ber-us): Three-headed dog that guards the gates of the Underworld.

Ceres (Seer'-eez): Goddess of crops and the harvest. Greek Demeter.

Charon (Kay'-ron): Ferryman who transports the dead across the river Styx in the Underworld.

Charybdis (Ka-rib'-dis): Whirlpool near Scylla in the straits of Messina.

Circe (Sir'-see): Sorceress whom Ulysses encountered in Homer's *Odyssey*. She changes Ulysses' men into swine.

Cocytus (Ko-kee'-tus): River in the Underworld.

Corinth (Kor'-inth): City in the northwest Peloponnesus of Greece; captured by the Romans in 146 B.C.E.

Crete (Kreet): Island in the Aegean Sea south of Greece. Aeneas landed here when searching for his destined land.

Creüsa (Kree-ooos'-a): Daughter of Priam; first wife of Aeneas; mother of Ascanius. She was separated from Aeneas and lost during the fall of Troy.

Cupid (Kyoo'-pid): God of love; son of Venus.

Cybele (Kee'-bel- ee): (1) Phrygian mother-goddess of Asia Minor. (2) The mountain with which she is associated.

Cyclops (Seyé'-klops): (1) Race of giants living in Sicily who have only one eye each. (2) The workers of Vulcan.

Cyprus (Seyé'-prus): Eastern Mediterranean island; associated with Venus.

Cythera (Si-thee'-ra): Island southeast of Greece near which Venus was born, hence Venus' name Cytherean.

Daedalus (Deye'-dal-us): Craftsman who built the labyrinth for the purpose of containing the Minotaur on the island of Crete. He escaped Crete by fashioning wings of feathers and wax and using them to fly to Cumae in Italy.

Danaans (Da-nay'-unz): A general name referring to the Greeks.

Danaë (Dan'-ay-ee): Daughter of Acrisius, a king of Argos. She was set adrift in a chest by her father; she reached Italy and founded Ardea, the city of Turnus.

Dardanus (Dar'-dan-us): Ancestor of the Trojans and mythological founder of Troy. From his name the Trojans are called Dardanians.

Delos (Dee'-los): Island in the Aegean Sea; birthplace of Apollo and Diana.

Diana (Deye-an'-a): Daughter of Jupiter and Latona; sister of Apollo; goddess of the hunt and the moon. Greek Artemis.

Dido (Deye'-doh): Queen of Carthage in North Africa. She founded Carthage when she fled from her brother's violence. She killed herself after Aeneas left Carthage. Also called Elissa.

Diomedes (Deye-oh-mee'-deez): Son of Tydeus and Deipyle. A commander and a foremost warrior in Homer's *Iliad*. He founded the city of Arpi in Italy after the Trojan War.

Drances (Dran'-seez): A Rutulian hostile to Turnus.

Elissa (A-lis'-a): A name of Dido.

Elysium (Ee-lee'-ee-um): Pleasant region of the Underworld reserved for those who led a good life.

Entellus (En-te'-us): A boxer who defeated Dares.

Erebus (Er'-ab-us): Name of the Underworld.

Eryx (Er'-ix): (1) Son of Venus, and so a half-brother of Aeneas; a king at Sicily known for boxing. (2) The name of a mountain.

Etruria (Ee-tru'-ree-a): Region in Italy north of Rome.

Etruscans (Ee-trus'-cans): People who inhabit Etruria.

Eumenides (Yoo-men'-id-eez): Kind name for the Furies; avengers of crimes committed within a family.

Eurus (Yoo'-rus): Southeast Wind.

Euryalus (Yoo-ree'-a-lus): Trojan, son of Opheltus, beloved of Nisus.

Evander (Ee-van'-der): Son of Mercury; king of Pallanteum. His son, Pallas, fought as an ally of Aeneas.

Fates: Three goddesses who spin the fate of human lives. Also called the Parcae.

Faunus (Faw'-nus): Italian god of woodlands and a deified king.

Furies (Fyur´-eez): Avengers of crimes committed within a family; also called the Eumenides.

Ganymede (Gan´-ee-meed): Son of the Trojan Tros. Snatched up by the eagle of Jupiter, he became Jupiter's cupbearer.

Geryon (Ger´-ee-on): Giant with three bodies; killed by Hercules.

Gorgon (Gore´-gon): One of three sisters with snakes in their hair and the ability to turn anyone who looked at them into stone. Medusa, one of the Gorgons, was decapitated, and her head was attached to Minerva's aegis.

Gracchi (Grak´-eye): Prominent Roman family whence came two brothers, Tiberius and Gaius, who attempted to reform the Roman state.

Harpies (Har´-pee-z): Monsters with a bird's body and a woman's head.

Hecate (Hek´-at-ee): Goddess of the Underworld and witchcraft; associated with the moon and Diana.

Hector (Hek´-tor): Eldest son of Priam and Hecuba; husband of Andromache. Leader of the Trojan army at Troy in Homer's *Iliad*; killed by Achilles.

Hecuba (He´-kew-ba): Queen of Troy and wife of Priam; mother of Hector, Paris, Cassandra, and other children of Priam.

Helen (He´-len): Daughter of Leda and Jupiter; wife of Menelaus. The most beautiful woman in the world. Her abduction by Paris was believed to cause the Trojan War.

Helicon (He´-li-kon): Mountain in Greece that the Muses frequent.

Hercules (Her´-kyoo-leez): Son of Jupiter and Alcmene; a hero famed for his twelve labors.

Hesperia (Hes-per´-ee-a): A land in the west; a name for Italy.

Hesperides (Hes-per´-id-eez): Daughters of Hesperus. Keepers of a garden in the far west that contained a tree bearing golden apples.

Hippolytus (Hip-all´-ee-tos): Son of Theseus and Hippolyte. His stepmother, Phaedra, fell in love with him, and when her love was not returned she engineered his death.

Hydra (Heye'-dra): Monster with many heads; killed by Hercules.

Icarus (I'-ka-rus): Son of Daedalus. He escaped Crete with his father by means of wings assembled with feathers and wax; he flew too close to the sun, the wax melted, and he fell into the sea.

Ida (Eye'-da): (1) Mountain near Troy. (2) Mountain in Crete. (3) Mother of Nisus.

Ilia (Il'-ee-a): Mother of Romulus and Remus by Mars.

Ilium (Il'-ee-um): A name for Troy.

Ilus (Ee'-lus): (1) A name for Ascanius, the son of Aeneas. (2) A founder of Troy. (3) A Rutulian allied with Turnus.

Io (I'-oh): Daughter of Inachus. Jupiter fell in love with her; she was changed into a cow and was tormented by Juno.

Iris (Eye'-ris): Goddess of the rainbow; messenger for Juno.

Iülus (Ee-oo'-los): A name for Ascanius, the son of Aeneas.

Jove (Johv): Name of Jupiter.

Juno (Joon'-oh): Daughter of Saturn; wife and sister of Jupiter. She is hostile toward the Trojans. Greek Hera.

Jupiter (Joo'-pit-er): Son of Saturn; husband of Juno; ruler of the gods. Greek Zeus.

Juturna (Joo-turn'-a): A nymph; sister of Turnus.

Laertes (Lay-er'-teez): Son of Arcesius; husband of Anticleia; father of Ulysses.

Laocoön (Lay-ak'-oh-on): A Trojan priest of Neptune. He was devoured by serpents for warning the Trojans about the Trojan Horse.

Laomedon (Lay-om'-ee-don): A king of Troy; father of Priam. He refused to repay Neptune and Apollo for building the walls of Troy.

Lar (Lar): A tutelary deity of the Roman household, associated especially with the hearth.

Latinus (La-tine'-us): Son of Faunus; father of Lavinia; King of Laurentium in Latium.

Latium (Lay'-she-um): Region in west-central Italy; ruled by King Latinus.

Latona (La-tone'-a): Mother of Apollo and Diana.

Lausus (Lau'-sus): Son of Mezentius; ally of Turnus.

Lavinia (La-vin'-ee-a): Daughter of Latinus and Amata. She was courted by Turnus but was destined to be the wife of Aeneas.

Leda (Lee'-da): Mother of Helen. Jupiter impregnated her while he assumed the form of a swan.

Lethe (Lee'-thee): River of forgetfulness in the Underworld. Whoever drank of this river lost memories.

Libya (Lib'-ee-a): Region of North Africa.

Lycurgus (Lie-kur'-jus): A Thracian king.

Manlius (Man'-lee-us): Marcus Manlius Torquatus Capitolinus; Roman general who successfully defended the citadel at Rome from the Gauls in 390 B.C.E.

Marcellus (Mar-sel'-us): (1) Marcus Claudius Marcellus; Roman general during the Second Punic War. (2) Nephew and son-in-law of Augustus; he died at a young age.

Mars: Son of Jupiter and Juno; the god of war. Greek Ares.

Memnon (Mem'-non): Son of Aurora and Tithonus; a king in Ethiopia; ally of the Trojans.

Menelaus (Me-ne-lay'-us): Son of Atreus and Aerope; brother of Agamemnon; husband of Helen; ruler of Sparta.

Mercury (Mer'-kyoor-ee): Son of Jupiter and Maia; the messenger god and guide of souls of the dead. Greek Hermes.

Messapus (Mes-ap'-us): Son of Neptune; ally of Turnus.

Mezentius (Mez-en'-tee-us): Father of Lausus. An exiled king who was an ally of Turnus.

Minerva (Min-er'-va): Daughter of Jupiter; said to have been born from his head; goddess of wisdom, crafts, and battle. Greek Athena.

Minos (Meye'-nos): King of Crete; husband of Pasiphaë. After his death he was a judge of souls in the Underworld.

Mnestheus (Men-es'-thee-us): A comrade of Aeneas.

Mycenae (Meye-see'-nee): City in the Peloponnesus of Greece ruled by Agamemnon.

Myrmidons (Meer'-mi-donz): People from Thessaly; the troops who follow Achilles.

Neoptolemus (Nee-op-tal'-a-mus): A name of Pyrrhus, son of Achilles, that means "young warrior."

Neptune (Nep'-tune): Son of Saturn and Rhea; brother of Jupiter; god of the sea. Greek Poseidon.

Nisus (Neye'-sus): Trojan son of Hyrtacus, lover of Euryalus.

Ocean: Son of Uranus and Earth; thought to be the river that encircled the earth.

Olympus (O-lim'-pus): Mountain in Thessaly thought to be the home of the gods.

Opis (O'-pis): A nymph; follower of Diana.

Orcus (Oar'-kus): Name of Pluto, the god of the Underworld. Or used to refer to the Underworld.

Orestes (O-res'-teez): Son of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra. He killed his mother and her lover in order to avenge the murder of his father.

Orion (O-reye'-on): Mythical hunter who, after his death, was transformed into a constellation. The setting of the constellation signaled stormy weather.

Orpheus (Oar'-fee-us): Mythical poet and singer who attempted to bring his wife, Eurydice, back from the Underworld after she died from a snakebite.

Ortygia (Oar-tij'-ee-a): (1) A name for the island of Delos. (2) A region of Syracuse in Sicily.

Palinurus (Pal-ee-noor'-us): The pilot of Aeneas' fleet.

Pallas (Pal'-as): (1) Name of Minerva. (2) An ancestor of Evander. (3) The son of Evander.

Pan: God of forests and shepherds; half-man, half-goat.

Pandarus (Pan'-dar-us): (1) A Trojan warrior with Aeneas. (2) A Trojan warrior at the battle of Troy who broke the truce between the two armies.

Parcae (Par'-keye): Three goddesses who spin the fate of human lives. Also called the Fates.

Paris (Pa'-ris): Son of Priam and Hecuba; brother of Hector. He took Helen from Menelaus at Sparta.

Pasiphaë (Pas-if'-a-ee): Wife of Minos; queen of Crete. She mated with a bull and produced the Minotaur.

Pentheus (Pen'-thee-us): A king of Thebes. He denied the worship of Bacchus and was killed by maenads, among whom was his mother.

Phaedra (Fay'-dra): Wife of Theseus. She fell in love with Hippolytus, her stepson; when he refused to return her love, she engineered his death and then committed suicide.

Phlegethon (Fleg'-a-thon): Fiery river in the Underworld.

Phoebus (Fee'-bus): Name of Apollo meaning "bright."

Pluto (Ploo'-toh): God of the Underworld. Greek Hades.

Portunus (Por-toon'-us): God of harbors.

Praeneste (Preye-nes'-tee): City in Latium.

Priam (Preye'-am): King of Troy; husband of Hecuba. He was killed during the fall of Troy.

Proserpina (Pros-er'-peen-a): Daughter of Ceres; wife of Pluto. Greek Persephone.

Pygmalion (Pig-mail'-ee-on): Brother of Dido. He killed Dido's husband.

Pyrrhus (Peer'-us): Son of Achilles; a Greek warrior in the Trojan War.

Quirinus (Kweer-in'-us): Italian god. This became the name of Romulus when he was deified.

Remus (Ree'-mus): (1) Son of Ilia; brother of Romulus. He was killed by Romulus. (2) A Rutulian.

Rhadamanthus (Rad-a-man'-thus): Brother of Minos. He became a judge in the Underworld after his death.

Romulus (Rom'-you-lus): Son of Ilia; brother of Remus. Legendary founder of Rome and descendant of Aeneas.

Rutulians (Roo-tul'-ee-anz): People in Italy ruled by Turnus.

Sarpedon (Sar-pee'-don): Son of Jupiter; leader of the Lycians in the Trojan War. Killed by Patroclus.

Saturn (Sat'-urn): Father of Jupiter and Juno. He was driven from Olympus by Jupiter. Greek Cronus.

Scylla (Sil'-a): Sea monster that devoured the passengers of passing ships.

Serestus (Ser-es'-tus): Comrade of Aeneas.

Sergestus (Ser-ges'-tus): Comrade of Aeneas.

Sibyl (Sib'-il): Prophetess at Cumae in Italy. Aeneas consulted her about entering the Underworld.

Sparta (Spar'-ta): City in the Peloponnesus of Greece; ruled by Menelaus.

Styx (Stix): River in the Underworld. The gods swore oaths to this river and could not break the oaths.

Sychaeus (See-key'-us): Dido's husband who was murdered by her brother, Pygmalion.

Syrtes (Sir'-teez): Sandbanks off the northern shore of Africa that were dangerous for ships.

Tarchon (Tar'-kon): An Etruscan leader; ally to Aeneas.

Tarquin (Tar'-kwin): The name of two kings of Rome. The second of the two, Tarquin the Proud, was driven out of Rome by Lucius Junius Brutus.

Tartarus (Tar'-tar-us): Region of the Underworld in which sinners were punished.

Tatius (Tay'-tee-us): Titus Tatius; a king of the Sabines who fought against the Romans but later made peace with them and joined Romulus as an ally.

Teucer (Too'-ser): (1) A king of Troy from Crete. From his name the Trojans are called Teucrians. (2) A Greek who fought in the Trojan War and later founded Salamis in Cyprus.

Theseus (Thee'-see-us): Son of Aegeas; a king of Athens. Killed the Minotaur. Attempted to help his comrade Pirithöus carry Proserpina from the Underworld.

Tiber (Teye'-ber): River in Italy near which Rome was founded.

Tibur (Teye'-bur): City in Latium.

Tithonus (Tith-oh'-nus): Son of Laomedon; husband of Aurora. He was granted eternal life but did not ask for eternal youth.

Triton (Treye'-ton): Son of Neptune; a sea-god.

Trivia (Triv'-ee-a): Name referring to Hecate and Diana as goddesses of crossroads.

Troy: City in northwestern Asia Minor ruled by Priam. It was the area of focus in Homer's *Iliad* and the city from which Aeneas fled when it was destroyed.

Turnus (Turn'-us): Son of Daunus and Venilia; king of the Rutulians. He was Aeneas' rival for Lavinia and led the armies opposing Aeneas in Italy.

Ulysses (Yoo-lis'-eez): A Greek leader in Homer's *Iliad* and the central character in Homer's *Odyssey*. Greek Odysseus.

Venus (Vee'-nus): Daughter of Jupiter and Dione; goddess of love and beauty. Mother of Aeneas by Anchises. Greek Aphrodite.

Vesta (Ves'-ta): Goddess of the hearth.

Vulcan (Vul'-can): Son of Juno; god of the forge and fire. He made armor for Aeneas. Greek Hephaestus.

Xanthus (Zan'-thus): River near Troy.

Zephyrus (Zef'-eer-us): The West Wind.

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**The room fell silent, all eyes on Aeneas,
Who from his high couch now began to speak. . . .**

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STANLEY LOMBARDO is Professor of Classics, University of Kansas. His previous translations include Homer's *Iliad* (1997, Hackett) and *Odyssey* (2000, Hackett), Hesiod's *Works & Days and Theogony* (1993, Hackett), and Sappho, *Poems and Fragments* (2002, Hackett), a PEN Center USA 2003 Literary Award Finalist.

*W. R. JOHNSON is Professor of Classics and Comparative Literature, Emeritus, University of Chicago. His previous published works include *Darkness Visible: A Study of Vergil's Aeneid* (1976, University of California Press) and *Lucretius and the Modern World* (2000, Duckworth).



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