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VERGIL

THE

AENEID

A NEW TRANSLATION BY
PATRIC DICKINSON



A M E N T O R B O O K

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TO J. R.
IN GRATITUDE AND AFFECTION
AND TO MY SON
DAVID

BOOK I

Of arms I sing and the hero, destiny's exile,
Who came from the beach of Troy and was the first
To make the Lavinian landfall, Italy:
Who in the grip of immortal powers was pounded
By land and sea to sate the implacable hatred
Of Juno; who suffered bitterly in his battles
As he strove for the site of his city, and safe harboring
For his gods in Latinum (himself the father-founder
Of his race, of the Alban chiefs, of the towers of Rome).
Then, Muse, remind us what was the root-cause
Of the goddess's wrath, what had he done that a Queen
Of heaven should break, on such wheels of disaster,
A man so patently pious? Is it a god's nature
To nurse an abiding fury?
There was an ancient city, a colony of Tyre,
Which stood on the African coast fronting across the sea
The mouth of the Tiber and the port of Rome;
A wealthy city, with a war-tempered army,
A city Juno favored of all the world the most,
Her Sannos even was second; and here she kept her arms,
And here she kept her chariot, and here,
If the fates allowed, she yearned to see a city
Ruling the world; and in her heart already
She was furthering, fostering this. But she had heard
Of a race to spring from the blood of a Trojan lord
That in due time would wreck that Tyrian stronghold
And down its throat of empire swallow Libya.
She feared this, Juno, and remembered still
The old campaign against Troy she had prosecuted
So vigorously in her affection for Argos.
Rage and chagrin boiled in her breast unabated,
The judgment of Paris rankled as bitterly—

That insight to her beauty, that hated people,
That stately Ganymede loaded with honors!

So those poor refugees, the remnant left by the Greeks
And brutal Achilles, were tossed on the mid-sea surges
As she kept them off from Latium: thus for years
They quartered the unmapped water, flocks of fate—
To found the Roman people so titanic an effort was needed—
Just out-of-sight of Sicily, full sail with a fair wind
The ships were scudding along, the bright spray flying,
When Juno nursing the quenchless wound in her heart
Said to herself: "Am I to be defeated?
Deprived of my spoil? Am I to be impotent
To prevent this Trojan princeling landing in Italy?
Simply because the fates appear to forbid it?
Did not Athene burn the Argive fleet
And drown their sailors, and for no more reason
Than the frenzy of Ajax? Did she not dare, herself,
To hurl Jove's instant thunderbolt from the clouds,
Smash the ships, whip up the sea with a whirlwind,
And suck the man up, lightning-struck to the heart
As he gasped out the fire, and impale him on a rock-point?
But I who am Queen of heaven, sister and wife
To Jove, must I battle for years with a single
Nation? Who will worship me for the future,
What suppliant lay a gift on my falling altar?"
The caldron of her indignation still
Seething, the goddess came to storm-inhabited
Aeolia, native region of raging gales,
For it is here that king Aeolus holds in thrall
The rampant moaning tempests shackled imprisoned
In a colossal cave. In muffled fury
They chafe and rumble in the mountain's bowels
While Aeolus sits, scepter in hand, above
On his high battlement soothing and calming them.
Were he to fail, they would sweep away land and sea
And even the vault of heaven itself into thin air!
Aware of this, Jove the King thrust them down
Into subterranean dark, heaped mountains on them,
And over them set a lord whose genius lay
In his power to adjust them to the nicety
Of his King's wishes: and to him it was
That Juno, speaking humbly, made her plea.

"Aeolus, you were granted by the Father
Of gods and King of men the faculty

8

Of calming wind and wave. Now listen to me. A people
I abominate are aloft on the Tyrrhen sea.
Barring to Italy Troy and its conquered Gods:
Now, lash the sea to frenzy, shatter their ships and sink
them,

Scatter them utterly, sow the deep-sea furrows
With all their bodies! I have twice seven nymphs,
All beautiful, most beautiful Deiopea,
And for this favor she shall be yours for life
In proper marriage, and bear your family."
Aeolus answered: "Goddess, it is your destiny
To ensure your will; my duty is to obey it,
My kingdom is in your gift, my place at your feasts;
You make me sib to almighty Jove, my dominion
Over storm and cloudburst emanates from you."
When he had said this he turned his slave over
And dug it into the ribs of the mountain; then
The winds snuffing an outlet, as if in assault order,
Swirled out and swept the land in a hurricane,
Whipped on the sea and whisked it deep to its bed,
From every quarter hurling the breakers shoreward.
Oh cries of sailors! Groan of straining tackle!
In a flash the flying wrack had masked the sky.
From Trojan sight, darkness swagged on the deep,
Thunder shackled the poles, the air crackled with fire,
Everywhere death was at the sailor's elbow;
Terror played fast and loose with Aeneas' limbs
And he moaned and lifted his arms to the stars in prayer
Crying: "Oh, three- and four-times lucky, my friends
Who died in their fathers' sight under Troy wall
O Diomedes, bravest of all the Danaan tribe,
Why could not I have died by your strong hand
There on the plain, where Hector is stretched stark
From Achilles' spear, by huge Sarpedon's hulk,
From the Simois tumbles, down its stream,
So many shields and helmets and heroes' bodies?"
But even as his lament poured out, a sudden blast
Howling out of the north struck the sail square
And the waves towered to the stars: the cars were smashed,
The bow yawed, she wallowed, and a huge mountain
Of toppling water battered her sheer on the beam.
In the bow they seemed to poise on a wave-pinnacle,
In the stern the wave-trough gaped to the naked bottom
Swirling among the sands. The south wind seized three ships
And impaled them upon a hidden reef, a ridge
Rising far out to seaward half-submerged,

9

(The Italians call them *The Alatin*). Another three
The east wind drove to shore and to shallow and quick-
sand—

A pitiful sight as they floundered on the shoals
And foundered under a weltering wall of sand.
A huge sea struck the Lycians' ship with their leader
Trusty Oronides; in a flash, as Aeneas watched her,
She was pooped, and the helmsman flung, headfirst, over-
board.

Three times she spun in the swirl, pinned on the vortex,
Then the whirlpool gulped her down its greedy throat,
Survivors were spotted struggling in the waste;
Wreckage of heroes' arms and of Troy's treasures
Bobbed through the waves; and now the storm had con-
quered

Ilionus' stout vessel and the ship of brave Achates,
And now it was Abas, now old Aletes' turn,
The bolts gave way, the seams opened, the sea

Of the storm that had been raised, for the surface became aware
And the still deep was stirred, for the surface roared
High from the surface he lifted his calm face
And scanned the ocean. He saw Aeneas' fleet
Scattered about and the Trojans crushed between sea and
sky

And the hatred and cunning of Juno was obvious to her
brother.

He called the East and the West wind to his side,
"Have you so great a faith in your birth, O winds,
That you dare to raise this turmoil, this melee
Of land and sea without consulting me, the sovereign god-
head?"

As for you . . . But first, it is best to calm
The seas you have raised—when that is duly accomplished

Now off with you! And bear these words to your king:
The Lordship of the sea, and the awesome trident,
Were not allotted to him. They are my sway,
His to hold the great cavern that is your dwelling,
You Eastern wind, let Aeolus lord it there

In his own halls reigning; in the wind's prison!
These were his words, and even as he was speaking,
The seas fell, the clouds dispersed, and the sun came out.
At the same time Cymochoe and Triton
Strove to push off the ships from the fangs of rock,
The God himself levered them with his trident,

10

Opened the huge quicksands, and skimming the surface
Calm'd all the sea as he drove his gliding car.
And just as in a great crowd where tempers are high
And the rowdies are milling and sticks and stones are flying
(For rage finds weapons to hand), then if by chance
They see some man who has won true respect
They quieten down and are ready to hear him speak
And by his argument he will soothe their passion,
So fell to silence the tumult of the deep
As the Father of Seas looked out across his kingdom,
And then with a cloudless heaven above his head
Gave loose rein to his horses and let his chariot rip.

Aeneas and his men, dead-beat, attempted
To make for the nearest shore, and Libya was nearest.
There is a harbor there at a long gulf's narrows
Where an island makes a bar against the tide
And divides the flood in navigable channels.
Great rocks, twin crags, lunge upwards to the sky
And under their sheer scree is a safe harbor.
Inland a scrubble of thick woods threatens darkness
And terrible shadows. But at the foot there lies
A cavern with stalactites and a fresh spring,
Seats cut from the live rock, a nymph's dwelling.
No cable is needed here to moor a ship
Wearry of deep sea, no fluke to bite the bottom.
It was here Aeneas came with the seven ships
Spurred from his convoy and oh, with what a longing
To foot dry land the Trojans disembarked
And molded the dry beach with their sopping bodies!
Then first Achates struck a spark from his flint,
Caught the dry leaves, and fed the brittle flosam.
There was warmth; and they brought the mushed sea-
sodden grain—

Themselves as soaked and mushed, utterly downcast—
And the utensils of the corn goddess, as is meet,
And tried to dry the rescued grain by the fire
And grind it in a millstone and make bread.
Meanwhile Aeneas climbed a high lookout to see
If anywhere he could spy more Trojan ships—
Phrygian Antheus with his storm-tossed biremes,
Or Cypys, or Carcus with his tall painted rudder.
There was not a ship on the sea, but on the shore
Three meandering stags and a whole herd following them
Spread out in file grazing along the valley.
He took his stance; in a flash his side-de-camp,

11

Faithful Aetides, handed him his bow
And his speedy arrows, ready for such an occurrence.
And first Aeneas sniped the leading stags—
Brow, bay and trey, with antlers big as trees—
Then scattered all the herd and peppered them
With arrow-volleys among the leafy groves.
He did not cease till he had brought down seven—
Seven prime bodies—one for each of his ships—
Then back to the port and the division of game!
Add this: the wine kindly Acestes stored
For the departing heroes on the Sicilian shore:
This he divided too, and to their gloomy spirits
Offered this comfort:

"My friends we must not forget
What we have suffered before—and there has been worse,
But the Gods will grant sometime an end to it.
You have looked on Scylla and heard her rocks re-echo
Her rabid shrieks—you have passed your pilot's ticket
In the Cyclops straits—Cheer up my friends, fear not!
One day you may look back on these memories
As pleasant memories. Whatever happens,
Whatever sort and share of luck we have,
Our aim is Latium; where Destiny has ordained
A quiet house: where Troy will rise again
As it is meet she should; then, friends, endure,
Keep yourselves fit for the end, the good days to be."
Such were his words and his face was a mask of hope
That hid the terrible boding in his heart.
His men prepared to deal with the spoils and the feast to
come.

They stripped the pelt off the ribs and laid bare the flesh.
Then some cut it up and spitted the quivering streaks,
Some set up caldrons on the beach and laid fires,
And all rekindled their spirits with the food
And, filled with old wine and venison, relaxed
Outstretched on the grass: and when they were satisfied
And the feast cleared away, they look to discussing
Their long-lost comrades, wavering in between
Hope that they might be still alive and fear
That they were dead and gone beyond their ken.
Noble Aeneas brooded over Orontes,
He mourned Amycus and wondered what awful fate
Lycaus had met, brave Gyas or Cloanthus. •

Now all were spent: but Jove himself looked down
From the height of heaven and saw the sail-flecked sea.

12

And the spread of earth and the manifold of its people
And his eagle eyes came to rest on the realm of Illyria.
And Venus, more grievously concerned even than he
As he considered all that was at stake,
Spoke to him through a mist of crystal tears:
"Oh Ruler of Gods and men with laws eternal,
Who wields the terrible thunderbolt, now tell me
What crime have my Aeneas and the Trojans
Committed against you? What can they have done,
Who have suffered so many deaths, and now it seems
The entire world is a barrier against
Them reaching Italy, and yet you promised
In the full course of time the rule of the world
To the Romans, a people sprung from Trojan blood.
What has changed your will? For this far-off event
Solaced me, in Troy's wreck—that another fate
Should be balanced against that ruin, yet ruin still
Pursues these ever ruin-hounded heroes.
O God of Gods, when will you grant them an end
Of their sufferings? Consider how Antenor
Slipped through the fingers of the Greeks and reached
The gulfs of Illyria safely and the realms
Of the Iaburnians, and Timavus' source—
The stream through whose nine mouths comes flooding in
The main with a rock-throated roar and the fields
Are inundated with the surf—and here it was
He founded a colony for the Trojans, and built
The city of Padua, and walls to hang up the arms
Of ancient Troy, and lapped in tranquility he rests there.
But we, your very own kin, and given the freedom
Of the high citadel of heaven at your nod,
Because of the wrath of One are betrayed utterly;
Our ships lost, cut off from Italy's coast.
Is this the just reward of our piety—this
How you restore the kingdom promised to us?"
Smiling down at her with the smile that calms
A heaven of storms, the sower of Gods and Men,
Kissed the lips of his daughter and spoke to her.
"Have no fear Cytherean; the destiny of your people
Remains unaltered, you shall see your city,
And see Lavinia's walls as I have promised.
You shall bear great-heart Aeneas to the height
Of the highest of heaven's stars.

I have no thought
Of a change of mind. But since you are so consumed
With anxiety for Aeneas I shall turn forward far

13

The hidden pages of fate and speak of the future,
 He shall conduct a great campaign for you
 And conquer all Italy and its haughty peoples.
 He shall impose laws on his own people
 And build walled cities for them; the third summer
 Shall see him rule in Latium, the third winter
 Of warfare see the Rutulians subdued.
 But his son Ascanius to whom the second name
 Iulus is now added (when Ilium stood he was Ilius)
 It is he who shall consolidate your power—
 For thirty years with all their turning months;
 Then shall he move his capital from Lavinium
 To Alba Longa, which he shall fortify
 To the uttermost; and there a line of kings,
 The seed of Hector, for three hundred years,
 Shall reign and reign till Iliu, a priestess
 Of royal blood, bear twins begotten by Mars;
 And one of these, Romulus, fostered by a she-wolf,
 And joyfully wearing her tawny hide, shall rule
 And found a city for Mars, a new city,
 And call his people Romans, after his name.
 For them I see no measure nor date, I grant them
 Dominion without end. Yes, even Juno
 Bitter as she has been, who harries heaven,
 And land and sea cower under her lash,
 Even she will mend her ways and vie with me
 In cherishing the Romans, the master-race,
 The wearers of the Toga. So it is willed.
 And an age shall come in the course of measured years
 When the House of Assaracus shall subdue
 Even Pithia and famous Mycenae and conquer Argos
 And rule there. And then shall be born Caesar
 Of the great Trojan line, and his rule shall extend
 To Ocean itself, his fame to the last star—
 Iulus named, and truly, from his forbear great Iulus,
 And you shall surely receive him safe to your bosom,
 Welcomed to heaven laden with all the spoils
 Of the East, and men shall invoke him in their prayers.
 The bitter centuries of war shall cease then,
 The world grow mild at last. And white-haired Faith,
 Vesta, and Romulus with his brother Remus
 Shall make the Laws and the grim, iron-bolted Gates
 Of War shall be closed and within them the fiend of Fury
 Throned upon weapons lethal as himself
 Rage impotently, his arms and his hands pinioned

Behind his back with a hundred brazen shackles,
 Roaring from his blood-battered throat in vain."
 Such was his prophecy, and he sent the son of Maia
 Down from on high, to ensure that the realm of Carthage
 With its new citadel should welcome open-armed
 The Trojan refugees—for Dido could not know
 The design of fate and might summarily expel them.
 Down flew Mercury winging through the air
 And swiftly alit on the Libyan shore and immediately
 Imposed upon the haughty Carthaginians
 The Divine Will and softened their rugged hearts.
 And most of all their Queen was inspired with thoughts
 Of kindness and good will towards the Trojans.
 But steadfast Aeneas spent the night mulling
 His many problems over and soon as dawn
 Offered him light enough he set out to see
 What sort of terrain it was that they were wrecked on,
 And whether inhabited, for it looked wild
 And desolate and he was determined to come back
 With some report to his men. (He had concealed
 The ships under an overhang of the cliff
 In a woody cove shut in with gloomy trees.)
 So off he went with no one but Achates,
 Two iron-tipped spears at the ready in each hand.
 In the midst of the wood he met his Divine Mother
 In the guise and mien of a girl, with a girl's weapons,
 Silent as a Spartan—or Thracian Harpalyce
 Outpacer of flagging horse after flagging horse,
 Outpacer of even the racing currents of Hebrus.
 Slung huntress-fashion from her shoulders she carried
 A handy bow, and her hair streamed out loose
 In the wind, her knees were bare, her tunic caught up
 Close in a knot. She hailed them, "You there, my lords!
 Have you seen anyone wandering in these parts
 Who might be my sister—wearing a spotted lynx-hide,
 With a quiver of arrows—she might be in full cry
 After a wild boar?"—So questioned Venus.
 Aeneas answered, "No, we have seen or heard
 Nothing of any sister of yours. . . . O maiden . . .
 How am I to address you . . . ? For your face
 Is not of earth, nor is your voice a mortal's.
 You are a goddess. . . . Are you Apollo's sister?
 Or kindred of the nymphs? Whoever you are,
 Be kind, and take the weight off our minds. Tell us

Where in the world we are? For driven here
 At the mercy of wind and sea, we are wandering
 In total ignorance of the clime or people.
 Tell us, and we will sacrifice to you
 Many and many a victim on your altar."
 Then Venus said: "I cannot claim such honors.
 Any Tyrian girl will dress in a like style
 With a quiver and such purple hunting boots.
 But what you see is the realm of the Phoenicians
 Who come from Tyre—which is Agenor's city.
 The Libyans live on our frontiers, they are fierce
 Unconquerable tribes: Our queen is Dido—
 She fled here from Tyre—escaping from her brother—
 But this is a long and intricate tale of troubles—
 I will give you the gist of it. Her husband's name
 Was Sychaeus—indeed he was the wealthiest
 Of all the Phoenician landowners—and Dido
 Loved him devotedly, poor girl, she was a virgin
 When given in marriage to him by her father.
 But she, alas, had a profligate Pygmalion,
 Who was king of Tyre, an utterly evil monster.
 A quarrel broke out; and then Pygmalion lurked
 By the very altar—his impiety blotted out
 By his blind lust for gold—and as Sychaeus
 Unwarily worshiped, he stabbed him in the back
 Without a thought for his sister or her love:
 For a long time he kept the murder secret,
 And fobbed her off with lies and cheating hopes,
 But then the ghost of Sychaeus, still unburi'd,
 Appeared to her in a dream, his face alight
 With a supernatural pallor, displayed his wounds,
 Revealed the deed of defilement at the altar
 And the whole evil crime within the house.
 He bade her fly the country with all speed,
 And to that end disclosed a hidden treasure.
 Shocked to the marrow, Dido and her friends
 Prepared for flight—all whom their fear or hatred
 Of the tyrant had united—they seized some ships
 Which happened to be ready for sea—they loaded
 The treasure on board—and greedy Pygmalion's wealth
 Was spirited overseas! And who was the leader
 Of all this enterprise? Dido, a woman!
 They reached the site where now you will see the walls
 And citadel of Carthage rising—a new city—
 For they bought the land—as much as could be encompassed
 By a bull's hide, and 'Byrsa' it still is called.

But tell me who are you? Where have you come from?
 And where are you journeying to?"
 With a sigh from his deep heart's core Aeneas answered:
 "Goddess, if I began at the beginning,
 If there were time to detail our tribulations,
 Evening would fall on Olympus before I had finished.
 We are from ancient Troy—does the name of 'Troy'
 Mean anything to you?—there is not a sea
 We have not traversed—but now we have just been wrecked
 On the coast of Libya. I am Aeneas the steadfast,
 And I bear my peoples' gods snatched from the foe,
 They are with me here in our ships. I am a name
 Banned among the stars and beyond. I seek
 My destined land of Italy; there my posterity,
 Offspring of Love, is to be born. With twenty
 Ships I launched in the Phrygian sea: my goddess
 Guiding and guarding my fate: only seven ships
 Shattered by gales from the East have weathered the storm.
 A beggar, a nameless creature, I probe this desert;
 A refugee from Europe, from Asia, I
 Am come to Libya, as you tell me it is, and . . ."
 Venus broke in; she could bear his woes no longer.
 "Whoever you are, I do not believe the gods
 Abhor your existence, for still you breathe the air
 And have reached this Tyrian city. Be on your way, now,
 Go straight ahead, you will come to the Queen's palace.
 And I can give you news: the winds have changed
 And brought your fleet and all its company here.
 If this is not the truth, my parents failed
 To teach me the art of augury: look up
 At those twelve swans flying carefree in line—
 Just now an eagle stooped from a height to harry them—
 But now some have landed, some look down as they fly
 And flock together and flail their wings for sport,
 And some go circling round in the height and utter
 Cries of delight—so some of your ships already
 Lie safe in port and some with port in sight
 Crowd on all sail—but as for you, simply
 Fare forward where the road leads." So she spoke.
 And turning away from him her neck glowed
 With hues of rose, and her ambrosial hair
 Waited a heavenly scent, her garment flowed
 To her very feet and her gait revealed her a goddess.
 As soon as he knew he started after her crying:
 "Why did you mock me with these false disguises?
 I your son? Oh why are you so cruel?"

Why may we not join hands and speak together
As our true selves? So he upbraided her
As he went his way with Achæes to the city.
But Venus enwound them in a swathe of mist
And fold upon fold of cloud, that none should see,
Touch, or waylay them or ask them why they came.
The goddess then took wing to Paphos, happy
To return to her favorite haunt where stands her temple
With incense rising from a hundred altars
And fragrance of fresh garlands, ever renewed.

The two meanwhile pushed on where the path led,
Then climbed a hill commanding most of the city
And the rising citadel. Aeneas was amazed
At the grandeur of the buildings—once mere hutments.
He marveled at the gates, at the general bustle,
At the stone pavements, at the mill of workmen
Laying the walls, uprearing the citadel,
Manhandling every stone.

Some were siting the houses
And making the sites with trenches. Others were busy
Examining the Constitution and electing leaders.
Some were digging out dockyards, others the deep
Foundations for a theater, some cutting from the quarries
Huge pillars to adorn the stage to be.
It was like watching bees in summer tireless
In the flowering fields under the high sun;
—And out come the new generation ready to work
And they squeeze more honey into the bulging cells
Swollen with nectar, or relieve their loaded
Foragers of their spoils or gather a party
To drive the idle drones from their community;
And the work glows, and thyme and honey-scent mingle—
“O lucky people, whose city already rises,”
Aeneas sighed as he looked across the rooftops.
Then clothed in his miraculous sheath of cloud,
He went clean through the crowds and nobody saw him.
Now, there was a grove in the center of the city
Sweet in its coith of shadows, and it was here
That the Carthaginians, first freed from storm and whirlwind
Unearthed the Token Juno had bidden them
Be sure to seek for, the head of a lively war-horse,
An earnest of prosperity and success
In war, and harvest, for centuries to come.
And there Queen Dido of Sidon bid be founded
An enormous temple, richly-entwrought and redolent

Of the Goddess's presence; and steps of bronze led up
To a threshold bronze-hind and doorposts bound
With rivets of bronze and great bronze hinges creaking
In the bronze doors. And it was suddenly here
That for the first time a pang of hope
Shot through Aeneas and a seed of trust.
In the future rooted in his afflicted heart.
For, as he waited for the queen, his eyes
Slowly explored the details of all the wonders
Under the huge roof of the temple, and he marveled
At the good fortune of a city that could call
Upon such craftsmen, each expert in his trade.

He saw a mural of the Trojan War—
And all its battles in order (so world-renowned
Had it become already). There were the Atreidae,
And Priam, and their mutual foe Achilles.
He stood and wept: “Achæes, is there a place
Left in the world not full of our miseries?
Look, there is Priam! Even here there is recognition
Of a man's worth, even here there is compassion
For human fortunes, they are touched by the common lot
Of mortal men. We must put off all fear.
Our very fame will bring us means of safety.”
He spoke and sighed and pored on the inert picture,
Tears coursing down his cheeks, reliving the whole scene
In the depths of his soul. They were back in the thick
Of the fight round Pergamus, and the Greeks were flying.
The Trojans hot on their heels. There were the Phrygians
And, hunting them, Achilles in his chariot
His tall crest waving.

Skill weeping he saw next the snowy canvases
Of Rhesus' tent betrayed to Diomedæ.
As its inmates slept their first deep sleep, and the slaughter,
And the warrior steeped in blood, driving away
Their fiery horses to his own encampment,
Before they had tasted a blade of Trojan pasture
Or drunk from the Xanthus—And, oh, there was Troilus
Unlucky youth, no kind of match for Achilles—
His weapons lost he lolled from his chariot
Still gripping the reins, but still his horses bolted
And his neck and hair went trailing along the ground
Meanwhile with loosened hair the Trojan women
Beating their breasts in weeping supplication
Were bearing to the Temple of Athene

The offering of a robe, but she was blazed
 And held her face averted, her eyes on the ground.
 And there was Achilles dragging poor dead Hector
 Those three grim circuits round the Trojan Walls,
 And, final insult, selling his corpse for gold.
 At this Aeneas gave a groan of anguish:
 The spoils, the chariot, the very body
 Of his dead friend, he saw them before his eyes
 And Priam stretching out his helpless hands.
 Then there he was himself among the chiefs!
 There was the battle-line from the Orient
 And the standard of swartly Memnon. Fire-eating Penthesilea
 Was leading her Amazons with their moonlike shields,
 In frenzy among her thousands, her naked breast
 Clapsed in a golden circlet, a war-queen,
 A maiden against men, and keyed for the combat.
 While Aeneas stood in trance with his wondering eyes
 Riveted on these pictures the stately Queen
 Most beautiful in her presence entered the temple
 With a great retinue of attendant youths.
 —Picture Diana dancing beside the Eurytias
 Or on the slopes of Cynthus with a thousand
 Oreads gathered from every place—and picture
 Quiver on shoulder how she towers above them,
 A Goddess of goddesses and Latona's breast
 Beats silently with joy. So it was as Dido
 Bore herself in triumph through the throng,
 The key to the creation of her state.
 Then opposite the threshold, the Goddess's entry,
 Under the midmost arch of the vaulted temple
 Fenced by her bodyguard she took her seat
 On a throne and set herself to dispensing laws—
 Assigning her subjects tasks in fair proportion,
 Or else by lot—and suddenly Aeneas
 Saw Antheus and Sergestus coming in
 And brave Cloanthus, the whole body of Trojans
 Whom the black storm had scattered and driven off
 To other shores. He and Achates were stunned
 With joy and fear and longed to seize their hands,
 But still they were confused by the mystery,
 Still withdrawn in their hollow cloud they waited
 To hear what had befallen, where their comrades
 Had beached their ships—for this was a deputation
 From every ship come to the temple to beg
 For clemency and crying aloud for mercy:
 They entered and Dido gave them leave to speak.

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Then Ilioneus the eldest with calm self-control
 Began to speak: "O queen to whom Jove has given
 Leave to found a new city and powers to bring
 The savage under the rule of Laws and Justice,
 We unhappy Trojans
 Driven by every storm across every sea
 Entreat you: forbid the firing of our ships;
 Have pity on us, we are god-fearing people.
 Consider our case more closely. We come not
 To wreck or raze your Libyan homes with the sword,
 Nor loot and carry our loot off to the shore,
 We have no such violent plan, we are not pirates—
 It is broken men you see.

There is a place,

The Greeks called it Hesperia, a land
 With a long history, powerful and prosperous:
 The Cenchrians settled there, but we have heard
 It is called Italy now, after one of their leaders.
 We were carried there when suddenly cloudy Orion
 Boiled up a storm and wrecked us on hidden shoals.
 He drove us at the wind's will and the seas',
 By rock and reef scattered and overcome,
 And some few of us finally reached your shores.
 But what sort of people are you that you allow
 The barbarian usage that we have had? We are not
 Even allowed to land, and threatened with death
 If we so much as set foot upon your shore.
 It may be you have no respect for your fellow mortals,
 But remember there are gods who are concerned
 With right and wrong. Our king was named Aeneas,
 And no man in the world is finer or more steadfast
 Or a greater warrior—Oh, if he *is* alive,
 If the fates have favored him and he has not gone
 Down to the cruel dark—we need not fear,
 Nor you regret you were the first to show us
 Some courtesy! In Sicily too we have cities
 And arms; and a ruler there, Trojan Acestes
 Of noble blood. Allow us to lay up
 Our storm-wrecked fleet and cut ourselves from the woods
 Timber enough for repairs and boughs to shape into oars—
 We ask no more, if our king and our comrades live
 And we are restored to each other, than to sail
 For Italy and Latium—there lies our happiness.
 But if our king our father lies at the bottom
 Of the Libyan sea and we have no chance of salvation
 And Ilius, our hope for the future lies drowned beside him,

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We still could make for the Sicilian straits
 Whence we began the voyage that has ended here;
 We have a welcome there and houses ready,
 And Acestes could be our king." So Ilioneus
 Finished his plea and the Trojans shouted accord.
 Then Dido with covered eyes made brief reply.
 "Trojans, Oh fear no more! Put by all these anxieties!
 My kingdom is new; we are in constant danger,
 It is imperative to guard my frontiers,
 I have no other course. But who has not heard
 Of Aeneas, of Troy, of its heroes and their exploits
 And the blaze of that great war? We Carthaginians
 Are not so obtuse as that, nor so benighted—
 Whether you choose famous Hesperia, once
 The kingdom of Saturn, or the region of Eryx
 And its king Acestes, I will escort you safely
 And give you stores; or would you prefer to settle
 With me in my kingdom here? I give you the freedom
 Of this city I am building; beach your ships—
 I make between Trojan and Tyrian no distinction!
 If only Aeneas driven by that same gale
 Were with you here—I will send picked men to search
 Along all the coast and to the ends of Libya
 And bid them look for him—he may be wrecked,
 And wandering lost in some city or some forest!"

Then lordly Aeneas and brave Achates craved
 To break from their cloud, and now these words kindled
 Their spirits to such a pitch that Achates said:
 "O Son of a goddess, what burns in your mind?
 You see all safe, our fleet and all our fellows:
 One comrade is lost—we ourselves saw him sink
 In the mid-sea, but all the rest are here,
 As your mother said." Hardly were these words out
 When their surrounding wrack suddenly vanished
 Dissolving to clear air. There glowed Aeneas
 Shining on head and shoulder like a god,
 For his mother Venus had graced him with a head
 Of translucent hair and the warm radiance
 Of youth and eyes shining with gay delight,
 Such gloss as artists impart to a fine ivory
 Or silver or Parian marble inlaid with gold.
 Then suddenly, to everyone's amazement
 He addressed the Queen. "I, whom you seek, am here!
 Standing before you! I, Trojan Aeneas,
 Snatched from the Libyan seal And you, O queen,

Aeneas have pitied Troy in its unspeakable travails
 And offered us, the relics of Greek fury,
 Us utterly spent by the batterings of storm
 And the twists of Fate, succor and household here—
 We can never repay such a debt of gratitude
 Nor could a Trojan anywhere in the world.
 Oh Dido, if there are anywhere any gods
 That reward Goodness, if anywhere there is Justice
 And an all-seeing Mind that knows the Right
 —Then may you be rewarded!
 What golden age were you born in? What parents bore you,
 What gods or mortals? While rivers run to the sea,
 While shadows sweep along the mountain crags,
 While the sky feeds the stars—so long your name,
 Your praises and your honor shall endure,
 Whatever the land that calls me to its heart!
 His words rang out; he offered his right hand
 To Ilioneus, his left hand to Serestus;
 Then to brave Gyas, Cloanthus and the rest.
 Dido was awestruck first by the hero's aspect,
 Then by the enormity of his sufferings.
 "O Son of a goddess," she questioned him, "what fate
 Has wounded you, and hurled you on our coasts?
 Are you in truth Aeneas whom beautiful Venus
 Bore to Dardan Anchises by the stream
 Of Phrygian Simois? Why, I remember
 I nursed's coming to Sidon, driven to exile
 From his own land and seeking a new settlement
 With my father Belus' help—it was when my father
 Was conquering rich Cyprus for himself.
 Since then I have known the story of Troy's disaster,
 And known your name and the Greek princes' names.
 Even my father spoke well of the Trojans
 And wished that he himself had sprung from their blood,
 Enemy though he was. So come, my friends,
 And settle here with us! I understand you,
 For I have had ill fortune and sufferings
 Like yours before I found this place to rest in.
 I am no stranger to sorrows and they have taught me
 To succor those in misery and distress."
 So saying, she led Aeneas into the palace
 And bade thanksgiving be rendered to the gods
 In the temple, and she also gave command
 For twenty bulls to be sent to Aeneas' company
 Down by the shore, and a hundred bristling hogs,
 A hundred lambs with their ewes, in prime condition,

And plenty of wine, the god's gift of delight,
Inside, the palace was sumptuously appointed
And in the great hall a banquet was being laid;
Embroidered cloths of marvellous purple, silver
That weighed the tables down and golden vessels
Kinwrought with the deeds of all the nation's heroes
From the remote beginning of their history.

But his father's love disturbed his equanimity,
So Aeneas sent Achates to the fleet.
Posthaste to tell Ascanius how things stood
And conduct him back to the city, for all his anxieties
Were centered upon Ascanius—and in addition
He ordered gifts to be brought—some treasures salvaged
From the wreck of Troy: a cloak that hung stiffly
Because of its gold embroidery—a veil
With a pattern of yellow acanthus as a border—
The marvellous clothes that Argive Helen had
From her mother Leda when she left Mycenae
For Troy and her unhallowed marriage bed.
There also was the scepter that Ilione
The eldest daughter of King Priam wielded,
And a necklace of pearls and a two-tiered coronet
Of solid gold and precious-stone-encrusted.
Off went Achates posthaste to the fleet,
To carry out his command. Meanwhile the Goddess Venus
Was reviewing in her mind new plans of action
And this seemed best. Cupid her son, assuming
His form and feature, must replace the charming Ascanius.
And as he gave the presents to Queen Dido
Inflame her desires and pierce her to the marrow
With passionate love. (For she could not but mistrust
A palace full of duplicitous Phoenicians).
The thought of Juno's anger racked her too
And as night fell her anxieties redoubled,
So she address'd Cupid, "My son, my strength,
My only source of power who even derides
The Typhoean thunderbolts of almighty Jove,
I fly to you and beg your divine aid.
Your brother Aeneas has been brutally storm-tossed
On every sea enflamed by the persistent
Malice of Juno. You know this well enough
And often have shared my grief. And now Aeneas
Lingers and listens to Dido's blandishments
As she begs him stay—and I am apprehensive
Of any part which has Juno's blessing—

This is a crucial moment, she will not be slow
To seize her opportunity: I must forestall her,
I know, and put the queen in such a blaze
Of passion for Aeneas, she shall be mine
And no god make her change. Your part is this:
The boy-prince, at this moment, is preparing
To go to the city—my best beloved boy—
(His loving father has sent for him) to bring
Gifts to the queen that have survived the sea
And the fiery last of Troy. I shall lull Ascanius
Into a deep sleep and spirit him off and hide him
In the heights of Cythera or at Idalía
In my holy temple: then it cannot be possible
For him to be ware of our plot or spoil it in the middle.
Now you, for this one night, must assume his features,
His tricks of speech and gesture, his very essence,
(You both are boys) and then when enraptured Dido
Embraces you while the feast is at its height
And the wine flowing, and she pins you down with kisses
Breathe into her passion unwitting and poison her heart."
Cupid obeyed his beloved mother's commands
And shed his wings and walked in Ascanius' shoes
With relish, but as for Ascanius, Venus
Laid upon all his limbs an all-pervading languor
And bore him on her breast to the high groves
Of Idalía where the soft amaracus lapped him
In flowers and sweet shade-haunting scents.
But Cupid went with the royal gifts for Dido,
Achates leading him, and when he arrived the Queen
Had settled herself upon her golden throne
In the midst of the hall. And then Aeneas the chief
And the Trojan retinue arrived and took
Their places on the purple coverings.
Then servants offered them water to wash their hands,
Proffered them bread from baskets and brought them napkins
Close-woven and soft. Within were fifty maidens
Whose task it was to see the storerooms stocked
And light the household fires. A hundred others,
And a hundred serving men of the same age,
Were there to pile the food upon all the tables
And set the wine cups. A crowd of Tyrian guests
Thronged through the festive doorways and took their places
On the embroidered seats allotted to them.
They marveled at the gifts Aeneas had brought,
They marveled at Iulus—for Cupid's godhead
Glowed in his features and in the conversation

He feigned for the boy; they marvel'd at his mantle
 And the scarf pick'd out with a yellow acanthus border.
 But most of all, now singled out for disaster,
 Unhappy Dido could not stave her thirst—
 For gazing upon the boy and upon the gifts—
 And gazing only fueled her craving to gaze the more.
 The boy clung to Aeneas embracing him,
 His arms about his neck in an access of devotion
 To his pretended father, then made his way
 To the Queen's lap. She was obsessed with him,
 She had eyes for no one else and her whole heart
 Went out to him, and often she hugged him tight—
 Poor ignorant Dido! She was not to know
 How great a god was possessing her, to what cost.
 But he kept well in mind the adjurations
 Of his Acdalian mother and hid by little
 Began to expunge from Dido's heart all thought of Sychaeus
 And tried to arouse in her heart, so long inert,
 A living passion; and stimulate her mind
 So long a stranger to all thoughts of love.
 When they arrived at the first pause in the feasting
 The tables were removed and in their stead
 Were set great bowls of wine filled to the brim.
 The palace rang with talk, the voices rolled
 Through the long spaces of the halls; lamps hung
 From the gilded ceilings and a blaze of torches
 Turned night to day. Then it was that the Queen
 Demanded a heavy golden cup encrusted
 With jewels and filled it full with unmix'd wine,
 —As was the wont of Belus and every king
 From Belus onward. Silence was commanded
 Throughout the palace. Then she spoke these words.
 "O love, for you are said to have made the Laws
 For host and guest, grant that this day may be
 A day of rejoicing both for us Tyrians
 And for the voyagers from Troy, a day
 To be remembered by posterity!
 May Bacchus giver of gaiety, may kindly Juno,
 Smile on us here; and you, my lords of Tyre,
 Grace with your blessing and goodwill this feast."
 She spoke, and poured a libation onto the table;
 Then having done so, put the cup first
 To her own lips, then handed it to Bitias
 And chaff'd him at his hesitation—then eagerly
 He drank the foaming bowl at a draught and drenched
 himself

From the full golden cup!—and after him
 Drank other Tyrian nobles. Then Iopas,
 The long-haired bard, took up his gilded lyre—
 Mighty Atlas himself had been his master.
 He sang of the wandering moon and the toils of the sun;
 He sang of the making of man and of the creatures;
 Of rain and fire; of Arcurus and the Hyades
 That bring the rain; he sang of the Twin Bears.
 He sang why the suns of winter make such haste
 To dip in Ocean, and why the nights are long
 And move so slowly. The Tyrian nobles gave him
 Praise upon round of applause and the Trojans followed
 them.
 Unhappy Dido stretched the hours of night
 With varied talk, drinking long draughts of love.
 She plied Aeneas with a stream of questions—
 About Priam; about Hector; what were the arms
 Aurora's son had worn when he came to Troy;
 How many horses Diomed had; how tall
 Achilles was. . . . "But come, dear guest," she cried,
 "And tell us the whole tale from the beginning—
 Of the cunning of the Greeks, of your country's ruin,
 Of your wanderings—it is now the seventh
 Summer of wandering you have had to bear
 On all the lands and seas of all the world!"

BOOK II

They were all silent then, and every face
 Was raptly turned to Aeneas. And now the chief
 Began to speak from the eminence of his couch:
 "Great Queen, the tale you bid me tell again
 Recalls a throe too terrible for speech:
 The tale of how the Greeks reduced to ruin

The power of Troy and its empire to be lamented for ever.
And I myself saw with my own eyes
The tragedy unfold, and I myself
Had no small part in it. In such a recital
Who could refrain from tears? Why even a Myrmidon,
A Dolopian, or a henchman of heartless Ulysses
Would weep his fill. And now the dews of night
Are falling fast from heaven and setting stars
Prompt us to sleep. Yet if your eagerness
To learn what ills we suffered and to hear
In brief the tale of Troy's last agony
Be insatiable, although my whole mind blenches
At the remembrance and finches at the pain of it,
I will begin.

Broken by war and flouted
By fate and seeing so many years slide by
The Greek Commanders had a horse constructed
With ribs of interlocking planks of firwood.
It stood high as a mountain and Minerva
Divinely inspired its fabrication: the reason
They cunningly put about, which became widespread,
Was that this horse was an offering to procure
A safe voyage home. It seems they then drew lots
And secretly hid selected troops inside
In its dark void, till its whole huge cavernous belly
Was stuffed with men at arms.

Within sight of Troy
Lies Tenedos, an island that in the days
Of Priam's Empire was most prosperous,
And all men knew of it—but now nothing
Is there but the mere bay, a treacherous roadstead:
And thus far sailed the Greeks and hid their ships
On its desolate shore. We thought they had gone away
And running before the wind made for Mycenae.
So the whole land of Troy was shed of the load
Of its long agony. The gates flew open
And oh! What joy it was to wander where
The camp had been and find the whole place empty
And the shore quite deserted! Here the Dolopians
Had had their quarter—here relentless Achilles
Had pitched his tent: here were the ships' moorings;
Here was the accustomed battlefield.
Some of us stood and gaped at the gift of disaster,
The horse for the unwed Goddess Minerva, and marveled
At the bulk of the beast. I remember it was Thymoetes,
Whether from treachery or because Troy's fate

Was already sealed, who first encouraged us
To drag it inside the walls and set it up in the citadel.
But Cerys and several others of saner judgement,
Regarding a Greek gift with the deepest suspicion
And scenting a trap, advised us to pitch the thing
Into the sea, or fire it from underneath
And burn it up or pierce the hollow sides
Of the womb and tear it open. The rest of the people
Wavered and plummeted for one side or the other.
But there, in front of us all, with a great crowd
Following at his back, Laocoön thrust
In a heat of passion down from the citadel
And from far off he cried 'My unhappy countrymen
What height of folly is this? Do you really believe
The enemy has sailed? Do you really think
Any gift from a Greek is guileless? Have you learnt
Nothing from knowing Ulysses? Either the Greeks
Have hidden some men inside this wooden monster
Or in itself it is a foul contrivance
For overthrowing our walls, somehow designed
To spy into our homes or menace Troy
With its height, or there is some other trick in it.
Whatever it be; I am nothing but apprehensive
Of the motives of Greeks, even as givers of gifts!'
As he spoke these words he lunged with all his might
And plugged his mighty spear into the horse's body,
Into the tough woodwork of its ribbing
And there it quivered, while a hollow echo
Rang chattering round the curving emptiness
Of its cavernous womb and rang and rang again.
If the leader steadfast will of the gods, if the feather-
weight
Of our human powers had not been set awry,
He would have had us gore and gouge the horse
With swords of massacre, into the Greek ambush,
And Troy would still be a city and Priam's citadel standing.
But behold! some Trojan shepherds now appeared
Haling before the King, with a loud clamor,
A stranger with his arms pinioned behind him,
A young man who had thrown himself upon them
In eager surrender:—it was his firm resolve
To open Troy to the Greeks—it was either that
Or his own death, and he had the cool resource
To meet whichever befell. The youth of Troy
Came jostling up to peer at the prisoner

Outmocking each other in his mockery.
Now let this one example be the proof
Of the whole pattern of Greek perfidy.
For there the prisoner stood, all eyes upon him,
And seemed in a defenseless dither and let
His panic eyes flicker along their faces
As the Trojans had their stare; and then cried out:
'Alas, alas, is there coign of earth or sea
Anywhere, anywhere, that I could hide in?
I am stretched to the utmost on the rack of misery—
What is there left me?—I have no place whatsoever
Among the Greeks, and the Trojans pursue my blood
With a bitter animus!'

This pitiful cry

Chastened our mood and checked our urge to violence.
We encouraged him to explain—to tell us his national-
ity.
And what he aimed to accomplish by this essay
Of trusting to surrender. After some hesitation
He seemed to lay his fears to rest and answered:
'Great King I will tell you all, whatever it cost me.
This is the truth: I am Greek; I will not deny it.
That for a start: it may be Fate has wrong
The last drop of its malice out of Sinon,
But never let it be said it has made of him
A cheat or a liar. Never let that be said!
It may be that in some random gossip the name,
Palamedes, has come to your ears, of the house of Belus,
A man of untarnished fame in the field whom the Greeks
Accused on a trumped-up charge and condemned to death,
Though he was innocent, simply because he censured
This war—and now he is dead they regret his loss:
I was his kinsman: my father was not wealthy,
And when I was very young he attached me to Palamedes
To be his page in war: and while he retained
His royal state and his seat in the Council of Kings
I, too, enjoyed my due of respect and dignity.
But after Ulysses in his jealousy
Had worked his crooked will (you know the story)
And removed my master from the world of men,
I was cast down to the dark, my days dragged by
In misery and I ate my unhappy heart out.
In fury for the fate of my innocent friend
I was so crazed I could not hold my tongue
And I kept on swearing that if I had the chance
And ever came in triumph back to Argos

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I would avenge him, and my violent words
Drew down a storm of hatred on my head.
This was the first step in my downfall: Ulysses
Thenceforward never ceased to harry me
With charge after charge and dropped his sinister hints
Among my fellows and deliberately
planned how to kill me. Nor did he ever relax
Until, with Calchas aiding and abetting—
But what is the point of my continuing?
My story can be nothing but disagreeable.
Why should I waste your time if you hump all Greeks
Together in one mold? I am a Greek.
What more do you need to hear? You should have killed me
When first I said so. It is the very thing
That would please Ulysses, and the sons of Atreus
Would give you a large reward for such a deed.'

This, of course, made us intensely curious
To question him and elicit all the facts—
We had no conception of what wickedness
And cunning at the Greeks were capable.
So he stood there and quaveringly continued,
Out of the hypocrisy of his heart:
'Often, because they were wearied by the duration
Of the war, the Greeks intended to abandon it
And beat a retreat from Troy. I wish they had!
But equally often the violence of the weather
Prevented their embarkation and contrary winds
Scared them from going. And especially
When this horse stood completed, with its skin
Of maple-planks, the firmament was filled
With thunderous storm. In our perplexity
We sent Eurypylos to the oracle of Apollo
To question it and he brought back from the shrine
This dreadful answer: "Greeks, it was with blood
You appeased the winds on your first setting sail
To Troy, the blood of the maiden Iphigenia;
With blood it is you must buy your passage home—
And only the blood of a Greek will suffice for payment."
When these words reached the common ear, cold fear
Clutched every heart, a shudder of horror thrilled
To the marrow of their bones: on whom would fall
The sentence of Fate? Whom would Apollo choose?
And now Ulysses propelled our prophet Calchas
Before us all in the midst of a great clamor.
We insisted on knowing how these divine directions

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Should be interpreted. And already many were saying
 That I would be victim of the cruel plot
 And silently they foresaw the end to come.
 But for ten days the prophet would not speak
 And kept to his tent, refusing to utter a syllable
 That might result in anyone's sacrifice.
 At last when he was driven beyond endurance
 By the persistent hectoring of Ulysses
 He agreed to his proposals and made a pronouncement
 Condemning me to the altar. All the rest
 Assented, only too glad that the fate each feared
 Might fall on him had fallen, poor wretch, on me.
 The day of doom soon came. The sacrificial
 Instruments were set ready; the salted meal cakes,
 And the ribands to be bound about my forehead,
 And then—I am safe to admit it now—I burst
 From my bonds and snatched myself from the jaws of death.
 That night I hid myself among the reeds
 In the mud of the marsh: they should have sailed that night
 And I had to think there was just a chance they would.
 For I had no hope at all I should see again
 My dear old homeland, my beloved children,
 Or the father I so longed for: and now the Greeks
 Will likely avenge themselves on those poor souls
 For my escape and expiate my guilt
 By taking their innocent lives. In the name of the Gods,
 And the guardians of the truth when it is spoken,
 In the name of faith unsullied, if anywhere
 Among men there is such a thing as unsullied faith,
 I beg you have pity for the enormity of my sufferings,
 Have pity for one who has borne sufferings none should
 bear!

For this pathetic appeal we gave him his life,
 And our hearts went out to him. Priam himself
 Was first to order the man to be set free
 From his manacles and shackles and spoke to him
 With friendliness: "Whoever you are, forget
 The Greeks—they have all gone from here;
 Be one of us. Now answer me fully and truly:
 What did the Greeks mean when they set up
 This huge bulk of a horse? Whose idea was it?
 What was their purpose? Has it religious significance?
 Or is it an engine of war?" The prisoner
 With all a Greek's adept dupliciousness
 Raised his unfettered palms to heaven and cried

You eternal Fires of heaven, Godhead inviolable,
 Now bear me witness, and you altars and knives
 Set for unspeakable deeds from which I escaped;
 You holy ribands donned for the sacrifice
 I am empowered, by right, to break the bonds
 Which were sacred as between me and the Greeks,
 I am empowered, by right, to exercise
 The hatred they have engendered in my heart
 And to disclose their secrets: I am beholden
 No more to my country's laws. But it is for you
 To keep to your word, you Trojans (if you are saved,
 And I am your savior and tell you all the truth
 And repay you well:) do not break faith with me!
 Right from the beginning of the war
 The confidence of the Greeks, the sum of their hopes
 Resided in Minerva— But as for that:
 After impious Diomedes and Ulysses, fertile
 In the invention of new crimes, slunk up
 To steal from your hallowed temple the guardian image
 Of Minerva of Troy, cutting the throats of the sentries
 Who guarded the citadel, and seized the statue
 And dared to defile with hands still dripping blood
 The virgin riband round the goddess's head,
 The hopes of the Greeks went ebbing, slipping away,
 Their strength was broken, the goddess set against them.
 Nor was there any doubt about the portents
 That evidenced her change of mood—for hardly
 Was her image set up in the camp when spurts
 Of flame flashed from her staring eyeballs, a salty
 Sweat poured from her limbs and, miraculous to relate,
 Three times of its own volition her statue leaped,
 Shield, quivering lance and all, clean off the ground.
 Calchas immediately divined the omen.
 We must take flight across the sea; no longer
 Could we expect to capture Pergamus
 With our Greek arms: we must return to Argos
 And seek renewal of those holy powers
 Which brought us here, at first, in our curved ships.
 Their present expedition to Mycenae
 Is to recruit new forces and a new dispensation
 Of the divine favor; then cross the sea again
 And fall on you unforeseen:— This was the prophet's
 Interpretation of the omens. As for this effigy,
 He advised them to erect it to atone
 For the rape of Minerva's image and expiate
 The onus of their guilt. It was Calchas too

Who bid them rear the beast to the vast proportions
You all can see, plank after plank of oak—
Till it nearly touched the sky, so that you Trojans
Should not be able to get it through your gates
Or hoist it over the walls, and the people again
Live in the tutelage of the old religion;
For if your hand defiled this gift for Minerva
A terrible holocaust, he said, would ensue
For Priam's Empire and the Phrygian people—
(Let the gods divert it onto Calchas first!)

Yet if the horse should ascend into your city
With the help of your own free hands, then Asia has
Carte blanche to launch an invasion in full force
To the very walls of Pelops—and that would be
The destiny that awaits our Greek descendants.'

Such was the cunning, such was the subtle skill
Of the perjurer Sinon that led us to believe him.
There we were, conquered by his tricks and the tears
He could summon at will, whom neither Diomedé
Nor Larissæan Achilles, nor ten years
Of warfare nor a thousand ships could conquer.
But now another event of a far more terrible nature
Was forced on the attention of my poor countrymen
And threw their simple minds into further confusion.
Laocoön, drawn by lot to be priest of Neptune
Was sacrificing a mighty bull at the proper altar
When suddenly—and I shudder to recall to it—
Two serpents were to be seen swimming across
From Tenedos breathing the calm sea waters
In ring upon vast ring swirling together
Towards the shore. Their blood-red hooded heads
And necks went towering up above the waves,
The rest of their length went thrashing through the water
Squirming colossal coils, churning the sea
In a breaking foamy wake—then they made the shore,
Their bloodshot eyes ablaze, the flickering forks
Of their tongues playing about their mouths. We scattered
In every direction white with fear at the sight.
But they made straight and purposefully on
Towards Laocoön: and first each serpent
Seized one of his little boys and wrapping itself
In squeezing coils around him snapped and swallowed
The wretched limbs. Then as he rushed to their rescue
Waving a weapon they seized on him and entwound him
In their huge spirals. Twice around his middle

And twice around his throat and still they reared
Their heads and necks above him. He in his turn
Strove wildly with his hands to wrench at the knots,
His priestly garland sodden black with blood
And poison, while his cries of agony
Were terrible to hear as they rang to heaven,
Like the bellowings of a bull when the sacrificial
Ax has not fallen true and he shrugs it off
And bolts away from the altar. But now the serpents
Withdrew and glided off to the citadel,
To the temple of implacable Minerva,
And there they disappeared by the feet of the goddess
And behind the round of her shield. And then, indeed,
Into every terror-stricken heart a new
And deeper terror struck, and all men said
Laocoön deserved to pay for his crime
Because he had profaned the sacred woodwork
With his spear-point when he hurled his sinful spear
At the horse's back. And all began to clamor
For the image to be hauled to its place in the temple,
And prayers be said to appease the might of Minerva.
We breached the walls and opened our defense works,
All braced themselves to the effort; under its feet
We inserted rollers to make it easy to move,
And hempen ropes were knotted round its neck.
So the doom-laden engine climbed the walls
With its womb full of death—while round it boys
And unwedded girls went chanting sacred songs,
Thrilled with delight even to touch its ropes,
And on it went and slid to a sinister halt
Right in the heart of our city, O my country!
O Ilium home of gods, O Trojan ramparts
The seat of so much glory! Why, four times
On the very threshold of the gates the horse
Came to a stop, four times within its womb
We heard the clank of weapons and we stood
Blind in our frenzy, mindless; then pressed on
And set the baleful horror in position
In our hallowed citadel. Then, too, it was
That Cassandra, whose own deity had decreed
That never a Trojan should believe her words,
Opened her lips and prophesied the truth
Of the fate in store for us, while we—poor dolls—
We spent that day (which was to be our last)
In decking every shrine, in the whole city,

With festal bougits.

Meanwhile the sky turned round
In its course and from the Ocean rose the Night

Unfolding in its single cloak of shade
Earth and high heaven and Greek treachery.

The Trojans, stretched in sleep about the ramparts,
Resigned their weary limbs and made no sound
And the Greek fleet in ordered line had already
Put out from Tenedos and was heading straight
For the shore they knew so well, under the friendly
Compliance of the still moon's quietude.

And suddenly, seel from the royal ship the flare
Of a signal, and Sinon under the shelter of Powers
Opposed to Troy crept stealthily to unpin

The pine-wood hatch and loose the pent-up Greeks:
The horse stood open; they opened their lungs to the air,
And joyfully leapt out of their timber cavern—
Thesandrus, Sthenelus, and ruthless Ulysses

Slid down the rope they dropped out of the horses;
Then Acaamas, Thoas, Neoptolemus
Of Pelus' line and, to the fore, Machaon

And Menelaus and the inspiration
Of the deceit of the horse Epeus, and all made free
To ramp through a city drowned in wine and sleep.
They killed the sentries, they flung wide the gates,
They admitted all their comrades, they all joined forces.

It was the time when the first flush of sleep,
That gift of the gods, infuses in mortal souls
Its balm to ease their frailties; and its onset
Is too ravishing to resist. But in my sleep,

Before my sight stood Hector in utter sorrow,
A torrent of tears, still in the semblance

Of that far day when he was dragged and mangled
Behind the chariot, caked with dust and blood,
His feet still swollen where the thongs had pierced them.

Oh! what a grievous sight! alas! How changed
From the Hector strutting back with spoils of Achilles
Or flinging our firebrands among the enemy ships!
His beard was matted, his hair clotted with blood,
And livid upon him all the weals and wounds
He had suffered for his country and our walls.

I thought in the dream I was the first to speak,
As heavily weeping as he, at this strange meeting:
'O light of Troy and truest hope of the Trojans,
What has kept you so long? Dear, longed-for Hector
From what clime have you come? After so many

Deaths of your kinsmen, after so many travails
Of the folk of our city, we who regard you are weary—

What cause unworthy of your powers has branded
The beauty of your countenance, oh why

Do I see these wounds? He did not answer a word.
He took no heed of my vain questions. None.
But heaving a deep half-strangling sigh he said:

'Son of a goddess, oh fly, fly, and escape
From the conflagration: the enemy hold your walls!—
Troy from her highest tower is tumbling down,
The end has come for Priam and our country!
If Pergamus could be held by any hand

Mine would have held it. But now Troy entrusts
Her gods and her holy ordinances to you:

Take them with you to share your destiny,
Find them a fortress site, and found it, as you shall do,

After a mort of wanderings over the sea.'
He spoke and with his very own hands drew forth
The holy garlands, Vesta and her powers,
And the ever-burning fire from the inmost shrine.

Meanwhile from the city cries of agony rose
Louder and louder, although my father's palace
Stood back secluded by a screen of trees;

The clamor swelled and the horrible clash of combat.
I started out of sleep and climbed to the rooftop
Listening with my ears skinned—what I heard
Was like the sound of sparks that catching a cornfield

Ave fanned by a fierce south wind; or like the roaring
Of a mountain torrent scouring the flooded pastures,
Felling the ripening crops, the bullocks' labors,
Uprooting woods in its onrush, and up on a crag

A shepherd hears in amazed perplexity.

There was no room for doubt: we saw only too clearly
The naked treachery of the Greeks. Already
Deiphobus' great mansion lay in a charred
Ruin before the all-maturing might of Fire,

And next to it, Ucalegon's was ablaze—
The broad Straits of Sigeum reflected the fire.
Men shouted, trumpets pealed. Out of my mind,
I sprang to arms—not stopping to reason why—
More than to muster to me a band of fighters
And rally with them to the citadel.

Rage, fury, mastered me; I had in my mind
No thought but death in battle and its glory!
But seel! Where Panthus came escaping the Greek weapons,

Panhus the son of Orthyra, the priest of Apollo's temple
Lip on the affraid, running madly for our doorways
And trailing along somehow his defeated gods
And his little grandson. 'Panhus!' I called to him
'Where is the core of the battle? Where best shall we make our
stand?'

My words were hardly out when he sighed and answered:
'This is our last day, the final inescapable
Moment of reckoning for all us Trojans:—
Trojans we were: Troy was a city—once!
We have had our hour of glory: relentless love
Has give us over to Argos and all that is ours.
The town is on fire and the Greeks are masters of it.
High in the heart of the city stands the Horse
And warriors pour from inside it—Simon swaggers
His conquering way fanning the flames as he goes.
There are others thronging at the open gates—
As many thousands as came from mighty Mycenae,
Some are blocking the streets with a bristle of weapons
Ready for all who come, their naked blades
Gittering in a murderous hedge of steel.
Only the guards on duty at the gates
Have attempted to fight back, blindly at that.
I heard these words of Panhus, I felt the prompting
Of heavenly powers and plunged into fire and fight
Where the black lust of vengeance led me, where
The din was loudest, and the shouting cracked the sky.
Rhipens came to my side, and Epytus
That mighty warrior clattered out of the moonlight
And Hypanis and Dymas and young Coroebus
Added their numbers to my band, Coroebus
Had come to Troy quite lately, as it chanced,
In a rage of frantic passion for Cassandra
And pressing his suit with Priam by bringing help
To the Trojan cause— Poor luckless boy you gave
No heed to the ravings of your bride to be!
Seeing them in a body and ready to fight to the last
I addressed them: 'Comrades! bravest of the brave
But all in vain! If you wish with your whole hearts
To follow a man who dares all, even to death,
Then follow me—you see the state of affairs.
Our gods have left us, every one, their altars
And shrines are deserted, the prop and stay they gave
To our Empire are no more. The city you go to succor
Is a blazing shambles—come then, let us die!
Let us charge into the thick of things—the defeated

Have but one hope of safety—not to hope for it!
My words worked on their valor, their hearts were stirred
To fighting madness. Then like wolves on the prowl
In a black mist of night driven blindly on
By the intolerable pangs of insensate hunger,
Whose famished cubs await them in their lair,
We took the road to certain death among
The enemy, javelins making our way straight
To the center of Troy under the dark wing
Of shadowy night—that night! Who could describe
The holocaust, the hecatombs of the dead?
An ancient city after so many years
Of pride and power was in her final throes.
The dead lay everywhere about the streets
In moveless mounds—they lay in the houses, they lay
On the temple thresholds hallowed for so long,
Nor was it Trojans only who paid the price—
Even in this last hour the defeated felt
New courage surge up in their hearts and Greeks
In the flush of victory fell. And everywhere
Was agonizing grief and terror and death
In a myriad forms.

The first of the Greeks to run
Foul of us with no small force at his back
Was Androgeus and stupidly he mistook us
For some of his own supporters and called out
A friendly greeting: 'Hurry up, my men,
Why are you late, dawdling along like this?
Pergamus is on fire and others are looting it—
Have you just disembarked from the tall ships?'
He spoke and then immediately realized,
When there was no response, that he had blundered
Right into enemy forces. So he recoiled
And bit his words back; he was like a man
Who unawares has put his foot on a snake
Among the brambles and starts back in alarm
As it rears up in anger its steely neck.
So did Androgeus tremble at sight of us
And try to retreat. But we rushed in and penned
His men in a circle of steel and being ignorant
Of the ground they fought on they were seized with panic
And we slaughtered them: fortune had smiled on us
In our first encounter. And here Coroebus cried
In the flush of success and his own exuberance,
'Friends let us take this hint from fortune and follow
Wherever she leads and shows herself our ally:

Let us change shields, let us fit ourselves
 With Greek equipment: courage or cunning—
 Who cares which, when dealing with the foe?
 They shall arm us themselves!—and as he spoke,
 He put Androgeus' crested helmet on,
 Took up his shield with its noble device and strapped
 A Greek sword to his side. Then Rhipheus, Dymas
 And all our youthful company followed suit
 In gay good humor—and each armed himself
 With weapons stripped from the newly dead. And so
 We went our way and mingled with the Greeks,
 Under auspices not ours, and many the combat
 We fought in the blindness of night and when we fought
 Many the Greek we sent down to the Shades.
 Some broke and fled to the ships, hoping for safety
 If they could make the shore, some uterary craven
 Climbed back into the Horse and hid in the belly
 They knew already.

Alas! it is not for a man
 To trust in the gods if they will not accept his trust.
 Before our eyes Cassandra daughter of Priam
 Was being dragged by her loose-streaming hair
 From the Temple, from the very Shrine, of Minerva.
 She could but yearn up with her flashing eyes,
 Her eyes toward heaven; her delicate hands were chained.
 This piteous sight was too much for Coroebus
 And mad with fury he ploughed into the ranks
 Of the Greeks to certain death—and we all followed,
 Charging in close order, armed to the teeth.
 Now for the first time, from the lofty top of the temple
 We were subjected to a shower of weapons
 From our own side—and the most pitiful
 Slaughter ensued—our crests and the shape of our arms
 Made them mistake us for Greeks. The Greeks themselves
 Fuming with rage at the rescue of Cassandra
 Rallied from every side and set upon us.
 Fiercest of all was Ajax, then Menelaus
 And Agamemnon and all the Dolopian army—
 It was like the outbreak of a whirl of storm
 And south, and east exulting in his team
 When the winds clash from every quarter, west,
 Of the horses of dawn; the forests crack and Nereus
 In a whirl of foam lashes the waves to fury
 Wielding his trident and sits up the sea
 Right from the bottom.

Why, and those very men,
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Whom we tricked in the dark and harried through the
 shadows,
 And chased all over the city, again confronted us
 And they were the first to recognize our trick
 Of shield and weapon, and note that our speech was alien.
 All was lost: we were crushed by weight of numbers.
 Coroebus was first to fall—Peneleus killed him
 Beside the altar of the Goddess of Arms.
 Rhipheus went down, the justest man of us all,
 And the most zealous and scrupulous for Right;
 (Who knows the canons of heaven? They are simply other
 than men's).
 Hypanis, Dymas fell, run through by their friends—
 Not, Panthus, could you escape for all the devotions
 You paid to Apollo and his holy garland
 Borne on your brow! O ashes of Ilum!
 O final flame destroying all I loved,
 Witness that in your fall I never shrank
 From any weapon, from any close encounter!
 Had I been marked for death, I earned my death
 At the hands of many a Greek!

We were separated:
 Iphitus clove to me, and Pelias—
 Iphitus, slow with age, and Pelias
 Maimed by a wound from Ulysses. Drawn by the shouting,
 We made for Priam's palace, and there indeed
 The fight was fiercest—nowhere else in Troy
 Was carnage to touch this or death on such a scale.
 We were face to face with naked war and we saw
 The Greeks charging towards the house and milling
 About the entrance, a wall of close-knit shields.
 Scaling ladders were reared against every wall
 And men were climbing close to the very rooftops
 Their left arms thrusting out their shields to protect
 Their bodies from blows, their right clutching the coping.
 Against them the Trojans tore up roof and turret—
 These were the weapons they used instead of spears,
 In their death throes, so they sought their defense,
 And hurled down gilded rafters, ancestral glories,
 While some with drawn swords packed the doors to guard
 them.

We felt our spirits lift with our resolve
 To help the palace, relieve the beset defenders
 And breathe new vigor into vanquished hearts.
 At the back of the palace there was a hidden postern

Which gave on a passage connecting two wings of the house-
hold.

And often Andromache, poor soul, made use of it
When she went unattended on a visit to Hector's family
Or to show little Asytanax to his grandfather.

I went through here and climbed to the rooftop where
The wretched Trojans were hurling down their weapons
All to no purpose. Now, there was a tower

That reared its height to the stars from another house
With a sheer drop, and from it you could see
All Troy spread out below, and the Greek camp

And their fleet beyond. We chopped at it all round
Where the top stories offered gaps in their framework
And we wrenched it out from its eminence and canted it

And suddenly down it crashed with a rumble of ruin
Tumbling onto the Greeks in widespread havoc.
But others took their place and the hail of stones
And weapons of all sorts never abated.

In the front of the entrance in the very gateway
Pranced Pyrrhus, all a glitter of steel and bronze.
He was like a snake that has come out after a winter
Layed underground and bloated from a diet

Of poisonous greenery and now prinks in the light
And sloughs his skin and rears his head to the sun
Glistening in new vigor and youth renewed.
Flexing the fluid coils of his back and frisking

His three-forked tongue. And with him was Periphas,
A huge man, and Automedon charioteer
And armor-bearer to Achilles, and all.

The youth of Scyros pressing up to the bulding
And lobbing firebrands onto the roof. Pyrrhus
Among the leaders with his two-edged ax

Was battering down the door, and cleaving through
The bronze pins of the hinges: and soon he hacked
A hole through the tough oaken planking turning

The door into a window—the whole inside
Of the house was nakedly exposed and the Great Hall.
The ancestral home of the House of the Kings of Troy
Lay open wide and standing within the entrance

Its last guard of armed warriors.

From within
The stricken palace rose the pitiful sound
Of grief and panic—the desolate cries of the women

Echoed from every room: a keen went up
To the golden stars. The terror-stricken women
Dithered from room to mighty room, and clung

To the pillars in close embrace and kissed them with passion.
But Pyrrhus moved inexorably on.

True son of his father Achilles—no bolted door
Nor guard could stem his irresistible onset.
Under a hail of blows the doors collapsed

Both hinge and hinge-post belabored till they burst.
Force found its way—the approaches were overrun,
The guards killed and the Greeks came flooding in
And occupied the building in full force.

They were more violent than a river in spate
That bursts its banks and tumbling over the dikes
In the swirl of its flood water runs amok

Over the cornfields, and over the whole champaign
Sweeps the cattle away and their stalls with them.
With my own eyes I saw Neoptolemus

In his full killing fury, and through the gateway
Stormed the two sons of Atreus. I saw Hecuba
With the wives of her hundred sons. And Priam dentling

With his own blood the altars whose holy fires
He had lit himself. Those fifty marriage rooms,
The glorious promise of such progeny,

The pillars gleaming with barbaric gold
And proud with plunder,—all sank down to dust.
The Greeks were masters wherever the fires were not.

Perhaps you would like to ask of Priam's doom.
When he saw his city fallen, his city sacked,

And the gates of his palace broken down and the foe
In the heart of his own home, with the trembling hands
Of an old man he struggled into his armor,
So long disused, and girted on a sword

He was too weak to wield and turned his steps
Towards a certain death in the thick of the fighting.
In the central courtyard open to the sky

Stood a great altar and an ancient bay tree
Bending above it, and cradling in its shade
The household deities. Hecuba and her daughters

Were huddling here in helpless hope of sanctuary,
Like doves that have dived for safety from a storm,
And their arms tight round the statues of their gods,

But when she saw Priam accoutered in the arms
He had worn as a young man, she cried 'My dearest,
My wretched husband, what mazes your mind

To do a thing like this and arm yourself?
Where are you off to? In straits as dire as ours
This is not the help we need, no, not if even my Hector

Were still alive to help us: come to us here; this altar
Is our defense in common—or let us face
A common death! She drew the old King close
And made him crouch beside her at the altar.
But see, Polites, one of Priam's sons
Escaped from the murderous blade of Pyrrhus, fleeing
Through the enemy storm down the long corridors
And crossing the empty courts was lurching wounded
And Pyrrhus pursued him like a running flame,
Poised for the kill and all but clutching him,
His spearpoint inches away. At last Polites
Staggered within his parents' sight and there
Before his eyes fell dead in a pool of blood.
At this old Priam, though death hemmed him about,
Could not restrain himself but roared in anger:
'For a crime such as this' he fulminated,
'For such an outrage may all the gods of heaven,
If any still have any sense of Right
And mark such wrongs as these, give you the thanks
You merit and pay you back in your true coin—
You that have killed my son before my eyes
And smirched a father's presence with this blood.
Not even Achilles whom you lie in calling
Your father dealt with me, his enemy, thus.
He could blush crimson at the dishonoring
Of a suppliant's claims, he returned to me Hector's corpse
For burial, he gave me safe conduct back
To my own kingdom!' So the old man cried
And hurled his feeble spear without the power
To inflict a wound and it was fended off
By the ringing bronze and hung there uselessly
From the end of the shield-boss. Pyrrhus answered him
'You shall be my messenger, then, to my father Achilles
And report all this to him: remember to tell him
Of my disgraceful deeds—how degenerately
His son behaved. Now die!' As he said these words
He dragged the trembling doidard, slipping and sliding
In the pool of his own son's blood, towards the altar,
He clawed his left hand in Priam's hair
And with his right he raised his glittering sword
And plunged it in his side up to the hilt.
So ended Priam's fortunes, such was his fate
After seeing his Troy fired, his Pergamus flattened,
He who had once been the proud sovereign
Of so many Asian lands and people. He lay,

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His mighty body abandoned on the shore,
Head severed from the trunk, a nameless corpse.
Then, for the first time, I was seized with utter horror.
The image of my beloved father rose
Before my eyes when I saw the King (for both
Were the same age) breathing his last, his life
Drained by that dreadful wound. I saw my love
Creusa and my house sacked and the fate
I had exposed my little Iulus to.
I hooked back, I looked everywhere to see
What forces were with me still. All had forsaken me.
In utter exhaustion they had slumped to the ground
Or thrown themselves on the fires in sheer despair.
I was alone, alone. It was then I saw her—
Helen the daughter of Tynhareus lay cringing
Silently shrinking into the darkest corner
Of the Temple of Vesta: by the flare of the fires
That lit my ranging steps and my roving eyes
I saw her: she who was equally terrified
Of Trojan hatred for the fall of Pergamus,
And Greek revenge in fury for her desertion
Of Menelaus, she the scourge alike
Of Troy and her own country, and there she had hidden
Her hateful hatred self beside the altar.
My blood boiled: I was filled with an overmastering fury
To avenge my country and make her pay in full
For the crimes she had committed: was she indeed
To go safe to see Mycenae, land of her birth,
And Sparta again? And queen it as a queen?
And see home, husband, parents, children—she
With a retinue of Trojan lords and ladies
To wait upon her? And Priam put to the sword
And Troy burnt to the ground and the shore so often
A sweat of blood? No, never. To kill a woman
Will never make a name: no fame nor honor
Springs from a conquest such as this—but I
Shall get my due for having blotted out
A sin like this, and executed justice
Where it was long deserved. And I shall relish
Feeding my fires of vengeance and satisfying
The ashes of those I love! Such were the ravings
Formed on my lips by the ravings of my mind.
But there before me and never before so clear
To my sight, appeared my mother in her grace
And tender beauty canceling the night

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With her pure radiance, in all her divinity,
 With the same men and stature as she wears
 Among the Heaven-dwellers, she took my hand
 And held me back, enhancing this restraint
 With these words from her lips of rose: 'O Son,
 What intolerable weight of agony
 Can rouse in you such uncontrollable anger?
 Why are you frenzied? And where has disappeared
 Your love for me? Will you not first attend to
 Your father Anchises? where have you left him worn
 With age as he is? Will you not see if your wife
 Creusa is still alive and your son Ascanius?
 Everywhere, all around them, are Greek patriots;
 They had been dead by now or burnt alive,
 Had I not kept them safe. It is not the hateful
 Beauty of Spartan Helen you must blame,
 Nor even Paris—it is the gods—the implacable
 Enmity of the gods that is wrecking Troy
 And hurling her empire down to utter ruin.
 Look! I will peel off all the glaucous mist
 That dulls the vision of mortals in gloom and darkness.
 But you—fear not to obey your mother's bidding,
 Follow her instruction. Here, where you see
 Masses of rubble and stone wrenched from stone
 And a smother of smoke and swirl of dust—Neptune
 Is prodding the walls down with his mighty trident
 And undermining the city's deep foundations;
 There Juno in full spate of fury is guarding
 The Scæan gate and sword at hip is driving
 Reinforcements up from the ships. Oh look behind you!
 There is Minerva already on her throne
 High on our citadel hissing from the cloud
 Of her Gorgon headress—There is Jove himself
 Nerving the Greeks to a new recourse of courage,
 Rousing the very forces of heaven against the Trojans.
 There is a time to flee, my dearest, to resign
 A hopeless struggle—never shall I desert you,
 Safe shall I bring you to your father's doorways.
 She vanished into the black abyss of night.
 And huge and mighty forms, that do not live
 Like living forms, I saw encompassing
 The obsequies of Troy.

I saw all Ilium
 Dissolving in the fires, all Neptune's city
 Topped to its foundations—like an old rovan
 On a peak a gang of farmers back and hack at

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With iron axes trying to dislodge,
 Till it begins to shudder, the topmost branches
 Quiver and threaten and in the end it cracks
 And groans and falls to a final stroke and crashes
 Down the fellside and leaves a wake of havoc.
 I climbed down from the roof and the goddess led me
 Safely through fire and foe: the flames withdrew,
 The weapons glanced aside.

But when I won
 To that old house I knew so well, my father's,
 Whom first I wished to bear to a place of safety
 Upon the mountains—he refused to come!
 He refused to go on living in banishment
 After the sack of his city. 'You are young,
 Your blood is not clotted yet, you are in the fullness
 Of your strength and spirit—it is for you to flee.
 But as for me if the Heaven-dwellers had wished
 To extend my days they would have saved my home.
 It is enough to have witnessed and survived
 One sack of my city—It is here, it is here
 You must leave my members and bid me last farewell—
 I shall find my death in my own way—the enemy
 Will show me pity: graspingly for my spoils.
 The lack of a tomb is a thing I can lightly bear;
 I have suffered long enough from heaven's hatred,
 Long enough have I dragged a useless life out,
 Since the All-Father blasted me with the winds
 Of his thunderstroke and laid the finger of flame
 Upon my body.'

He was adamant
 For all the entreaties of our tearful hearts—
 My wife Creusa, my son Ascanius
 And all the household—though we appealed to him
 As head of the family not to drag us all
 Down to disaster with him and lend his weight
 To the doom that hung so heavily already
 Over us all. He refused utterly.
 He would not budge from the house or change his purpose.
 So again I prepared to arm myself and in desperation
 Launched on the sea of death—what could I do?
 What other course was open? Truly, father
 Did you suppose I should up with my heels and bolt
 And leave you behind? I said, 'Could a father's lips
 Let fall a thought so shocking? If the Immortals
 Have willed this mighty city to be crushed
 To an utter cipher, and if it be your pleasure

47

To add the deaths of you and yours to Troy's—
That door to death is open wide—yes, Pyrrhus
Fresh from the bath of Priam's blood will be here,
The killer of his son before a father.
The killer of that father at the altar.
Sweet mother, was it for this you rescued me
From fire and sword? Simply to see the foe
In the heart of my own home—see my Ascanius,
My father, and my wife Creusa butchered
In pools of mutual blood like sacrifices?
Come, heroes, bring my arms—it is the fight
Of our last day calling the conquered! Get me to grips
With the Greeks again, let me go back to the battle!
We shall not all die unavenged this day!

So I was strapping on my sword again
And easing my left arm into position
In the harness of my shield and about to sally
Out of the house when at the very doorway
There was my wife and she clasped me by the feet
And held out little Iulus to me, his father.
'If you are going to death,' she sobbed, 'then take us with
you

To all that may befall—from what you have seen,
If you have any faith in a further stand,
Then make it here protecting your own home!
To whom else are you leaving little Iulus,
Your father, or your wife—as you called me once?'
The house was ringing with her piteous cries
When suddenly appeared a miraculous portent.
For there between his parents' hands and faces,
As they stood grieving over him, the very top
Of Iulus' head was seen to burst into flame
And glow with a fiery light, that harmlessly
Played round his silken hair and upon his forehead.
We in a pother of alarm and hurry
Shook out his blazing locks and tried to quench
The holy fires with water. But my father
Anchises raised his eyes to the stars in rapture
And stretched his hands to heaven and prayed aloud:
'Almighty Jove, if my prayer has power
To bend your iron resolve, look down on us
This one and only time, and if by our piety
We have earned any reward, grant us your help
And affirmation of this omen.'

48

Scarcely

Had the old man finished his prayer when thunder pealed
Suddenly on the left and a shooting star
Sled down from heaven trailing a brilliant tail
And flashing through the dark. We saw it pass
Over the top of our house and marked the gleaming
Course of its flight till it fell and disappeared
In the woods of Ida. Over a great stretch
Of the sky it scored a shining furrow of light
And over the earth a cloud of sulfur smoke.
This sight convinced my father utterly.
He made obeisance to the holy star,
He raised himself heavenward, he addressed the Gods:
'No more delay, no more! Gods of my country!
I follow, and where you lead there I shall be!
Preserve my house, preserve my little grandson!
Yours is this sign and under your sway is Troy.
For my part I give way, my son. I am willing
To come with you now.'

And now we heard the roar
Of the fire grow louder and louder through the town
And the waves of heat rolled nearer ever nearer.
'Come then, dear father, up onto my back
I will bear you on my shoulders—you will be
No burden to me at all, and whatever befall us,
One and the same peril will face us both
And there will be one and the same salvation!
Little Iulus, you must walk at my side.
And you, Creusa, follow in my footsteps.
Now you, my servants, attend to what I say:
As you leave the city there is a mound and upon it
An ancient shrine of Ceres long abandoned,
And by it grows an aged cypress tree—
For many years our forebears held it in reverence—
And here we shall rally—each of us arriving
By different routes. You, father, take in your hand
Our holy relics and our country's gods—
I cannot do so without sacrifice,
Hot as I am from the moid of war and drenched
In the fresh blood of slaughter, till I have cleansed
My body in running water.'

Having spoken
I bent my neck and shoulders down and cloaked them
In a tawny lion-skin, and took up my burden.
My little Iulus clutching my right hand
Kept at my side with his quick little steps.
My wife followed behind. So we set out

49

Creeping along in the shadows. As for me
 Though never till that moment had I flinched
 From any weapons the Greeks could hurl against me
 Nor at the knots of those picked men who barred
 My way against me, now a breath of wind
 Was enough to scare me, I jumped at every sound—
 Equally fearful for the load I carried
 And the little thing I led. And now I had nearly
 Reached the gates of the city and thought I had made
 The whole long way in safety when suddenly
 We seemed to hear the tramp of hurrying feet—
 Feet hurrying our way and my father peered
 Through the shadows. 'Son,' he cried. 'Quick quick, my son!
 They are on us; I can see the glint of shields
 And the flash of swords!' What hostile powers robbed me
 Of my wits in this extremity and stress
 I cannot tell, for as I dodged away
 Out of the streets I knew I lost my bearings
 As I fled over trackless country, and Oh, alas:
 Creusa—she was torn from me—what happened to her?
 Did she stop or stray or sink down in exhaustion?
 I was never to set my eyes on her again.
 Never had I looked back when first she flagged,
 Never gave her a thought before I came
 To the mound and the Shrine, such ages dedicated
 To the cult of Ceres; here we were all gathered,
 But she was not. She was lost to us for ever,
 Her husband and her son and all her companions.
 I went out of my mind, there was not a god,
 There was not a man that lacked the lash of my curses!
 In all the sack of the city, what had I seen
 More fraught with agonies unspeakable?
 Ascanius and Anchises and the Gods
 Of our country I committed to the care
 Of my comrades, leaving them in safety hidden
 In a curving dip of ground, whilst I myself
 Needs must return to Troy. Again I clad
 Myself in my shining armor. I was resolved
 To answer every challenger again, to retrace
 My every step through Troy, to expose my life
 Once more to every danger. First of all
 I sought again the wall where the dark gate
 Had let us out and carefully cast my eye
 Over the ground and tracked my footsteps back
 Through the black night. Everywhere on my senses
 Pressed horror, the very silence made me shiver.

50

Then I turned homeward hoping against hope,
 Hoping against all hope, that she had gone there.
 The Greeks were everywhere—they had occupied
 The entire house: but all was lost for the greedy
 Tongues of the hungry fire fanned by the wind
 Licked round the roof and mounted ever higher,
 And the heat fumed up to the sky. So on I went
 And visited the citadel again
 And Priam's palace. Here in the empty cloisters,
 In Jove's sanctuary, Phoenix and grim Ulysses
 Had been set guard and were standing over the plunder.
 Looted from every burnt-out Temple in Troy
 Here lay a pile of treasure—holy tables,
 And mixing bowls of solid gold and vestments.
 Trembling mothers and little children stood
 In a long line beside them. I even dared
 To call out through the darkness, I filled the streets
 With my unhappy cries—all to no end—
 Calling Creusa! Creusa! again and again.
 As I was combing the city frenziedly,
 There before my eyes the unhappy phantom
 Of my Creusa appeared but taller far
 Than ever she was in life this image stood.
 I was struck dumb, my hair stood on end, my voice
 Died in my throat, but then she spoke to me
 And calmed my fears: 'Sweet husband, why do you choose
 To indulge yourself in such extremes of grief?
 Not without heaven's cognizance is the scope
 Of these present plans. That you should take your Creusa
 Upon your journey is forbidden: it is opposed
 To what is Right, and the Mighty Ruler of Heaven
 Forbids you also. You have years of exile
 And untold leagues of ocean to plough—but at last
 You will come to the Western Land where the Lydian Tiber
 Rolls softly through the rich acres of rich men.
 There you will find happiness and a kingdom
 And a royal bride awaiting. Do not weep
 For Creusa your beloved. I shall not suffer
 The pride of Dolopian or of Myrmiton
 Lording it in their homes; or be the slave
 Of some Greek mother. I am Dardan begotten
 Of the royal blood and my mother was Venus divine:
 And it is the Mighty Mother of gods who is keeping me
 Safe in these coasts. And now farewell. Keep safe
 In your loving care the son of our own love.
 These were her words and she departed from me

51

And vanished into thin air for all that I wept
And longed to say so many things— Three times
I tried to fling my arms about her neck;
Three times in vain, the phantom slipped through my hands
Like a breath of wind or the fleeting of a dream.
So passed the night and I returned to my comrades.
When I arrived I found to my amazement
Their numbers swelled by a great multitude
Of new arrivals, mothers and warrior-husbands
And young men, mustered for exile; a pitiful concourse.
From everywhere they had gathered, their minds made up,
And their resources ready at my disposal
To have me lead them over sea to whatever
Land I might choose. And now the morning star
Was rising over the highest ridges of Ida
Bringing the day. In Troy Greek sentries blocked
Every gate of the city. There was no hope of help.
I turned my back, I hoisted my father on it,
And made tracks for the mountains.”

BOOK III

*After the overthrow of the Asian powers
Was seen to be the manifest will of the Gods,
After the overthrow, though they were guiltless,
Of Priam's people and proud Ilium's fall,
And Neptune's Troy was a flattened smoking waste,
We were driven on by auguries from the gods
To scour the empty regions of the world
For a home of exile, and beside Antandros
Under the first slopes of our Phrygian Ida
We built a fleet,—but where the fates would carry us
Or where it would be granted us to settle
We had no clue, but we mustered our men, we were ready,
And scarcely had summer begun when my father Anchises

52

Bid us set sail before the winds of fate,
Weeping I left my country's shores and the port
And the plains where once Troy was: I was borne out
Onto the deep, an exile with my comrades,
My son, and my household gods, and the Great Gods of my
people.

In the distance lies a terrain owned by the War God
And its wide plains are tilled by Thracian farmers—
Once it was ruled by the cruel king Lycurgus;
We were bound by ties of friendship and alliance
From times of old, when things were well with us.
There was I borne, and on a curving line
Of the coast I chose the site for our city walls—
(An ill beginning as it proved) and named it
Aeneadae, after my own name.

I was sacrificing
To Venus my mother and to the other gods
That they might bless the work I had embarked on;
And to the Monarch of all the Heaven-dwellers
I was about to slay a glossy bull
On the seashore. Now there chanced to be nearby
A mound whose top was thick with a scrub of cornel
And myrtle shoots as stiff and sharp as spears.
I went there and I tried to uproot some greenery,
To grace the altar with a leafy canopy,
When I was met by an awesome and ghastly marvel:
From the first tree I wrenched at, tearing it off
At the roots, blood welled up in black drops
And sullied the earth with its spots. A chill shudder
Convulsed my body and my blood froze with fear.
I tried again and tugged at the stubborn stems
Of a second tree, to try and find out the cause
Of the mystery. Another gout of blood
Broke from the bark. In a mael of puzzled wonder
I began to pray to the nymphs of the countryside
And Father Mars, the god of Thrace; I besought them
To turn the vision to good and to purge off
The horror of the omen: but when I tried
To uproot the third stem, straining with my knees
Dug into the sand and my whole body braced
For a greater effort—oh shall I dare to tell
What happened, or keep silent?—from the depths
Of the mound I heard heartrending moans and I heard
A human voice: 'Aeneas,' it cried out, 'why
Must you tear me apart, suffering as I am?'

53

Let me alone, at last, in my grave—stain not
Your innocent hands with guilt. I am no stranger;
I am of Troy—it is Trojan blood you see
Weep from that branch. Fly from these cruel lands!
Fly from these misers' shores! I am Polydorus.
And here I lie where an iron crop of spears
First laid me low, and out of my buried body
Shoot stems as weapon-sharp.

Then indeed I stood
Dumfounded in a maze of doubt and dread
My hair stood up, my voice stuck in my throat.
For Polydorus it was that luckless Priam,
When he began to despair of Trojan arms
And saw the city in a noose of siege,
Had secretly despatched, with a great hoard
Of gold to the King of Thrace—and he when he saw
Troy broken, her power and prosperity
Melted away, he turned his coat and sided
With the victorious arms of Agamemnon;
All laws of Right and Equity were shattered.
He murdered Polydorus and seized the treasure
By main force—O accursed lust for gold!
To what will you not force the hearts of men?
After that panic had ceased to grip my marrow
I summoned my father and a chosen few,
Acquainted them with this miracle of the gods
And asked for their opinion. One and all
Agreed to quit this land of villainy,
And cut all contact with a place which so
Had sinitched the laws of amicable conduct.
We must set sail whatever wind was blowing.
Therefore we reburied Polydorus
And heaped upon him a huge pile of earth;
We raised up altars to the Shades below
Somber with mourning garlands and black cypresses,
And women of Ilium with their hair loosed
In customary fashion attended them.
We offered bowls of new warm foaming milk
And vessels of consecrated blood and committed his spirit
To rest in its tomb and lifted up our voices
In last farewell. Then in the first calm spell
When the sea was smooth and a gentle breeze from the south
Invited us, our crews hauled down their ships
And the shore was crowded. Then we put out from the har-
bor
And lands and cities dwindled in our wake.

In the midst of the sea there lies the island of Delos
An inhabited and almost holy place,
Well favored by the Nereids' mother and Neptune;
Apollo, the archer-god, had found it drifting
From shore to shore about the seas and had moored it
Between the crags of Myconus and Gyarus
And offered it as a fixed dwelling-place
And potent to defy the winds. He did this
In deference to his mother. There I sailed,
And in its sheltered harbors my weary men
Found gentlest welcome. We landed and paid homage
To Apollo's city. Anius temporal king
Of his subjects and at the same time priest of the god
Hurried to meet us, his temples wreathed in garlands
And hallowed bay-leaves: he recognized Anchises,
His friend of old: we shook each other's hands
In mutual esteem and approached his dwelling as guests.
In the temple built of ancient stone I worshiped
And spoke this prayer: 'Grant us, O God of Thymbra,*
A home of our own. Grant walls to us weary mortals,
Grant us descendants and an enduring city.
Keep safe for Troy a second citadel—
All that was left to us by the Greeks and brutal Achilles.
Who is our guide? Where do you bid us go?
Where found our home? Father, vouchsafe a sign
And fill our hearts with the knowledge of your presence.'

My prayer was scarcely finished when it seemed
That a tremor passed through everything—even the door
Of the temple and the bay-tree of the god.
The whole mass of the mountain shook, the shrine
Flew open and the hidden tripod tolled.
We flung ourselves face downwards to the earth
And a voice sounded in our ears.
O Dardan people strong to endure, the land
That cradled first your race, from whence you sprung,
That land shall take you to her joyful breast
On your return. Seek for your ancient mother.
From there the house of Aeneas and the sons of his sons
And all that are born from them shall hold dominion
Over the whole earth.' So spoke Apollo.
There was a great burst of jubilation
And a wild uproar as each man asked his fellow
Where was the walled city? Where did Apollo intend

* Apollo.

Us wanderers to return to? What did he mean?
Then spoke my father turning his thoughts back
To the traditions of our ancestors:

I, Istan, your lords of Troy, and learn where lie
Your hopes. There lies in the middle of the sea
The isle of Crete—the isle of almighty Jove.
A Mount Ida is there and the cradle of our race.
The Cretans live in a hundred splendid cities
And the land is very fertile; it was from there,
If I remember rightly what I have heard,
That Teucer, the founder of our people, went
To the coasts of Troy and chose a site for his kingdom.
Not yet was Ilium built nor the citadel.
Of Pergamus; the people lived in the valleys.
Cybele our Mother Goddess came from this isle
With the ritual dances of her Corybants,
Clashing their cymbals in the Grove of Ida;
From here, the silent awe in which we worship;
And the lions harnessed to her Queenly chariot.
Come, then, and let us follow out the road
The gods have bidden. Let us propitiate
The winds and set a course for the realms of Knossos—
It is no long way—if Jove show us his favor
The third day ought to see us touch the shores.
Such were his words, and standing at the altar
He offered the due sacrifice—a bull
To Neptune, and to you, beauteous Apollo,
Likewise a bull; and a black lamb to the Storm Wind;
A white lamb to the gentle westerly breezes.

There was a rumor widely and speedily
Being put about that King Idomeneus
Had been exiled from his father's kingdom of Crete;
That we should find the shores deserted and the houses
All standing empty and meet no opposition.
So we put out from the harbor of Ortygia
And sped over the deep—we shaped our course
Through racing channels in a sea dotted with islands,
By Naxos where the bacchantes reel on the hilltops;
By green Donusa; Olearos; and Paros
White with its marble; by the Cyclades:
And sailor shouts encouragement to sailor
As each bends to his task in rivalry,
'Crete and the land of our fathers! On to Crete!
A following wind sprang up and helped us on
And at last we glided in to the ancient coasts

56

When the Cretans live. Then eagerly
I began to raise the walls of the city we all
So craved for, and I called it Pergamea.
My people rejoiced at the name and I urged them on
To love their homes, and erect a defensive citadel.
Our ships were nearly all laid up securely
Above the tide-line, our young men and women
Were busy with marriage and the cultivation
Of their new farms, and I myself was busy
Alighting houses and formulating laws,
When suddenly from some poisonous region of heaven
A pestilence fell upon our wretched frames,
A killing blight on man and crop and tree,
And that year death was the only yield we had.
The people died, they surrendered their sweet souls,
Or dragged their wasted bodies just alive,
And the Dog Star shriveled the fields to barrenness;
The grasses withered, the blighted crops denied us
Our sustenance. And then my father urged me
To sail back to Ortygia, to the oracle
And pray for Apollo's pardon and ask the god
What term he would set to our weary struggle, and whence
Did he bid us seek for aid in our tribulation
And whither we should direct our course.

It was night;

And every living creature upon the earth
Was in the grip of sleep. But in my sleep
The sacred figures of the Gods of Troy
Which I had carried off from the midst of the flames
Seemed to appear standing before my eyes,
Clear-cut in a flood of light the full moon poured
In through the window slits, and they spoke to me
And with their words relieved me of my cares:
We are here at Apollo's bidding, he has sent us
Of his own will to your very door to give you
The prophecy he was prepared to give you
If you sailed to Ortygia. Since Troy was consumed
We have followed you and your arms; We have been with
you
Through every trough, on every crest of ocean
Your fleet has weathered, and we it is shall raise
Your posterity to the stars and give to your city
Its mighty sway. Do you make ready the walls,
Great walls for the great and do not flinch from the long
And grinding toil of exile. You must move
Your habitation—it was not these shores

57

Apollo of Delos commended nor did he bid you
 Settle in Crete—there is a place the Greeks
 Have called Hesperia—the western land—
 An ancient country powerful in war
 And rich of soil: the Oenotrians once lived there
 But now they say their descendants have called themselves
 "Italians" after Italus—one of their leaders.
 There lies your true home—it was from there
 That Dardanus came and Iasius your founder.
 Come now, arise, and joyfully repeat
 This message true, beyond all doubt of truth,
 To your aged father—tell him to seek Corythus
 And the lands of Italy, I was stunned
 By such a vision and the divine voices.
 For it was not sleep—I was in their very presence,
 We were face to face and I saw their braided hair
 And the movement of their lips, and a cold sweat
 Broke out all over my body. I sprang from bed
 And stretched my hands to heaven and breathed a prayer
 And poured upon the hearth a libation of unmixed wine:
 I performed this office and then joyfully
 Told every detail of the occurrence to Anchises.
 He called to mind then our double pedigree
 And the two rival branches of our stock
 And saw that he had muddled the location
 Of the two ancient countries of our source:
 O my son versed in the destinies of Troy,
 Cassandra's was the only voice to foretell
 Such an event to me. I remember now
 This was the prophecy she made about our people
 And often and often she cried out "Italy!"
 "Hesperia! There is our destined home!"
 But who could believe in Trojans ever having
 To travel to the shores of the Western Land?
 And who believed Cassandra's ravings then?
 Let us yield to Apollo and being guided by him
 Follow a more favorable course.
 So spoke Anchises and we all with acclamation
 Seconded his pronouncement. So on we moved
 From here as we had moved from Thrace, leaving
 A handful of our folk behind, and sped full sail
 Over the waste of waters in our ships.
 When we were truly out on the high seas
 And no more land was in sight—when there was nothing
 But sky and sea and sky wherever you looked,

58

An ink-black storm-cloud gathered, lowering
 Over our heads, a brew of might and tempest
 Whipping the sea to curling crests of darkness.
 At once the gusts made all the surface seethe
 And the waves rose mountains high. Our fleet was scatered
 About the heaving deep. Clouds dimmed the daylight
 And sodden night blotted the whole sky.
 Bright tongues of lightning spit and spit the clouds.
 We lost our bearings and blindly groped our way
 Over the blind waste. Palinurus himself
 Could not tell night from day by observing the sky
 Nor plot a course in this void of open sea.
 For three whole days (they were hard enough to reckon)
 We lurched about in this dank oblivion—
 For three whole nights with never a star to guide us.
 At last on the fourth day we sighted land
 With distant mountains and smoke curling upward.
 Down came the sails, it was all hands to the oars!
 There was no hesitation, every sailor
 Pulled with a will, dipped deep in the dark blue surfice
 And made it boil with foam. Saved from the waves,
 It was on the shores of the Strophades first I landed.
 The Strophades—as the Greeks have called them—are islands
 In the great Ionian sea and there the appalling Celaeno
 And the rest of the Harpies have lived since the house of
 Phineus
 Was closed against them and they were driven by fear
 From the tables where they had gorged themselves in the
 past.
 No more disgusting monster nor plague more cruel
 Nor agent of heaven's anger more dire than these
 Was ever thrust up from the Stygian waters.
 They were birds with the features of young girls, their
 droppings
 Were utterly nauseous, their hands had talons,
 Their faces eternally pinched and pale with hunger.
 Here we made landfall and when we entered the harbor
 We saw rich herds of cattle everywhere
 At graze about the plains and goats at pasture
 With none to guard them. So we rushed upon them,
 Weapons in hand, and called upon the gods,
 Even great Jove himself, to share our plunder.
 Then we spread seats along the curving shore
 And addressed ourselves to a delicious banquet.
 But suddenly with a horrifying swoop

59

Down from their mountain eyries stooped the Harpies
With a great clattering of wings and tipped
The feast in fragments and fouled everything
With their filthy contact—they stank revoltingly,
And screamed appallingly—, So once again
We set our tables, moved our altars and kindled
Their fires in a deep recess hidden beneath
An overhang of rock and hedged in by trees
But once again, from a different quarter of sky,
The raucous flock swooped down from their hidden lairs
And fluttered round their prey with their hooked claws
And fouled the feast with their mouths. Then I commanded
My comrades to take up arms: we must wage war
On the loathsome tribe. Obedient to my orders
They unsheathed their swords, hiding them in the grass,
And covered up their shields. Then, when the sound
Of their swooping wings was heard along the shore
Misenus blew a trumpet blast from his lookout
High on a rock. My comrades charged and engaged
In a new form of battle—trying to wound
These disgusting birds of the sea. But however hard
They struck they could not even mark their feathers
Nor inflict wounds on their backs—they simply escaped
By soaring quickly into the sky and leaving
Half-eaten food and a trail of filth behind.
But one of them, Celaeno, perched on a spur
Of rock, and spoke—a prophetess of woe.
You have slaughtered our cattle, you have felled our bul-
locks—

Do you mean to make war to justify your deeds,
True kindred of Laomedon? To make war
And drive us Harpies, blameless as we are,
From our ancestral home? Listen to me!
Take heed of my words and fix them in your minds!
This prophecy the Almighty Father Jove
Imparted to Phoebus Apollo and he, Apollo,
Imparted it to me, chief of the Furies,
And now it is mine to impart the words to you.
Your course is set for Italy. Summon the winds,
They shall obey, to Italy you shall go,
You shall be granted entry to a harbor.
But you shall not put one stone upon another
To encircle your fated city with its walls
Before the utmost pangs of ravenous hunger
Force you to gnaw at and wolf your very tables
In payment for your brutal assault upon us!

60

So saying she flew off and swiftly fled
Into the wood. My comrades' blood went cold
With sudden dread. They had no more heart to fight
But bid me sue for peace with prayers and vows—
Whether these creatures were goddesses indeed
Or vile and disgusting birds. My father Anchises
Lifted his hands from where he stood on the shore
And invoked the Mighty Powers—instructing us
In the due ritual for the sacrifice.
'Great gods, forfend this menace; Great Gods avert
Such evil case as this, but graciously
Look down on us your faithful worshippers
And shield us from all evil.' Then he bade us
Cast off, uncoil the sheets and hoist our sails,
And they filled with a good southerly breeze and we sped
Over the foaming waters where their slant
And the pilot chose. And soon they came into view
The wooded isle of Zacynthus, then Dulichium
And Same and Neritus' rocky cliffs.
We escaped the rocks of Ithaca, the realm
Laertes ruled, and cursed the land that nourished
Cruel Ulysses. And soon the storm-crowned summit
Of the headland of Leucata hove in sight
And Apollo's shrine, the dread of every sailor.
But we were exhausted, it was there we made for,
Cast anchor from our prows, drew up our stems
Along the shore and entered the little town.

So now, beyond all our hopes, we had made port;
We performed our due ritual to the Almighty
And kindled altars to repay our vows.
Then on the shores of Actium we held games
In the Trojan manner—my comrades stripped, and slippery
With olive oil they wrestled using the holds
That are traditional with us. We all rejoiced
To have passed safely by so many settlements
Of Greeks, to have held the course of our escape
Through such a crowd of foes. Meanwhile the sun
Rolled on through the circuit of the enormous year
And winter brought the ice, and northerly gales
Lashed up the seas. I fastened upon the portal
Of the temple a hollow shield of brass once borne
By Abas, that mighty man, and celebrated
The deed with an inscription: 'Aeneas offers
This armor won from his Greek conquerors.'
Then I bade my crews to their place upon the beaches

61

And gave my sailing orders and out we put,
Striking the sea in rhythmic strokes and striving
Each ship with the next in line. Nor was it long
Before Phaeacia's heights sank down astern
And we coasted along Epirus and put in
At Chaonia and approached the high-built city
Of Butthum.

—Here a truly incredible story
Came to our ears: we were told that Helenus,
Son of Priam, was ruling over Greeks
In the cities here—sitting upon the throne
Of Pyrrhus, Achilles' son, and having for wife
Andromache—who thus became again
The wife of a Trojan. I was flabbergasted.
I burned with a strange overpowering compulsion
To question my old friend and hear from him
The story of such an astounding train of events.
Leaving the shore and the fleet I was coming up from the
harbor

At the very time when Andromache, in a grove
Near the city by a stream she had called Simois,
Was celebrating her yearly rites of grief,
Her customary sacrifice to Hector:
She was pouring her libation to his ashes
And calling on his spirit by a mound
Of green turf which was empty, but consecrated
To his memory with two altars—she had raised
As a place where she could weep in holy peace.
She saw me coming and wildly she saw me coming
Clad all in Trojan arms and she was shattered
By this fantastic shock, she stiffened, went cold,
Her eyes glazed and she swooned: it was long before
She whispered 'Is it you? Is it truly you?
Is it real news you bring me? Son of the goddess,
Are you alive? Or if the blessed light
Of life has withdrawn from you, Oh where is Hector?
She burst into a torrent of tears, her sobs
Filled all the grove. She was so beside herself
I had little chance to answer and worked my words
Haphazardly between her bouts of grief.
'Why, truly I am alive, though I pass my days
At the stretch of suffering—but I *am* alive,
No doubt of it—your eyes tell you the truth.
But, alas, what chance has befallen you—cast down
From such a height of married happiness?
O wife of Hector! Andromache! Has fortune

Blossomed upon you such a second spring
As you deserve? Are you still Pyrrhus' wife?
With downcast eyes she said in a low voice:
Supremely happy was Polyxena,
Beyond all others, being doomed to death
By an enemy's tomb at the foot of Troy's high ramparts.
She was not chosen to be a slave by lot,
Or pleasure her master with her captive body!
But I saw our city burnt, I was carried off
Far overseas to suffer the scorn and pride
Of Pyrrhus, Achilles' son, and in my slavery
I bore his child: but soon he turned from me
To lust after Leda's grandchild Hermione
And make a Spartan match—and he fobbed me off
On Helenus—for he too was a house slave.
But Orestes who was still being harried by the Furies
Aid himself in a fever of love for Hermione
Whom Pyrrhus was now intending to snatch from him,
Ambushed and murdered him at his father's altar.
Then, after Pyrrhus' death, part of the kingdom
Was passed to Helenus and he called the plains
The Chaonian plains and the whole realm Chaonia
After the Chaeon in Troy and built our Ilium
A citadel on that spur and called it Pergamus.
But tell me about yourself—what wind, what fate
Has blown you here? What god has driven you
Onto our shores not knowing we were here?
How is your son Ascanius? Is he alive?
Is he still nourished on the upper air?
He was there with you in Troy—Was he too young
To remember now the mother he lost that night?
Does he yet realize whose son he is?
That Hector was his uncle? And, if he does,
Is he inspired with the valor of olden times
And the virtues of true manhood?
Weeping she plied her questions, weeping and moaning
Her long and fruitless tears when Helenus
The heroic son of Priam issued forth
From the city walls with a bevy of followers.
He recognized his kindred and joyfully
Conducted us to the gate, his every word
Borne on a flood of tears. As I went onward
I recognized this little Troy—its Pergamus
Built to resemble its magnificent namesake;
Its Xanthus, a dry rivulet—why, indeed,
There was a Saeian gate and I embraced it!

My Trojan comrades, one and all, were made
Free of the friendly city—the king received them
In a spacious cloister—and there in the midst of the hall
They poured libations to the god of wine
From the bowls in their hands, and found a banquet set
On plates of gold.

And now day followed day,
And the winds wooed our sails, the canvas bellied
In the warm southern airs. So I approached
King Helenus (he was a seer) and put these questions:
O Trojan-born, interpreter of heaven,
You know the true godhead of Apollo,
His tripod, and his bay-tree there at Clarius;
You know the signs in the stars, the tongues of the birds,
And can divine the secrets of their flight.
Come, speak (for I have been fostered on my voyage
By happy auspices and all the gods
Have urged me with all their powers to make for Italy,
And to make trial of those remote domains,
Save only Celaeno the Harpy who foretold—
It is a sin even to speak of the horror—
A monstrous portent and bitter tides of wrath
And famine beyond imagination) tell me, therefore,
What dangers must I principally avoid?
What precepts must I follow to overcome
The tremendous tasks ahead?

Then Helenus

First by the ritual sacrifices of bullocks
And by prayer besought the clemency of the gods,
Then loosed the garland from his sacred brow
And took my hand, Apollo, and led me straight
To your temple-door in an ecstasy of possession,
And opened his sacred lips, priest that he was,
And made this prophecy. 'Son of the goddess,
Beyond all doubt it is clear that you plough the deep
With the good will of the Great Powers:—for so
The King of the Gods ordains the lot—events
Go forward at his behest, such is the order of things—
I shall reveal to you only a few of the many
Truths I am free of: such as will make your passage
The safer through alien waters and securer
Your homing to an Italian harbor—the Fates
Either forbid me knowledge of the rest
Or Saturnian Juno forbids me utterance.
First, as to Italy which you imagine close,
And ignorantly think a voyage direct

To one of its harbors a simple matter—Not
For you the way is far over seas uncharted
And leagues of coastland. First you must ply your oars
In Sicilian waters, your ships must cross the expanse
Of the Italian seas, you must pass by
The Infernal Lakes and the isle of Aegean Circe
Before you can find safe land to found your city.
I shall tell you the signs: so keep them clear in your mind,
When in a time of anxiety you find on the bank
Of a remote river under flex trees
A huge white sow stretched out along the ground
That has just farrowed thirty piglings all
As white as she—there is the site for your city,
And rest assured from all your length of labors,
And do not blench at the thought of being reduced
To gnawing at your tables: the fates will find you
A way out—so will Apollo if you invoke him.
But you must shun the lands along this shore,
This coast of Italy washed by the ebb and flow
Of our own waters: for every city-fortress
Is inhabited by Greeks. Here Locrians
From Naryceum have built—here Idomeneus
Of Crete has pitched his camp and occupies
The Salentine plains—here is little Petelia,
The base of Philoctetes the Meliboean,
With its bastion-wall. But when you have crossed the sea
And your fleet lies at anchor—build your altars
And offer prayers of thanksgiving on the shore.
Swathe your head in the folds of purple robes
Lest while at worship, and the holy fires
Still ablaze, some prying eye should see you
And annul the holy sympathy of spirit:
Let all your comrades too observe this custom
And your descendants keep it in their rubric
Of their purest observances.

Now, when you depart

And the wind bears you close to the coast of Sicily
And the narrows of Pelorus open wider,
Make for the shore to port though it means a long
And circuitous route over open waters—avoid
The land and sea to the starboard. Long ago
This region suffered the throes of a ruinous earthquake
And its unbroken mass was torn asunder
(So great a power to encompass change
Has the long lapse of centuries). The sea
Poured violently between and with its current

Severed the Italian from the Sicilian side
 Thrusting the narrow tongue of its racing tide
 Between fields and cities sundered now for ever.
 To starboard Scylla lies athwart your course,
 To port Charybdis the insatiable
 Who three times in a day swells down huge waves
 To her vast whirling maw, then hurts them as high
 And stripes the stars with spray. But Scylla lurks
 In the hidden gloom of a cavern whence she thrusts
 Her hungry mouth and sucks ships onto the rocks.
 She is human to the waist, a maiden with beautiful breasts,
 But below she is all sea-monster with dolphin tails
 Growing from wolfish bellies. Take my advice:
 Accept the long and tedious grind you must make
 To double Cape Pachynus in Sicily,
 Better it is than to look once more where the monster
 Scylla skulks in her cave and the rocks yelp
 With her deep-blue dogs. And add to this, if Helenus
 Has powers of divination, if you give
 Any credence to his prophecy, if his well
 Is brimming with the truth of Apollo, listen:
 O son of the goddess, one particular thing
 There is above all else, one absolute obligation
 You must fulfill—of paramount importance—
 And let me repeat this warning again and again:
 You must worship mighty Juno; it must be Juno
 Above all others to whom you offer your prayers—
 Placate her; submit your will to her; win her
 By every means of piety and honor:
 For only so may you successfully
 Leave Sicily behind and head for Italy.
 When you have finally reached there you must visit
 The city of Cumae with its ghostly lake
 Among the whispering glades above Avernus.
 There you will see a prophetess in trance
 Who from the hollow depths of a cavern intones
 The decrees of the Fates, and commits her prophecies
 To leaves—and all the runes that she has written
 She puts in order and stores them secretly
 In her cave—and there they stay, unmolested, still, in order.
 But if the hinge be turned and a breath of air
 Ruffle or rustle them, if the opening door
 Disturbs their thistledowny sequence, the prophetess
 Is never afterwards concerned for a single instant
 In catching them as they drift about the cavern
 And reassembling them coherently.

Inuiters, therefore, go away unanswered
 And curse the sibyl and her seat of prophecy.
 Now I adjure you, however your comrades chide you,
 However fair the wind blows for your voyage,
 Let no delay, no loss of time prevent you
 From visiting this prophetess and you must persist,
 You must badger her until she answers you,
 Of her own free will, in her own utterance!
 Then she will tell you of the nations of Italy,
 The wars that you must fight and how to escape
 Or withstand the shock of every trial to be.
 She will grant you a prosperous passage if you revere her.
 These are the counsels which I am permitted
 To give in answer to your prayers—go!
 Exalt great Troy to heaven by the glory
 Of the deeds you do in her name! So spoke the seer
 And then in kindness of heart he ordered gifts
 To be carried to our ships, great ingots of gold
 And carven ivory; he crammed into our holds
 A weight of silver and caldrons from Dodona,
 A cuirass of chain mail three-plied with threads
 Of gold and a splendid helmet coned and created,
 The armor of Pyrrhus once. And there were particular
 Gifts for my father. He also furnished us
 With guides and horses; rearméd our company
 And filled our emptying benches with new oarsmen.

 Meanwhile Anchises bid the fleet up-sail,
 Determined we should not miss a favoring wind;
 And dutifully Helenus, priest of Apollo,
 Addressed the old statesman with profound respect:
 'Anchises, counted a fit mate for Venus,
 Anchises for whom the Gods had special care,
 Whom twice they saved from the fall of Troy—see
 There is the land of Italy—make all sail!
 But first you must take your course and sail straight on—
 It is on the further coast of Italy
 Apollo intends your landing—Go!' he cries,
 'Glad in the gift of a son so dutiful!
 But why do I go on? I keep the winds
 In custody while I talk!'

Adromache
 Was no less sad, now it was time to go,
 And no less generous—giving Ascantius
 Garments with designs in golden thread
 And a Trojan cloak, and as she heaped on him

These gifts of woven raiment, she said to him:
 'Take these, my darling, take these gifts as well,
 To remember me by, and what my hands can do—
 A memento that Andromache, wife of Hector,
 Offered you love. Oh my dear, take these last
 Presents from your own kindred, all that is left
 Of my own lost boy Astyanax—you are his age—
 And your hands, your eyes, your face, are so like his—
 His every movement was so like yours—had he lived
 He would be just your age.' I left them there,
 My own eyes blind with tears and said to them,
 'Live happily, prosper long, your perils are past,
 You have won your rest; but we must face our fate,
 Blow upon blow—you have no wastes of sea
 To traverse as we have, no land of Italy
 Ever receding as we seem to approach it,
 Your eyes feed on your make-believe River Xanthus,
 On a Troy your own hands have built—A Troy
 With happier hopes and no more fear of invasion
 And Greek destruction—if ever I reach the Tiber
 And the lands on its banks and see at last
 The city-walls my people are promised—then
 We will make two kindred states, two mutual cities,
 One in Epirus, one in Hesperia,
 With Dardanus our common founder and both
 With a common history—we shall be Troy, one Troy.
 Let our descendants preserve this faith in common!'

We sailed to sea, holding a course that took us
 Close by the Ceramian headland whence the distance
 Over the water to Italy is the shortest.
 Meanwhile the sun set and the mountains were shrouded
 in darkness.
 So we put in to shore, and a watch on the oars
 Was drawn by lot, and the rest of us were glad
 To stretch ourselves on the lap of kindly earth
 Close by the waterside. And scattered about
 On the dry sand we eased our weary limbs
 And refreshed our bodies in the balm of sleep.
 But night, in its passage of hours, had not yet reached
 The middle of its cycle when Palinurus,
 Who was ever watchful, arose and cocked an ear
 For a wind from any quarter: he marked the movement
 Of all the stars as silently they wheeled
 Across the silent sky: there was Arcturus,
 There were the Hyades that augur rain,

There the two Bears; and as his eye ranged round
 He marked Orion on his arms of gold.
 He satisfied himself that all was calm
 About the sky, then standing up on the stern
 Gave the signal to embark, so we struck camp,
 Resumed our voyage and spread the wings of our sails.
 And now at the first blush of dawn when the stars
 Were put to flight we saw dim hills in the distance
 And a low coastline, 'Italy!' Achilles
 Was the first to shout it out; then a cry of joy
 Broke from my comrades, 'Welcome, Italy!'
 My father Anchises twined a garland round
 A mighty bowl and filled it with pure wine
 And standing up in the high stern he made
 This invocation: 'Gods of land and sea!
 Powers that rule the storms, look kindly upon us,
 Give us a fair wind, a breath to speed us!
 In answer to his prayer the breeze freshened,
 A harbor opened its arms as we drew nearer
 And on the heights a temple of Minerva—
 My comrades furl'd their sails and swung inshore.
 The harbor had been eroded into an arc
 By easterly seas and lay concealed within
 Projecting cliffs dripping with salt spray;
 The temple lay well back above the tideline.
 Here on the meadowgrass I saw four horses
 Cropping the pasture—they were white as snow,
 And the first indication of heaven's will.
 My father Anchises then pronounced these words:
 'Strange land, it is war you offer—it is war
 These horses are equipped for—it is war
 These creatures threaten. But it is also true
 That these fourfooted creatures can be trained
 To draw a chariot yoked in harmony
 And happily harnessed—so there is also hope
 For peace!' And then we offered up our prayers
 To the holy goddess Minerva, the weapon-clashing,
 The first to welcome us in our first flush of rejoicing.
 We stood before the altars our heads muffled
 In Trojan cloth and with due ceremony
 Paid homage to Argive Juno in accordance
 With Helenus' insistent admonitions.
 We did not linger; as soon as our vows were paid
 We swiveled our yardarms so that our sails could fill
 And left that region being chary of anywhere
 That Greeks inhabited. Next in its bay we saw

Tarentum—the city, if the tale be true,
 That was visited by Hercules, and, opposite,
 Iacintian Juno's temple reared its glory
 And the fortress of Caulonia and Scylaceum
 Where ships are wrecked. Then, far away in the distance,
 Rising out of the sea, Sicilian Etna:
 And we heard the melancholy mighty roar
 Of the sea shattering on rocks, and a jangled
 Noise from the shore, and then saw the waves leap up
 And the smotherers of sand in the turbid maelstrom.
 My father Anchises cried, "This is Charybdis,
 The dreaded Charybdis without any doubt.
 Those are the frightful rocks that Helanus
 Forewarned us of. We must keep free at all costs,
 Comrades! Jump to your oars and pull together!"
 They did as they were bidden and the first
 To force his roaring prow to port and out
 To open water was Palinurus—and after him
 The whole fleet followed, straining oars and sails.
 On the crest of the wave we seemed to touch the sky,
 Down in the trough we wallowed deep as Hell,
 Three times the rocks rang back their hollow echo,
 Three times we saw the sky through sheets of spray
 And a screen of lathered foam. We were exhausted,
 We were bereft of wind and the sun deserted us—
 Our course was lost and we ignorantly floated
 To the shores of the Cyclopes. There is a harbor
 Spacious indeed and free from the winds' onset
 But Etna is close by, rumbling and erupting
 With terrible destruction and now and then
 Thrusts up to heaven a cloud of utter blackness,
 A whirling column of smoke and molten ash
 And puts forth tongues of flame to lick the stars.
 And now and then it vomits rocks which it roots
 Out of its very bowels and with a roar
 Whirls lumps of white-hot stone into the air
 And seethes to its inmost base. The story goes
 That the body of Enceladus who was blasted
 By a thunderbolt lies crushed under the bulk
 Of mighty Etna which is piled upon him
 Breathing out flame from its erupting fires,
 And that as often as, from weariness,
 He turns his body over to his other side,
 All Sicily quakes and groans and draws a pall
 Of smoke over all the sky. That night we lay
 Hid in the woods and having to endure

70

The weirdest manifestations—but we could not
 See what produced the sound—there was no starlight,
 No heaven glittering with its bright array,
 But the firmament was flamed with a muck of cloud
 And the night confined the moon in a cell of storms.

Just at the crack of dawn the following day
 When the first rays had made their way among
 The dew shadows of the height of the sky
 There suddenly burst from the woods a fantastic figure—
 A strange man, shaggy and starved to a skeleton,
 Who stretched his hands towards us and the shore
 In supplication. We looked him up and down.
 His state of filth was appalling, his beard straggled,
 His clothing held together with thorns. But still
 It was clear he was a Greek who in his time
 Had been to Troy in the campaign and worn
 The country's arms. Poor fellow, when he saw
 Our Trojan garb, our Trojan arms, from afar
 He checked for a moment in sheer terror—then
 Dashed for the shore in a volley of entreaty:
 "I implore you by the stars, by the gods above
 And the light of heaven we breathe, take me away!
 Oh Trojans, take me to any land you choose:
 That is all I ask. I know, I admit I sailed
 With the Greek fleet, I confess to making war
 On your Trojan homes. And if my crime was such
 That I deserve it, scatter me in pieces
 And drown me deep in the sea. If I am to die,
 To die at the hands of ordinary men
 Will be a source of happiness. So he pleaded
 And clung to our knees and cringed. But we encouraged
 him

To tell us who he was, from what race he came,
 And the fortunes that had been meted out to him.
 After a little pause my father Anchises himself
 Offered his hand to the young man—a gesture
 Which reassured him greatly so that at last
 He laid aside his fears and spoke these words.
 "I come from Ithaca. I was a comrade
 Of the ill-starred Ulysses and my name
 Is Achaemenides—I am the son
 Of Adamastus, a poor man, whom I left,
 To sail for Troy. Oh, how I wish we had let
 Things be as they were—and I was marooned here
 In the huge cave of the Cyclopes—my friends forgot me

71

In their panic haste to escape from his murderous thrice-
old,
 Inside it is dark and enormous and revolting
 From its bloody orgies—the Cyclops is so gigantic
 He towers to the stars (Gods, keep the world
 Of men from such a monster!). He is hideous
 To look upon, nor can his mind be moved
 By human speech. He feeds upon the entrails
 And the dark blood of his unhappy victims.
 With my own eyes I have seen him snatch up two
 Of our number in his colossal hand and brain them
 Upon a rock without the need to move
 From where he lay. I have seen all the floor
 Awash with spurting blood. I have seen him crunch
 Their limbs up dripping with dark blood
 And their joints warm and twitching still as his jaws
 Closed over them. But he did not go scot-free:
 Ulysses was not the man to brook such deeds,
 Nor did his great resource fail him in such a crisis.
 For as soon as the Cyclops, sated with food and drunk,
 Sagged down in drunken stupor and sprawled his length
 Over the cave with his neck bent, and retching
 As he slept gobbets of meat and wine and blood,
 We offered prayers to the Powers and then drew lots
 For our places in the action, then as one man
 We thrust in to surround him and with a sharp
 Weapon jabbed out his eye—his one huge eye
 Sunk deep in his frowning forehead and as big
 As an Argive shield or the very sun of Apollo.
 So we avenged with relish the ghosts of our poor comrades.
 But you, poor people, fly, oh fly! cast off
 Your ropes from the shore—there are a hundred other
 As huge and hideous Cyclopes as this
 One Polyphemus who pens his woolly flock
 And milks them in the spaces of his cave,
 And they live all along this curve of coast
 And stride about the mountain-tops. It is now
 For the third time that the moon is filling her horns
 With light, and for so long have I eked out
 My days in the woods among the desolate
 Lairs of wild beasts and in terrible trepidation,
 Keeping a watch on the huge Cyclopes
 From behind a rock and shivering at the tread
 Of their feet and the sound of their voices. I have fed
 On what I could gather from the branches—berries

72

And stony cornel-seeds—I have rooted grass up
 To allay my hunger—I have kept constant watch,
 But yours are the first ships I have seen put in here.
 Whatever the outcome might be, I decided
 To trust myself to you—it would be enough
 If I escaped this execrable race—
 Rather than them—I would let you take my life
 With any death you choose!

He had scarcely ended
 When we saw Polyphemus mountainous
 As the mountain whence he was driving down his flocks
 To the familiar shore—a ghastly monster,
 Repulsive, huge, and his one eye put out,
 To guide himself and steady his steps he had
 A pine-tree he had trimmed into a staff.
 His fleecy sheep accompanied him—his sole
 Delight and solace in his evil case.
 After he had felt for and found the sea,
 He waded out into the deep and groaning
 And grinding his teeth he washed away the blood
 That dripped from the socket of his put-out eye,
 Then he strode through the depths of the sea but the water
 Never reached his towering thighs. In our alarm
 We took aboard the suppliant—he deserved
 His rescue—and stealthily we cut our cables
 In a flurry of departure and flung ourselves
 Onto our oars and raced each other seaward.
 He was aware of something and turned his steps
 In our direction because of the sounds we made,
 But he had no scope to lay his hands upon us
 Nor could he hunt us clean through the Ionian,
 So he raised a gigantic roar and the whole sea
 Shuddered through all its depth and Italy trembled
 To its midland core, and Etna bellowed too
 Through all the winding systems of its caverns.
 Now the whole tribe of Cyclopes was raised
 And rushed from the forest and the mountain heights
 Down to the shore: and there we could see them standing
 Barch with the baleful menace of his eye,
 But impotent to harm us, a grim gathering
 Of towering heads, this brotherhood of Etna,
 Like oaks that point to the sky or coniferous
 Cypresses in a mountain forest of Iove's,
 Or in a grove of Diana. Terror-goaded
 We hoisted sail whatever way we could,

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Freeing the sheets to any wind that blew,
Oblivious of our course. But Helenus
Had hidden us otherwise: he had given us warning
Not to hold on a course that took us through
The narrows of Scylla and Charibdis—a passage
So close to death and destruction either side,
So we decided to put about: but suddenly
A north wind rose from over Peiorus Head.
We skirted Pantagia's rocky river mouth
And the bay of Megara and low-lying Thapsus.
Achaemenides named these places for us
As he retraced the course of his wanderings
When he was sailing with ill-starred Ulysses.
Stretching in front of the Sicilian bay
Plenyrium lies, an island which in old times
Was called Ortygia, with its ruff of surf.

The story goes that Alpheus, river of Elis,
Thrust through the sea his invisible currents here
To join Sicilian waters, Arethusa.
At your own mouth—and here in obedience
To the command we worshipped the High Gods.
Then we passed by the rich soil of Helorus
Built on its marsh and round the jutting rocks
Of the headland of Pachynus. Camarina
Which, said the oracle, must never be moved,
Came next and the plains of Gela, and Gela itself
Grim Gela mocked by the name of its laughing stream.
Acragas on its hill with its high walls
Seen far and wide, that was once a breeding place
Of bloodstock; then with favorable winds
I left Selinus with its palms and threaded
My way through the hidden rocks by Lilybaeum;
From there I made the port of Drepanum—
Oh, without any joy in memory:
For here, after such batteries of storm,
Alas, my father died, my dearest Anchises,
My prop and stay who had lightened my every care;
You left me torn and weary, best of fathers
Saved from so many dreadful perils, in vain!
Among the appalling catalogue of travails
The seer Helenus foretold was never
Never this grief—nor did that foul Celaeno.
This was my last disaster—this the term
Of my long wanderings—from there it was
The gods, on my departure, drove me here.”

So did the chief Aeneas tell the story
Of his wanderings at the behest of Heaven
And every face was fixed intent upon his,
Till at last he ceased, his saga at an end.

BOOK IV

But the queen so long distraught with her load of anguish
Yet fed it with her heart's blood, all the time
Being consumed within as with a bog fire. But still the
aspects

Of her hero throbbed and pulsed back to her mind:
His noble blood and state, his face, his voice
Were branded upon her breast, forbidding sleep.

The Nymph of the new day was gliding earth already,
Dawn loosing their dewy mantles from the Poles,
When Dido, almost out of her wits, sought
Her sister, whose instinctive sympathy
Was never-failing, and said

“O Anna, sister,
What dread terrors hold me sleepless? Who is he?
This new guest sown and rooted in our midst—
So brave his bearing, such his strength and prowess,
How can I see him but as a god? And truly
I see him so. Fear is a mark of ill breeding;
But he has told us of his harrying by the fates,
And war to the utmost limit of endurance. . . .
Were my mind not made up, if I had no wish
To keep the vows I swore to my first love
Whose single infidelity was with death,
If I had not lost the inclination to marry,
It may be I would give myself this once
To this man. I tell you Anna, never
Since Sychaeus died, never since the household gods

Dripped with my brother's murder has anything
Had power to rouse my soul from its torpor—to impel it—
Yes! I feel again some trace of love's first fires!
But oh! Let the earth gape open to its core,
Let God Almighty dash me with thunderbolts
To the darkness, the blank of hell, to uttermost night,
Before I lie with another man and break
My vows to the man I married. He has my heart,
It is his to hold, it is his alone—let him keep it
There in the tomb. . . .”

She faltered, her voice failed;
Her gathered anguish burst in a flood of tears.

Anna said, “I love you more than the light,
You poor lonely darling, but must you mourn for ever
Your frozen youth, refuse the joys of children,
And the comforts of a bed—do you really think
The dead, the dust and ashes, care at all?
Ages ago, in your grief, you rejected them all—
Whether from Tyre or Libya, all those princes—
You loathed Iarbas and every other chief,
Though gluttled with the riches of Africa.

Why struggle now against a love you want?
Think where we are: in whose territories we have settled.
One side there is Gaetulia, unconquerable in war,
The Numidians on the rampage all around us;
The Syrtis hostile to shipping, and inland
The dry throat of the desert, where the Barcae
Range in their violence; there is war fermenting in Tyre,
Pygmalion is threatening—perhaps it was
For this very reason the Trojans were blown here,
If the gods favor us and Juno fosters our cause.
O Dido! What a city, what a kingdom
Could swell from such a husband—to what heights
Of power would Carthage rise with Trojan aid!
First ask the Gods for grace and if you get it,
Exploit this visit! What patterns of delay
Cannot you weave from winter and Orion's
Tempetuous light on the lifting sea and the ships
Straining and shaken and the sky lowering?”

These words set fire to Dido. Her chastity melted
In a furnace of desire and she made up her mind.
So first they went to the shrines and sought placation
From every altar according to the rubric.

They sacrificed a sheep to Ceres the Lawgiver,
To Phoebus, to the Father, but primarily to Juno
Whose province is the sanctity of marriage.
How beautiful Dido was, the cup in her right hand
As she poured the libation down between the horns
Of a milk-white cow—before the gods were alive
To their heaped altars, she had hallowed the day
With gifts, and into the riven breasts of the beasts
She peered with parted lips in divination
Of the quivering live-yet entrails. Alas for the purblind,
The sycophantic seers! What oaths, what shrines
Can minister to a mind diseased? The fires
Sunked mining through her marrow, the tacit wound
Sucked inward from her breasts. Unhappy Dido
In frenzy staggered and reeled through the whole city,
Like a wild doe in the mountain groves of Crete
A shepherd has shot at a venture, at long range,
And does not know his lucky shaft has struck
And the flying barb clings like a burr in its wound—
And through the woods and plains of Dicie it reels,
The deadly weapon fast in its dying flank.

Now she paraded Aeneas the length and breadth
Of the city, displayed Sidonia and all its wealth,
Opened her lips to speak, halted in mid-word,
And as the day wore on she yearned for yesterday
And its banquet, and wildly begged to hear the story
Of Troy again and hung on every syllable
Of the twice-told—thrice-told tale. Then he had gone.
She was alone in the occluding moonlight,
The glittering stars invited her to sleep but still
She patrolled the empty house and groveling lay
On the couch he sat on; though he had gone she saw him,
She heard him still; she fondled young Ascanius,
So like his father she pretended he was,
And vented on him the love she could not speak.

Half dead at the top the half-built towers stood,
The young neither paraded nor built defenses,
Everything now hung fire, the threat of the walls and
these engines,
Was like an empty frown on the vacant sky.

As soon as Love's beloved wife divined such a turmoil
In Dido's heart and realized neither her vows
Nor fear for her repete stood as a bar

To this overriding passion—she, Salmir's daughter,
Approached Venus and said: "I congratulate you!
I have reason to! You and your boy have got
Reward enough—it is a nine-day wonder
When one poor mortal woman is overcome
By the conspiring of two gods! But I am not so blind
To your concern for my Carthage and its walls.
Very well, then. What is to happen? What is the outcome?
Why not make peace? Will you not then accomplish
All that you had a mind to, by a marriage?
Dido is made with love to the mid-marrow;
Let us two rule this people together, then;
Let her be slave to a Trojan husband—yes!
And make her Tyrians over—to you, for dowry?"

Venus saw perfectly well the guile in her mind—
How she hoped to fend that Kingdom of Italy
Off to the Libyan shore. She saw this, but she said:
"Would anyone be so mad as to refuse?
Choose you to fight?—So long as good luck stems
Out of your proposals?—I am the fool of Fate.
If love has willed the city to be the Tyrians',
In league with the Trojans, if indeed he approves
Them joined in treaty . . . if . . . who am I to tell . . . ?
It is your office to test him with entreaties:
Try. I shall follow you." Queen Juno answered,
"It is my office. And how we shall accomplish it
I briefly propose to tell you: here and now.
Aeneas and unhappy Dido plan
To hunt tomorrow in the woods as soon
As the sun is up and the earth bathed in its beams.
I shall loose on them, from above, a cloud
Heavy with hail and shaken up with thunder.
Their comrades shall disperse, as if benighted.
Then Dido and Aeneas shall take shelter
In the same cave. I shall be there. I needs
Must have your help to count on; there I shall join them
In bodily love, and pronounce it lawful marriage,
Their Hymeneal Day." Then, smiling, Venus
Nodded assent, aware of Juno's sleight.

Meanwhile the dawn from its ocean bed had leapt
And the young chivalry went through the sunrise gate
With wide-meshed nets, close snares, and iron-tipped spears.
The Massyian hunters jogged with their pack of hounds,
But the Carthaginian nobles lagged at the threshold
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Of their Queen who lingered still within her chamber
While her own charger, purple-and-gold accoutered,
Stamped and champed at his slavered bit. At last
With all her retinue she emerged swathed
In a Sidonian purple-bordered chlamys.
Her quiver was gold; her hair broided with gold,
A clasp of gold retained her purple robe.
Happy Iulus and the Trojans followed:
Aeneas last, most handsome of all the rout,
Grafted himself to the morning cavalcade.

Just as Apollo leaves his winter quarters,
In Lycia where the River Xanthus flows,
To visit Delos, dwelling of his mother,
And there inspires the Spring Rites; and the Cretans,
Dryopes, and painted Scythians dance,
And the god strolls upon Mount Cynthus binding
His flying hair with a wreath, and interweaving
Fillets of gold to hold it firm, and his armor
Rings on his shoulder, so Aeneas strode
No less inspiring—no less an effulgence flowing
From his princely mien; so to the woods they went,
The heights, the trackless terrain, and saw the wild
Goats hurtle down from pinnacles of rock
And rattle away—and there went the flushed stags
Full tilt across the open, trailing their gathering
Dust cloud, down from the heights, rushing away!
There, young Ascanius, fresh as his horse, delighted
To pelt along the valleys overtaking
Now one, now another hunter, eagerly hoping
Among such feeble game for a rough customer—
A wild boar or a red-gold mountain lion.

But soon black mutterings trepidated the sky,
A line-storm lashing hail gathered and flashed,
And Trojan and Tyrian helter-skelter scattered
Seeking whatever cover they could, in terror.
Dido, Aeneas, together alone found shelter
In the same cave.

The Gods, Primeval Earth,
And Juno convener of marriages give their signal:
The lightning streaks; they couple; the skies shudder;
The vault of heaven feels that mortal surge;
The nymphs from their hilltops shriek the cry of Hymen.
Day of disaster and woe: first day of doom!
But Dido was oblivious—she has no care
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For her name or her repute nor feels the amour
A furtive one—she conceives it to be "marriage"
And hides her deed of shame behind a word.
Then Rumor ripped through all the cities of Libya,
What is more foul? more swift? Rumor that feeds on
Speed and bloats in her going—at first, minute,
From fear, but soon swelling—swelling—swollen
With every wind and treading the earth baring
Her head to the clouds and still goes growing—growing—
growing.

Earth bore her, people suppose, an ugly sister
For Coeus and Enceladus, to spite the gods.
Swift-foot, foul-wing, a monster to appal
With an eye under each feather—and a tongue
(Believe who can) and a mouth and an ear pricked
Under each feather and every single one.
Midway between earth and sky she flies by night
Whispering, hissing, and never a wink of sleep;
By day on the peak of a house or a high tower
She perching puts whole cities on the sweat,
So potent a champion of the lie she is
So steadfast against truth.

And so from mouth to ear from mouth to ear
Her battle went with no respect for truth.

"Aeneas, they say, is a prince of the Trojan blood,
And Dido our lovely queen, oh she'd marry him,
She is good enough for him they say, and all the winter
Letting their kingdoms go to pot, idling, faddling
There in the palace, lapped in luxury and
Of course you know what they do..." these lies the
creature

Poured in all ears, and in the end she came
After how many twists and turns to King Iarbas:
Rage drove him frantic, as it was bound to do.
Iarbas, son of Almighty Jove and a nymph
The god had raped on Garamantis, —Iarbas
Had built a hundred temples to the god
In his wide domains and at a hundred altars
Had kindled watch-fire sentinels for the gods.
Now, roused to frenzy by the bestial rumor,
The thresholds flowering with votive garlands,
The altars wet with sacrificial blood
And fruitful tilth, he is said to have gone on his knees

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A suppliant with every godhead round him
And prayed with upraised hands:

"Oh God Almighty for whom the Moors feasting
On painted couches pour libation now:
Look down upon me! When you hurl thunderbolts,
Do we cringe for nothing? Are those fiery runblings
That terrify our souls no more than drunken belches?
Here is a woman. She strayed into our dominions
And founded a meager city—at a price.
We granted certain leaseholds. She disdained our
Offers of marriage—but makes Aeneas Master
Of her city and herself and now with his mincing minions,
Like Paris with a Maeonian coil keeping his chin up,
With his crimped hair, he lords it over his leman—
And she gives him everything:—and all we do
Is worship in due obeisance and all we give is
Rumor its head."

Great Jove heard him praying,
Grappling the altar in his agony,
Then he turned his gaze upon the royal walls
And the oblivious lovers and summoning Mercury
Gave him this ukase.

"Come now, my lad! Rally your winds and glide
On your quickest wing down to this Trojan Prince
Who dallies in Carthage there and has no care
For the cities fated for him. Speak to him,
Bear my words through the quick air; acquaint him
That he seems not of such metal as his beautiful
Mother promised and by her promise twice
Saved him from Greek swords. And if he indeed should be
That man ordained to be king of an Italy
Pregnant with lands to win by war, and rule,
And pass the blood of Teucer on unblemished
And bend the world to his laws—if he be that man,
Yet no ambition spurs him nor desire
To see himself renowned for his own deeds—
Even so—would a father's love begrudge
Ascendus his due, the Roman inheritance?
What is he doing? In hope of what does he loiter
Among a hostile tribe? Has he no respect
For his Ausonian stock nor the fields of Lavinia?
Let him set sail! That is all. My message be delivered!"

Mercury leapt to obey the Great Father's order.
First he bound his golden sandals on

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Which, winged, carry him high over land or sea
With the same despatch. Then he took up his wand,
With this he can summon a spirit up from Orcus,
Can post another down to Tartarus,
Give or withhold sleep, open the eye after death;
With this cleave cloud, dog-drive the wind. Now,
Volplaning down he saw the summit and flanks
Of grimy Atlas who upholds the heavens
With his head, whose locks of pine are shrouded
In circlets of black cloud and bristle with wind and rain.
Snow cloaks his shoulders, rivers pour in spate
Down his cold chin, his beard is daggered with ice.
Here Mercury folded his wings and rested; from here he
long
He dived to the wavetops like a cormorant
That round the shores and round the fishy rocks
Flies low alone the water; and when first
He landed upon his winged feet among
The suburbs—there was Aeneas building
Towers and houses. He had a jeweled sword
That gleamed with jasper—he glowed in Tyrian purple—
Dido had given them to him. The mantle hung from his
shoulders
Embroidered with rich designs of golden thread.

Mercury speaks to him without preamble:
"Aeneas! laying out for your mistress a great city
Here at Carthage! you forget, it seems,
Your kingdom, your destiny! Now Jove Almighty
The absolute monarch of the Gods has sent me,
He who holds heaven and earth in the palm of his hand,
Has sent me from Olympus not unknown.
It is his behests I bring through the quick air.
What are you doing? In hope of what do you loiter
In Libya? If no ambition spurs you, nor desire
To see yourself renowned for your own deeds—
What of Ascanius, earnest of your line?
The realm of Italy, the Roman inheritance
His due, and—"

in mid-sentence he vanished clean;
Into air, into thin air, he disappeared.
Cowed by this apparition, terrified Aeneas
Was dumb; his hair stood on end; his tongue cloyed;
He burned to escape, to quit these lotus-lands;
Thunderstruck with this stark ultimatum
From the god of gods. Oh God, what can he do?

With what words mollify the queen's fury?
His quick mind ran through the possibilities of the possible.
Then he decided. He sent for Menestheus,
Sergestus and bold Sergestus: Prepare the fleet
For sea secrecy; rally the sailors armed
To the shore; give no reason for this new move.
(Dido knows nothing—how should she believe
Such love could be broken? There will be a time
And he will pick the time and mood and mode.)

They were delighted to obey—but the queen
Rav'd to the least pain was quick and aware—
(Who can trick a lover?) She felt the first
Wave of the flood to be; though seeming-safe
But fearing-all and that same Rumor brought
To her frenzied senses—"The fleet's to be manned;
Its course is set." In mad frustration of mind
She fumed, and ramped through the length and breadth of
the city
Like a Bacchante blind with the holy rites
Of the triennial festival when they hear
The cries of Bacchus nightly, daily, nightly.

At last she confronted Aeneas. She must speak:
"You traitor! Did you hope to mask such treachery
And silently slink from my land? Is there nothing to keep
you?
Nothing my life, our love, has given you
Knowing that if you go—I cannot but die?
And you launch your fleet under a wintry star
Into these northerly gales? Why, if Troy still stood,
Would you seek Troy across these ravaging waters?
Is it unknown lands and unknown homes you seek
Or is it from me you flee? You see me weep.
I have nothing else but tears and your right hand
To plead with, and our bodies, once at one,
Our marriage rite performed—if you ever loved me,
If you ever found in me any sort of sweetness,
Pity me now! My life, my power seeping.
If prayer has any potency, change your mind!
Because of you the Libyan lords of the desert
Detest me; my Tyrians turn a cold shoulder,
My chastity is destroyed, the repute I had—
My immortality insured in the stars—
All, all is gone. And whom do you offer me to?
A woman bound for death—you my departing "guest"—

A word I took to mean a husband. . . . No . . .
What have I to await? My brother Pygmalion
To smash my walls? Larbas to rape me? Oh
If I'd had a child of yours before you fled,
A little Aeneas to frolic on my floor
And remind me of your face, I would not feel
So utterly ruined, deserted and destroyed!"

Aeneas heard her; he strove to harden his heart,
His eyes steady: Jove's command in his ear.
At last he said, "I shall not ever deny
All you have done, you may name each separate act;
While I have memory, a breath of life in my body,
I shall remember Carthage; not without pleasure.
But I have this to say; do not imagine
I ever intended to slip away secretly;
Do not imagine either I ever came
As a prospective husband. If the Fates
Allowed me the life I would choose to live for myself—
The city of Troy, the sweet relics of my people,
Would be my foremost care—the towers of Priam
Would rise again—with my own hand I would build
Up Pergamus—a restitution
For a conquered race—but now Apollo compels,
His oracles are brookless—to Italy I must go.
There is the fatherland that I must love.
You are Phoenician, yet you date on Carthage—
Why then forbid a Trojan his Italy?
It is a human right to seek foreign dominions.
Often at night when the fiery stars appear
The gruff ghost of my father fills my dreams,
Upraising me as I lie in a sweat of terror.
And always like a thorn in my mind I feel
How I am cheating my own, my son Ascanius,
Of his Hesperian realm; his fated inheritance.
Now comes an order straight from Jove himself.
I swear by our two lives his messenger
Brought mandates down through the midday air, I saw him
In clear day enter these walls, I heard his words
With my own two ears. Oh, cease tormenting both
Our souls with lamentation—it is not
Of my own free will I must seek Italy."
She heard him out; she turned away from him,
At random roved her eyes and then they fixed him
Head-to-foot in a silent scance and then

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Her fury burst.

"No goddess was your mother!
No noble Dardanus forebear of yours, you scum,
But the foul Caucasus breached you out of its rocks,
Hyrcanian tigresses gave you suck—What is there still?
Is there anything more unbearable than this?
When I wept tears did he not groan for me?
Did not his own eyes fill? Was he not overcome
With pity for his love? What clue have I to hold?
Nether Love Almighty nor Juno views this stratily—
Nowhere have I any hold on trust.
I took him in shipwrecked—he had nothing,
I allotted him part of my realm—I was mad to do it;
I saved his fleet, I rescued his retinue—
O God, I am driven raving mad with fury!
So—now it is Apollo's doing—now the Lycian lot,
And now a messenger winging from Jove himself
With detestable commands—indeed it is the ploy
Of the overlord—their pastime is to destroy
Us quiet ones! I shall not keep you. No!
Nor recant my words. Go. Go—seek Italy
On the tempest, seek your realms over the storm-crests,
And I pray if the gods are as true to themselves as their powers
You shall be smashed on the rocks, calling on Dido's name;
O, I will shadow your course like a black star
And when cold death possesses my body and soul;
I will haunt you wherever you go, you wicked creature,
I will see to your punishment. Report of you
Will filter down to me even among the dead,
And I will—"

She broke off in mid-sentence
And snudded away from him in a dead faint.
Struck dumb, with a mouthful of unspoken excuses,
Aeneas saw her servants bear off her jolting limbs
To her marble chamber where they laid her down.
But virtuous Aeneas although he longed
To comfort her and suage her grief with words,
His spirit at stretch with his love, and ginning deeply,
Obeyed the god's command and sought his fleet.

Then they all buckled-to: dragged down their ships
On the whole shore, and tested their seaworthiness,
And such was their lust to be off, made do with oars
Still sprouting leaf, and beams rough-hewn from the forest.
Behold them pouring out of every coign of the city

85

Like provident winter-minded ants that swarm
Over a heap of grain, stripping it for their store,
That coil their writhing columns across the plains
As they carry their trove through the grass, on a penciled path
And some hoist grains on their backs, their shoulders showing
Others egg on the slug-guards, and the whole path teems
With vital energy.

O Dido! What did you feel then?

*Watching them from your tower in what torture?
Seeing the stretch of shore seething with sailors,
The bay re-echoing with their busy voices.
O cruel Love, is there an uttermost limit
To your hounding of mortal hearts? Again she was driven
To tears, to entreaties, to groveling for her love
Lest she should leave one single course untried,
And the death she has set her heart on be in vain.*

"Anna, look at the shore! What haste they seem to be making
Do you see them congregating—how every sail
Whistles the wind, and how the happy sailors
Hang garlands on the sterns? Can I sustain
Such a grief, foreseen as grief must be foreseen?
I suppose I may—but do this for me, will you?
He trusts you, the monster confides in you,
You only know the moods and moments he might soften.
Go to him, sister, this proud enemy,
And beg for me. Tell him I never joined
The federation of Aulis against the Trojans,
I never sent a fleet to Pergamus,
I never dug up the ashes of Anchises
Nor his spirit—why should he block his ears?
What haste is this? Beg him for this last gift
To his wretched love—beg him, beg him to wait
For a fair wind and favorable weather.
I do not ask him to forgo his realm
In beautiful Latium, by any renewing
Of our old love so brutally betrayed—
No! Only I ask for time, a neutral time,
A rest and breathing space for my love to learn
A way to grieve—if fortune show me any.
Dear sister this is the last thing I shall ask you
And I will repay you all—and more—in death."

Again and again her sister was go-between
With suchlike pleas. The hero was moved by none of them
No arguments could break his calm resolution;

The Fates forbade and if the hero seemed
Relenting, Love stopped both his ears.

Just as the Alpine gales with quartering blasts
Compete to uproot an oak in its full prime
And the uproar rings, and leaves from the topmost branches
Layer the ground because of the withren stem:
But cleave to the rock it does, and as much as the gale
Shivers the top so do its roots thrust down
And clench the underworld—so was the hero
Buffered by these pleas from every quarter,
In his great heart agony twisted the knife
But his mind was steadfast. All tears rolled in vain.

Then poor Dido crazed by her fate prayed
For death—the arch of heaven was agony
To her sight. Her purpose, secretly set
For suicide, was manifestly strengthened—
Horror! as on the incense-bearing altars
She laid her offerings, she saw the sacred
Vials turn black, the sacrificial wine
In the very cup curdle to filthy blood.
This she told no one, no, not even her sister.
Add this: there was in the house a consecrated
Ahr of marble to her dead Sychaëus—
She nurtured it with a devoted care,
Dressed it with snow-white fleeces and festal garlands,
And from this shrine she imagined she heard his voice—
Words in the nightwatches. And often a single owl
On the gable taunted a long note of grief
To breaking point; the sooth of ancient seers
Knocked at her mind with terrible prediction.
Aeneas himself went stalking through her dreams
And always alone she plodded an endless road
Leading her Tyrians to a barren land.
So Penheus in his madness saw the advancing
Formations of Furies; saw two suns; Thebes double;
Or Agamemnon's son, hunted and haunted
By his mother armed with fire and serpents, fled
From place to place and the avenging fiends
Crouched at whatever door he knocked for help.
So in the throes of grief she spawned her Pursuers;
Was absolute for death, and cunning to that end
With a clear mien, her forehead smooth with hope,
Stilled up to her sister, grievous for her . . .
Words, words. "Dear Anna be happy for me,

I have found a way to win him back to me,
Or be quit of his love for ever.

At the world's end

There is a plot between Ocean and the sunset
Where Atlas hoists the spindle of the stars
Upon his shoulder. There a Massylian priestess,
As I am told, is guardian of the temple
Of the Hesperides. She feeds the dragon,
Preserves the Golden Tree, she drips sweet honey
And sleep-enlusting poppy. She has power
To set the mind care-free with her incantations
If so she choose, or impose inescapable woe.
She can stop the flow of rivers, reverse the stars
Raise ghosts in the night—and you shall see the earth
Under her foot-sole roar, and the rowan-trees
Leap from the mountain crags. My darling sister
I swear by your sweet life I have no wish
To assume these magic arts.

Now if you will,

Build me in the innermost open court,
That winks a secret eye to the sky above,
A pyre, and place on it the hero's arms
Which he, in careless cruelty, strewed about
In our very room, and all his cast-off clothes,
Yes, and the marriage bed I perished on.
It is my wish to destroy all traces of him,
And the priestess bids me do what is my wish."

Anna did not detect behind these requests
Her sister composing death—she could not divine
A grief more irresolvable, a frenzy
Worse than befell when her Sychaeus died.
So the pyre was built in the innermost court with pine
And hewn oak, and Dido decked the structure
With garlands and a funerary wreath:

As crown of the summit, on their marriage bed,
She laid his cast-off clothes, his sword, his image;
She knew the end to be. Altars were set up;
A priestess with lank hair invoked a three hundred
Of Gods: Erebus, Chaos, Hecate and
The thrice-incarnate form of Diana the Virgin—
Holy water was sprinkled—warranted from Avernus—
Herbs gathered by full moonlight with bronze shears
Rich with the milk of black poison—even
The live-blazon on the forehead of
A newborn colt she harried before its mother

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Could seize it. And she with purified hand, for death be-
spoken,
One foot naked, her girdle loosed, knelt
At the altar and prayed to the stars and the gods that have
Control of destiny. *If any god have cognizance
Of the truths that lovers lie to each other: O hear her now.*

Night fell and weary bodies everywhere
Sought rest. The woods and the killing seas were still,
The stars mild in mid-orbit—all nature rested,
The beasts and the colored birds and whatever widely
The lapsing waters hide or the hard earth holds in thicket,
All were enthralled in sleep.

But Dido, no.

She could not sleep. Nor eye nor heart could close.
Reboubled anguish, unrequitable love
And burning anger pulsed in her soul in turn;
Obsessed, consumed, with room for nothing else.
"What shall I do next? Ogle the neighbors
I mocked before? Go on my knees to seduce
Those desert sheiks I have so often scorned?
Shall I follow the fleet and the flick of a Trojan finger?
What will they care that once I helped them, what will it
matter?"

And even if I chose to, who would receive me now
Into his proud ship?

Do I still not understand

The falsity of Laomedon's foul race?
Shall I go alone then and prostitute my body
To the mocking sailors? Shall I uproot my people?
I emigrated from Sidon and bade them sail
By law to face the vagaries of the winds.
Die as deserve you! Sheathe your grief in a sword!
O Anna, my sister, it was you who forced me
On my foe. I was mad—you made me seem I was sane.
I broke every law of the essence of true marriage,
I broke them like a beast, my faith vowed to Sychaeus,
I broke every vow like a beast: could I escape scot-free
And think I would not suffer the uttermost?"
Her heart was bursting with such agonizings.

Aeneas in his cabin, his sailing certain
And everything going well, was simply going to sleep.
But the god returned to him, the image of Mercury,
His voice, his color, his golden hair, his litness,
And again the vision warned him: "Goddess-born,

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How can you sleep now—are you such a fool
You cannot see the dangers that surround you?
Cannot you hear the wind whispering favor?
And she on the spit of her heart is roasting hatred
Evil and cunning, being foredoomed to die!
Fly! Fly at once while you have power to order,
Or you will see the waters threshed with beams
And battering-rams and alive with savage torches;
You will see the coast a chain of fire if the dawn
Skill finds you loitering here: Wake up! Move!
Women are always changeable and violent!
His warning given he dissolved in the darkness.

Aeneas truly terrified by the vision
Started from sleep and roused up all his crews.
"Wake up, my friends! Get to your oars! Set sail!
A god from heaven has come with a second warning!
There is not a moment to lose—Quick! Cut the cables!
O Gods wherever you are, we joyfully follow,
We lucky ones, we obey. Let you be with us
And aid us wisely, setting the guiding stars
As each is useful." He snatched his glittering sword
From its scabbard and with the blade severed a hawser.
Men all were seized with a like enthusiasm—
They scurried and hurried, pushed off, were in open water;
Strongly they strove with the foam and drove for the
deep....

And now the dawn rose from the saffron couch
Of Tithonus sowing new light on the land;
The queen in her watchtower saw the light growing
And as it grew the glittering white light
Disclosed the fleet full-sail and heading northwards,
The quays deserted, not a ship, not an oar!
And three or four times she beat her gleaming breasts,
And tearing her hair she screamed, "By the Gods, shall
he go?
Shall a stranger bilk our realm—and we not take arms
And the whole city pursue—launching our ships from the
docks?
Go, quick! kindle the beacons! Arm the people!
Dash in with the oars! . . . What am I saying? Where am I?
What madness churns in my mind? O wretched Dido
What evils now consume you—when you ruled
You ruled indeed! Now see what has befallen . . .
My life . . . my dust . . . there goes that man they say

Carries the gods of his native land—who carried
His spent father upon his shoulders—and I
Could have seized and scattered him piecemeal to the sea,
Could have murdered Ascanius and served him to his father
As an appetizer . . . which of us would have prevailed?
No one can know. What do I fear in death?
I could have burned his camp down, burned his ships,
Killed father and son, his whole house, then myself
O sun that illumines all the works of the world,
O Juno aware of my woes, O Hecate
Invoked on the city-highways, avenging Fates,
Hear me! It is meet you should. You gods of dying Car-
thage

GIVE ear to my evil case; O hear my prayer.
If it be fated that this abhorrent monster
Make landfall, if Jove demand it, let this curse
Be set upon him. Bereft of his son's face,
Plagued by a bold foe, let him seek help in vain,
Let his friends die useless paltry deaths about him;
Then having made a traitor's unjust peace,
Let him never enjoy his realm, as he would choose,
But let him die before his time and lie
Unburied upon the field!

This is my prayer.
I pour it out with my blood. And you, my people
For ever persecute them—grant that to my dust.
Never let there be love between our peoples,
Never a treaty. But let an Avenger rise
From my bones to harry these Trojan colonists.
Now, or in time to be, whenever the power is vouchsafed,
Let coast contend with coast, army with army,
Let them fight each other in every generation!"

And now she bent her mind to the final problem:
What was the quickest way to shatter the life
She hated so. She summoned Sycæus's nurse
(Her own was long dead in her father's country).
"Dear nurse, please fetch my sister, tell her to purge
Herself with lustral water and bring what creatures
We need for sacrifice. So let her come.
And wreath a holy garland about your brow.
I have a mind to complete those sacrifices
To Stygian Jove I have prepared duly;
I have a mind to end my own sorrows
And feed to the flame the pillow he laid his head on."

The old woman, with an old woman's zeal,
Burst away. But poor demented Dido
Wild with purpose, her cheeks interlarded
With shuddering blotches, but pale with her death to be
Burst in the door into the innermost court,
Frankly mounted the pyre, unsheathed the sword
She begged from Aeneas (never to this end),
She looked at his clothes, at the horrible bed of sorrow,
Wept and weeping remembered; pressed her breasts to
bed.

"Sweet relics," she wailed, "sweet while the fates allowed,
Receive my soul and loose me from my grief.
I have lived. I have run my course as fortune let me.
Now goes to the underworld the image of my greatness.
I founded a fine city. I saw my ramparts.
I avenged my husband, punished my hateful brother,
What happiness did I lack? Too happy—if . . .
The ships of Troy had never touched these shores!"
She kissed the bed. "Unavenged I die, so be it,
Thus! Thus! I am pleased to go into the dark. . . .
Let the cruel Trojan in mid-ocean spy
These fires and bear with him presage of my death!"

O, as she spoke, she fell upon the sword.
They saw the blood spurt out on the blade, they saw
Her hands bloody. The keen rang to the roof-tree.
Rumor staggered through the appalled city
The palace was hollow with the women's howls,
Echoes belabored the air with such a grief
As if, like Troy, Carthage were overthrown.
Fires leapt from roof to roof of gods and men.

Her sister heard. She scored her cheeks with her nails,
She flung through the crowd and called upon the dying.
"O sister, was *this* how you sought to deceive me?
The pyre? The altar fires? What words have I?
You should have let me share your fate with you.
And the same hour and the same grief had twinned us
Upon one blade. Did I with my own hands build,
With my own voice call upon the gods—that you
Should lie there—and I not there? We are all dead now.
You, me, the elders of Sidon—all our city,
We are all dead. But let me leave your wounds,
And if a single breath remain, it is mine to claim!"
She climbed the steps, she pressed her half-dead sister,
Sighing she stanch'd with her robe the gouts of blood.

Dido struggled to lift her head, sank back.
The wound girds through her breast. Three times she strove
To raise up on her elbow, three times she failed.
With wandering eyes she sought the light of heaven
And shuddered to see it still.

Then mighty Juno
In pity for her long agony sent Iris
Down from Olympus to loose her imprisoned limbs,
And grieving soul. Since she was dying not
In the course of Fate or a death deserved, but in grief
And before her time in an access of wild passion,
Proserpina had not yet levied from her
That wisp of hair that is key to the Stygian shades.
Therefore did Iris fly, her saffron wings
Refracting a thousand colors through the sunlight
And stood at her head.

"I bring the word of Dis.
I loose you from that flesh." With her own right hand
The lock was shorn.

All vital power departed—
Her life was gone with the wind.

BOOK V

Meanwhile Aeneas was well out from the shore.
He had set his fleet an unwavering course to keep
And they were ploughing through a choppy sea
Blown black by a northerly wind. But looking back
Towards the city he saw the glow of fire—
Poor Dido's funeral fires—but what had caused
So great a conflagration he could not tell.
But as they thought of the bitter agonies
Ensuing from the outrage of great love
And to what lengths frenzy will drive a woman,
The Trojans felt in their hearts the leaden weight

Of grim foreboding.

When the ships were far

Into the deep and land was out of sight—

Nothing but sea and sky and sky and sea—

A scud of raincloud gathered and hung glowing

Above Aeneas' head in stormy darkness

And the sea shuddered in the shadow—even

Palinurus the pilot shouted from the helm:

"Why, why should such a wrack of heavy cloud

Blanket the sky? What are you brewing up

For us now, old Father Neptune?" When he had spoken

He gave the order to reef the sails and pull

Strongly upon the oars, then set them again

For a different tack and spoke these words to Aeneas:

"Aeneas my hearty, not even if Jove himself

Gave me his warrant would I hope to make

Italy with a weather sky like this:

The wind has changed—it has swung into the west

Onto our beam, and it's rising out of the dark

And a fog's gathering, there's nothing we can do:

We cannot make any headway and we haven't the strength

Fortune's got the whip-hand—we'd better obey

And steer whatever course she sets: I took

A sight of the stars on the voyage out and if

My memory's not at fault and our present course

Is properly plotted by the same constellations,

I'd say the friendly coast of your brother Eryx

And the harbors of Sicily are in the offing."

Then good Aeneas answered, "I agree.

I have noticed for some time what the winds dictated

And your vain counter-action. Then trim your sails

And alter course!—No land would more delight me,

Nor harbor would I choose more happily

For my weary ships, than where Dardan Acestes

Is safe alive and where my father's bones

Lie buried in the bosom of the earth."

So with a following wind from the west they ran

Full speed for port over the heaving deep

And touched the familiar shores with joy at last.

Far off from the top of a lofty spur Acestes

Had marked their coming with amazement and grasped

That they were friendly ships and ran to meet them.

Dressed in a Libyan bearskin and armed to the teeth

He seemed a savage—yet his mother was Trojan;

And his father was the god of the river Ctimisus.

His ancestral blood was strong in his veins and the wail-
comed

These men of Troy come back, and joyfully made them

Free of his primitive riches and alleviated

Their weariness with every kind of comfort

Friendship could offer.

On the following day,

When the first hint of dawn hunted the stars

Out of the sky, Aeneas called an assembly.

From every part of the shore his comrades gathered

And standing on the top of a mound of earth he addressed

them.

"Great sons of Dardanus, blood-descendants of gods,

The cycle of months is complete and come full circle;

It is a year now since we committed to earth

The mortal bones of my father, now an immortal,

And consecrated altars to mourn his loss.

Unless I am at fault this is the day,

The very day (for so you gods have desired it),

That I shall hallow for ever in grief and honor—

And were this day to find me an African exile

Beside the Syrtis or on the Argive sea

Or in the streets of Mycenae—wherever I was,

Still would I keep my annual vows of observance

In solemn ritual, and pile up on the altar

Its need of gifts. And now by our own choice—

But not I think without the provenance

And guidance of the gods—we are here present

Beside the very grave, my father's bones and ashes,

Having made landfall in a friendly harbor.

Come therefore everyone and take your part

In joyful celebration. Let us pray

For favoring winds and when in the course of time

May it please my father I should offer him.

These annual rites in his own shrine! Acestes,

True son of Troy, has allotted to the crews

Of every ship two head of oxen—summon therefore

The household gods of our fathers to the feast

And those our host Acestes worships. And furthermore

If the ninth dawn bears up benign to us mortals

And fixes in its light the myriad world,

I shall declare a race to be fought out

Among my Trojan fleet; then next a foot race,

And then a match for those who pride themselves

On their prowess with the javelin or light arrow,

Then boxing bows for any who believe
In their skill with the gloves, come one and all!
Prizes await all those who merit them.
Keep holy silence all, and wreathe your brows with leaves."

So saying he bound his brows with his mother's myrtle
And Helymus followed suit and aged Accestes
And young Ascanius, and all the rest of the Trojans.
Aeneas made his way from the assembly
Towards the tomb with thousands pressing round him,
The center of the throng. And with due formality
He poured two bowls of unmixed wine on the earth,
Two of fresh milk, two of the blood of sacrifice,
Then scattered some bright flowers and spoke these words:
"O hallowed father, hail to you once more!
O father saved in vain only to lie
In ashes here, all hail O Shade and Spirit!
It was not granted me to seek with you
The borders of Italy, our destined demesne,
Nor see the Ausonian Tiber—wherever it be."
He had hardly finished when a colossal snake
Slithered its seven coils from the depths of the tomb
And in seven enormous rings it slid and calmly
Wound round the tomb and glided between the altars:
His back was a sheeny pattern of blue markings,
Its scales ashine with gold—like a rainbow catching
The light of the sun and glancing a thousand colors
Onto the clouds. Aeneas stood there spellbound.
And the snake threaded its long sinuous body
Between the bowls and the polished cups sampling
The fare, then, harmlessly, when it had eaten
The altar offering, slipped back to the base of the tomb.
Not knowing whether he ought to regard the snake
As the tutelary Spirit of the place
Or as the familiar of his father, Aeneas
Resumed the ritual of his filial duty
With quickened purpose: he duly sacrificed
A pair of two-year sheep, and then two pigs
And then two black-skinned bullocks; he poured wine
From the bowls and called on the soul of the mighty Anchises
And his shade let free from Acheron. His companions
Joyfully offered gifts each as his means permitted,
Piling them on the altars and slaughtering bullocks.
Some set up rows of caldrons. Some brought live coals
To the spits and, stretched at ease along the grass,

Roused the flesh.

And now the day they awaited
Had come, and Phaeton's team were harbingers
Of a bright and tranquil dawn. News of the games,
And the magic of Accestes' famous name
Had drawn the folk from all the neighborhood;
And they filled the shore in a jolly holiday crowd
Bigger to see Aeneas and his fellows,
And some were ready to enter for the events.
And first of all the gifts were exhibited
In the center of the ground—the sacred tripods,
The green garlands, the palms—emblems of victory,
Weapons and robes dyed purple, and talents of gold and
silver.

Then from a mound in the middle a trumpet pealed
Announcing the games begun.

The first event

Was a rowing race: four ships of equal size,
Four ships with heavy oars, were singled out
From the whole fleet. Commanding the speedy *Prists*
Was Mnesteus with his dashing crew—that Mnesteus
Who was to be an Italian prince, and from whom
The Memmian family take their name; there was Gyas
Directing the vast bulk of the *Chimera*,
She was as big as a city and propelled
By Dardan rowers at three banks of oars;
Sergestus, from whom the Sergii derive
Their name, was captain of the mighty *Centaur*;
And finally Cloanthus—the founder, O Roman Cluentus,
Of your house—in the sky-blue *Scylla*.
Some way out
To sea, off the spray-beaten shore, jutted a rock
Sometimes submerged and pounded by the swell
When the northerly winter wracks blindfold the stars;
But now, in the calm, it heaves from the smooth waters
A level shelf where the gulls love to bask.
Here lord Aeneas set as a mark the green
Branch of an ilex, a clear sign to the sailors
To tell them where to turn in their long voyage
And strike for home.
They drew lots for position;
Then at their helms the captains took their stand
In dazzling gold and purple, a far-seen splendor;
Their crews were crowned with garlands of poplar leaves
And their bare shoulders gleamed with embrocation.
They took their place at the thwarts, their muscles tensed,

Tensely they waited the signal, their hearts pounding
With nervous fear and longing to be the winners.
The trumpet gave the signal. Then in a flash
All shot away from the start; and seamen's orders
Rang to the sky as they drew back their arms,
And the waters boiled. Then they clove through the furrow
With steady strokes and the whole sea was slashed
By trident-prow and striving oar.

No chariot

Drawn by a tandem team ever shot out
From its starting gate with such a headlong thrust,
Nor charioteer giving his gallopers head
And waving the slack reins above their backs
Leant forward so to the lash. Then all the woodland
Rang with the cheers of men and the urgent appeals
Of eager supporters—and the high hills resounded
And the sound rolled round the low line of the shore.
Amid the tumult and the shouting Gyas
Had slipped into clear water and the lead.
Cleoanthus followed—he had better oarsmen
Behind, at an equal distance, *Pristis* and *Centaure*
Struggled against each other and now *Pristis*
Was just in front and then the mighty *Centaure*
Put in a burst, and passing her took the lead.
Then both forged on together bow to bow
Ploughing the salt seaway with long keels.
They were already approaching the half-way mark
And shaping a course to round the rock when Gyas
Who was leading at this point yelled at his helmsman:
"Menocetes! Why are you steering so far to the starboard?
Steer *this* way; hug the shore! Let the blades of our oars
Feather the rocks to our port—let the others indulge
In the open sea!" But Menocetes timorous
Of hidden reefs turned to the open sea.
Again Gyas shouted, "Make inshore, Menocetes!"
And looking back he saw Cleoanthus gaining
And pressing him from the inner berth—and indeed
He snaked his way between the ringing rocks
And Gyas' ship on the port side and passed him,
Rounded the mark, and got into safe waters.
Then a grievous fury welled from the very marrow—
Of Gyas' bones, tears stood out on his cheeks,
And blind to his own good name and his crew's safety
He tore Menocetes from his timorous helm
And hurled him headlong into the sea and took

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The helm himself: he would be pilot now.
He cheered his rowers on, and altered course
Crowing towards the rocks. But poor Menocetes
Struggled at last to the surface from the depths—
He was old, his clothes clung sodden to his body,
But he managed to grope his way up onto the rock
And collapsed in the dry. The Trojans jeered as he fell,
Tearing as he swam, and roared to see him reach
The brine out of his lungs.

The hearts of Sergestus

And Menestheus, the last two, were suddenly fired
With the wild hope of passing the flagging Gyas.
Sergestus jockeyed into position first
And reared the rock, but he had not cleared the *Pristis*,
She was only half a length behind and pressing.
So he leapt down among his crew and exhorted,
"Come now, my comrades, fellows once with Hector,
You whom I chose in Troy's last thro' to follow me,
Rise to your oars with all the dash and spirit
That got us out of the Syrtis and the storms
Of the Ionian Sea and Malea's currents.
I tell you, I do not strive for first place now
Nor aim at total victory . . . Oh, but I wish . . .
No, Neptune, let whoever you want to, win . . .
But to come in last, think of the shame of that!
My friends, prevent that horror at all costs—
Count that your victory!"

They made a supreme effort

The brazen keel shuddered under the pulse
Of their mighty strokes. The sea slipped under them.
Their throats were parched, their lungs were almost bursting,
Their sweat poured off in streams. And a sheer chance
Brought to the heroes the honor they coveted;
For Sergestus, in a fever of excitement
Kept bearing in towards the rocks and thrusting
On the inside berth, with lessening room to maneuver,
Until he ran, by ill luck, onto a reef.
The very rock juddered; against the jagged
Edges of flint the oars splintered and broke;
The prow hung high and dry. And the crew leapt up
Clamoring, from their thwarts at the sudden check,
And seizing iron-bound poles and pointed boat-hooks
Gripped their broken oars and fished them out.
Menestheus now was jubilant and madder
Than ever to win and with the wind at his beck
And call and his oarsmen striking a fast rate

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He scudded over the open water landward,
 As a dove is suddenly startled from the niche
 In the lava-rock where she has her nest and the nestlings
 She loves to cosset, and with a terrified flap
 And clatter of wings comes whirling over the meadows,
 But soon you will see her slide through the limpid air
 Tranquilly gliding and without a wing-beat,
 So in the *Prisis* now Mnesotheus skinned
 Through the last lanes of water as the way
 Of the boat simply propelled her onward.
 Sergestus he left behind, still in the toils
 Of reef and shallows, calling in vain for help
 And learning how to limp with broken oars.
 Next he came up with Gyas and the colossal
Chimaera and, being bereft of her pilot, passed her.
 So there was only Cloanthus alone and close to the finish,
 And he pressed after him straining every nerve.
 Then truly the cheering redoubled to a roar
 And everyone urged the pursuer on
 And the sky rang with the racket. The leading crew
 In a cold sweat of fear that after all
 A prize they considered theirs already and honors
 As good as won might still be snatched away,
 And willing to give their lives for glory—the others
 Spurred to a greater effort by success
 And the crowd's confidence inspiring theirs.
 There might have been a dead heat and the prize
 Divided if Cloanthus had not stretched
 Both hands out over the sea in fervent prayer
 And called upon the gods to heed his vow.
 "O gods who have dominion over the sea
 Upon whose breast I sail, if you hear my prayer,
 With joyful heart I shall station by your altar
 Upon this shore a snow-white bull: I shall scatter
 The entrails into the salt waves, I shall pour
 Clear streams of wine." Deep down among the billows
 His prayer was heard by all the Nereids
 And Phorcus' troop and the maid Panopea—and Father
 Porhunnus himself with his own mighty hand
 Gave a boost to the ship as she passed; and on she shot
 Swifter than arrowflight or the south wind
 Towards the land and in the heart of the harbor
 Was lost to view. Then duly the son of Anchises
 Called all together and in stentorian tones
 A herald proclaimed Cloanthus winner! A garland
 Of green bay leaves was placed upon his brow.

Aeneas next gave their prizes to each crew—
 They could choose to have three bullocks,
 Wine, or a bulky talent of silver. The captains
 Had further special awards: Aeneas gave to the winner
 A gold-embroidered cloak with a double pattern
 In Meliboean purple on its facings,
 While on the whole was woven a depiction
 First of the young prince Ganymede at his hunting
 On leary Ida, hounding the swift stags
 With his darts in sharp pursuit; you could almost see
 The heaving of his chest, it was so lifelike.
 Then sweeping down from Ida came that bird
 Which is Love's armor-bearer and snatched him up
 In its hooked talons while his aged attendants
 Raised helpless hands to heaven and his hounds
 Expended their fury barking into the air.
 To him whose prowess had gained him second place
 Aeneas presented a cuirass of mail
 Close-linked and triple-threaded with gold—he had stripped
 it
 Himself from Demoleos after killing him
 By the banks of the swift Simois under the walls
 Of Ilion: and this was the gift he gave
 To a warrior to have for his own, to be
 His pride and defense in battle. Indeed his servants
 Phageus and Sagaris could hardly manage
 To carry its many layers on their straining shoulders.
 Yet Demoleos in his day had worn it
 And worn it flashing after fleeing Trojans.
 The third prize was a pair of brazen caldrons
 And two cups wrought of silver with bas-reliefs.
 Now all had received their gifts and were strutting off
 With purple ribands round their brows exulting
 Each with his treasure when at last Sergestus
 Was sighted—he had just succeeded,
 After a painful and protracted series
 Of cunning maneuvers, in refloating the *Centaur*:
 He had lost some oars and one whole bank was crippled
 And now he brought her home in a storm of catcalls:
 She was like a snake, caught on the verge of a road
 And run over by some brazen wheel or mangled
 And left half dead by a brutal traveler
 With a stone in his hand, that writhes but cannot move;
 Its eyes glitter, its neck and hissing head
 Are reared upright, and half its sinuous length

Strives to escape but paralyzed by the wound
It flounders impotently writhing and coiling
Back on its stricken half—such was the state
Of the oarage the *Centaur* dragged herself along with;
But she broke out sail and made the harbor mouth
In spanking style in the end. So Aeneas gave
Sergestus his promised prize—he was delighted
To see the ship safe and her crew returned—
Gave him a Cretan slave girl not unskilled—
In domestic matters with twin sons at her breast.
Her name was Pholoë.

So this event was finished,
And good Aeneas next turned his attention
To a grassy level enclosed on every side
By wooded hill-sides curving up and providing
A perfect vantage point for the track in the valley below them
Hither the hero went with many thousands about him
And took his seat on a dais in the center.
From here he invited any young man of mettle
Who wished to compete in the footrace to come forward,
And offered prizes and set them up to the view.
From every side competitors appeared,
Both Trojans and Sicilians and to the fore
Were Nisus and Euryalus—Euryalus
In the April of his youth and beautiful,
Nisus who loved him with a pure devotion.
Next after them there came princely Dioreas
A sprig of Priam's noble house; and next
Came Salius and Patron, both together:
An Acarnanian one, the other Arcadian
Of the stock of Tegea—then two Sicilian youths,
Both adepts of the woodland, Helymus
And Panopes—companions of Acestes
Though he was older, and many more besides
Whose names are dim now and whose fame forgotten.
When all were assembled round him Aeneas addressed them:
"Attend to my words with care. The gist of them will delight
you.
No man of all your number shall go away
Without a gift from me. I shall give a pair
Of iron darts from Crete, agleam with polish,
And a two-edged ax with silver chasing—all of you
Alike shall have this honor. The first three
Shall receive special prizes and have their brows
Wreathed with pale olive garlands. Let the first,
As winner, receive a horse with glorious trappings;

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The second an Amazon's quiver fully loaded
With Thracian arrows, and a broad belt of gold
To sling it from; and to fasten it a buckle
Wrought of a polished jewel. Let the third
Be happy to take this Argive helmet home."
When he had finished they all got on their marks
And at the sudden signal off they streaked
From the starting line and pelted down the course
Like a burst of storm, each with his eye on the goal.
Right from the start Nisus was far in front
Leaping into the lead swifter than wind
Or winging thunderbolt. Next after him,
But a long way behind, came pounding Salius,
Then with a closer interval between them
Euryalus thrd. Then after Euryalus, Helymus
And right on his heels and hustling up to his shoulder
Dioreas—if the course had but been longer
He would have slipped him—there would have been no doubt
Of the outcome of their struggle.

And now they were
nearing
The end of the course and spent they saw the tape
Almost in reach when Nisus by sheer ill luck
Slipped in a slime of blood that had been spilt,
As it happened, at the slaughter of some bullocks
And still lay soaking into the earth and sticky
On the green of the grass. And here the poor young man
With the taste of victory already on his tongue
Planted his steps and skidded and found no foothold
But fell flat down into the muck and blood.
But even then he never forgot Euryalus,
Never forgot his love—heaving himself
Out of the mess he obstructed Salius
And Salius went down, head over heels in the mush.
Euryalus sprinted ahead and thanks to his friend
Was cheered to the winning post by the crowd's noisy favors.
Helymus came in second, Dioreas thrd.

But Salius filled the whole arena with eloquent protest
Appealing to the elders sitting in front,
Insisting that the prize he had been deprived of
By a trick be given him back. But Euryalus
Had the support of the crowd because of the tears
He shed so becomingly and because of the grace
Of his burgeoning beauty—and Dioreas backed him
With his own loud appeals—he had won a prize—

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And if the first place were to be given to Salius
His own position as third would go for nothing.
Then lord Aeneas said to them "My lads,
You certainly keep the prizes you have won:
Nobody can disturb the order once it is settled,
But let me be allowed to commiserate
With a friend for ill luck he did not so deserve."
So saying he presented Salius
With an enormous African lionskin loaded
With the weight of his mane and its claws sheathed in gold.
At this, Nisus complained "If these are the prizes
You give the defeated—if you are so sympathetic
To those who fall—what prize will you give me
Equal to my deserts?—I deserved to win
And I would have won, had I not been embroiled
In the same accident as Salius!"—As he spoke
He displayed the mud and filth on his face and limbs.
Aeneas, best of princes, smiled at him
And bade a shield be brought—the workmanship
Of Didymaon which the Greeks had wrenched
From Neptune's hallowed doorway once—and this
Munificent gift he gave to the noble youth.

So the race was over, the prizes duly awarded.
Then Aeneas said, "Let any man come forward
Of courage and quick wits, put on the gloves
And take his guard." He offered a pair of prizes.
A bullock garlanded, with gilded horns,
For the winner, for the loser as a sop
A sword and a splendid helmet. In an instant,
To a hum of admiration Dares heaved
The colossal strength of his mighty frame upright
And presented himself—it was he and he alone
Who used to pit himself in single combat
Against Paris—and beside great Hector's tomb,
It was this very man had smashed the all-conquering giant,
Butes who bore himself to the field of battle
With the blood of Berycian Amycus in his veins,
And stretched him dying on the saffron sand.
Such was the caliber of this Dares who
Now ranged his bulk in readiness for a bout,
Flexed his broad shoulders and indulged himself
In a burst of shadow-boxing. The only question
Was an opponent—but no one in all that crowd
Dared to confront him and put on the gloves.
Assuming therefore that nobody else intended to enter

Dares went strutting tip to Aeneas and stood there
And brashly taking hold of the bullock's horn
In his left hand he said: "Son of a goddess
If no one dares to risk himself to a bout
How long do I have stand here? How long is it right
To keep me waiting? Please give me the word
To take the prize away!" Then all the Trojans
Roared with one voice in favor of their champion
Being given the promised prize.

At this Aecetes
Turned to Entellus who happened to be sitting
Beside him on a bank of lush green grass
And gave him the rough edge of his tongue, saying:
"Entellus, bravest of heroes—once! Does what you were
Mean nothing to you? Will you really sit there calmly
And let so great a prize be carried off
Without one blow, or thought for Eryx vaunted in vain
Your god and master? What of your fame become
A household word throughout all Sicily?
And the prizes hung in your own house?" He answered,
"It is not fear has quenched my love of fame,
Nor my ambition. No, but the chill of age
Has slowed my blood, and atrophied the sinews
Of all my body—if I still had in me
The sap of youth I had once—as that young lout
Boasts of with such loud-mouthed self-confidence—
No pretty bullock, nor hat of a reward
Need have been offered to tempt me into the ring—
I care nothing for prizes!" With these words
He hurried into the arena a pair of leathers
Of an immense weight which nimble Eryx used
To sheathe his arms in, when he came to combat.
Men's hearts stood still; so huge the seven oxen
These hides must have been from, now reinforced
With lead and iron stitched into them. More stunned
Than all the rest Dares just stood there gaping
And then backed well away; great-hearted Aeneas
Himself stood trying out their weight and turning
The massive bindings round and round in his hands.
Then from the depths of his heart the older contender
Entellus spoke: "Just think had anyone seen
The very leather used by Hercules,
And the ghastly fight he fought on this very shore!
These arms were wielded once by our brother Eryx—
You can still see the bloodstains and the splayed
Fragments of brain—with these he stood his ground

Against great Alcides—when I was in my heyday
I used them regularly, before my rival—
Jealous old age—sprinkled upon my brows
His weakening snow. But if the Trojan Dares
Refuses to face me in this gear of mine,
If good Aeneas agrees and my sponsor Acestes
Approves my proposal—let us fight it out
On equal terms. I will spare you Eryx's gloves—
So calm your fears—and as for yourself put off
Your Trojan leathers." So saying, he flung from his shoulders
The double folds of his cloak and bared to view
The huge joints of his limbs, the mighty bones
Of arms and legs, and stationed his vast frame
In the center of the ring. The son of Anchises
Held up two equal pairs of gloves and, as part of his office,
Bound them about the hands of both contestants.
At once each took his guard, and without fear
Lifted his arms in the air, dancing on tiptoe.
They held their heads up and well out of range
And sparred for an opening, probing at each other—
Dares quicker on foot, reliant on youth,
Entellus the more powerful and the bigger,
But slow and weak in the knee, and out of condition,
Panting for every breath, his huge limbs heaving.
Many the blows they aimed at each other and missed.
Many the blows that hammered their hollow sides
Or thudded on ribs. Their fists kept lashing round
Forehead and ears, and uppercuts to the jaw
Rattled their teeth. Stolid Entellus stood
Rooted in one position—avoiding punishment
By his sheer vigilance and skill in balance.
Dares, it seemed, was like a general attacking
A high-walled city with siege-engines or
Investing a mountain fortress with his army
Who tries out every mode of approach in turn,
Exploring the whole position with all his skill,
And throws in every sort of assault—all to no purpose.
Entellus, then, gathered himself to strike
And lifting high his right hand shot it out,
But Dares, quick to anticipate, saw the blow
As it swept down and with a nimble sidestep
Slipped out of the way. And all Entellus' effort
Was wasted on the air, but the mighty impetus
Of his mighty blow caused the colossal fighter
To crash full-length to the earth, as a hollow pine
Torn up by its roots is sometimes seen to crash.

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Or Erymanthus or on lofty Ida,
The Trojan and Sicilian youths spring up
In their excitement; a shout rose to the sky.
Acestes was the first to run to his aid
And, though he was as old, he tenderly
Lifted his friend up from the ground. But the hero,
Neither dismayed nor shaken up by his fall,
Returned to the fight more fiercely still and anger
Charged him with new force—he began to blaze
In the fullness of his strength, pricked into action
By shame and the certain knowledge of his powers.
In a flame of fury he drove Dares headlong
Over the whole field showering blows upon him
Now with his right, now with his left—allowing
Nor pause nor respite—thick as the hammering hailstones
A storm hurls on the roof, such was the storm
Of battering blows Entellus with both hands
Let fall on Dares and sent him staggering.
But finally chief Aeneas thought it fit
To put a term to this massacre—Entellus
Had glutted his savage spirit quite enough—
So he stopped the fight and rescued flagging Dares
And spoke these soothing words,—“Oh Luckless Dares,
What overwhelming madness has possessed you?
Do you not see this strength is supernatural?
That the gods have turned against you? Give way to the gods!”
Such were his words as he parted the two fighters—
There were faithful friends to help the wretched Dares
Whose knees were sagging, whose head hung loosely flopping
From side to side, as he kept spitting blood
And teeth with the blood as they led him to the ships.
Then summoned they received on his behalf
The sword and helmet—leaving to Entellus
The garland and the bullock. At this the victor
Bursting with pride in himself and in his trophy
Cried “Son of a goddess, and you Trojans, now
You shall see the measure of what strength I had
In my body when I was young, and the sort of death
Dares escaped—who is now safe among you!”
Nearby the bullock stood, the prize for the fight,
And he took his stand directly in front of its muzzle;
He drew his right arm back and aiming the blow
Of his toughened leather exactly between the horns
Rose to his full height and crashed down his fist.
The bone was shattered, the brains were spattered out.
The bullock fell to the ground, quivering still, but dead.

107

Then spoke Eurytion from the depths of his heart,
"This life I pay you Erys, a better life,
In Dares' stead and here as a victor may
Lay down my gloves and the secrets of my skill."
Aeneas next invited competition
For any who liked the swift flight of the arrow.
He allotted prizes, and with his mighty hand
Himself set up the mast of Sereatus' ship
And tied to the masthead on a cord bent round it
A fluttering dove, a mark for the iron-tipped shafts.
The archers gathered; and each dropped his lot
Into the waiting helmet and first to come out,
Before anyone else, and to everyone's delight,
Was Hippocoön's the son of Hyrtacus.
Next came Mnestheus only lately the winner
In the ship race, Mnestheus still with the green garland
Of olive on his head, and Eurytion third—
Your brother, Pandarus, you whose fame is immortal,
Who in those old days, bidden to break the truce,
Were first to hurl your weapons spinning into the thick
Of the Greek host. And last to fall from the helmet
Was Accestes' lot—an old man still prepared
To compete in a contest fitter for the young.
Now every man with all the strength he could muster
Was limbering up his bow, testing its powers
And drawing arrows from his quiver—the first
To slice the air came from the twanging bowstring
Of young Hippocoön and whizzing away it flew
Straight at the mast and struck and stuck in it.
The mast quivered, the dove in a flutter of terror
Wheeled whirling, amidst a thunder of applause.
Next was Mnestheus taut and keen, his bow
Drawn back and pointing up, his shaft and eye
Aligned in aim—but alas! he had no luck:
He failed to hit the bird with the iron tip of his arrow
But cut the knot of the string she was tethered to,
Tied by the foot to the masthead—and off she flashed
Into the murk blown up by the south wind!
Then quick as light, for he had had his bow
For long full drawn and an arrow nocked to the string,
Eurytion muttered a prayer to his brother and fixed
His eye on the dove as joyfully she winged
Her way in the waste of air and then transfixed her
As white she flew with a dark cloud behind.
Down, down she came and left her soul to inhabit
The starry stations of air, and her tumbling body

108

Brought home the embodied arrow to its owner,
With nothing to win there still remained Accestes:
And he discharged his arrow into the heights of the sky
To prove an old man still had skill and power
To wield the twanging bow. And all of a sudden
A portent fraught with hidden doom to be
Burst on their sight—the momentous aftermath
Was to disclose itself and prophets wise
After the event expound too late its meaning—
For as it flew in the formless clouds the shaft
Caught fire and flamed its way with diminishing fires
Until it vanished, burned out into the winds,
Like the shooting stars that sweep across the sky
Their burning tresses. With minds rapt in wonder
The Trojans and Sicilians rooted stood
And prayed. Nor was Aeneas one to deny
So great an omen—but he embraced Accestes,
Who was overjoyed himself and almost smothered him
Under a pile of costly gifts and addressed him:
"Take them, old father: for the mighty King of Olympus
Has willed it so. By these ineluctable omens
He has ordained you a prize for which no lot was cast.
The gift I will give you belonged to aged Anchises:
It is a mixing bowl embossed with figures
Which long ago Cisseus of Thrace most generously
Gave to my father and bid him always keep it
As a remembrancer, an earnest of his love."
So saying he placed upon Accestes' brows
The wreath of bay and pronounced him the absolute winner.
Nor did Eurytion with his sense of fairness begrudge
The outstanding honor, although it was he indeed
And he alone who had brought down the dove.
Next after him Mnestheus got his prize
For severing the cord, and last Hippocoön
For fixing in the mast his speedy arrow.
Before they broke up after this event
Aeneas the chief had summoned Epytides
The tutor and companion of young Iulus
And whispered in his ear: "Now, off you go—
And if Ascanius has his squadron of boys
All mounted ready and drilled for his parade,
Tell him to lead them onto the field now
To pay their homage to his honored grandsire,
And show himself in arms." Then he himself
Ordered the crowd that had poured into the arena

109

To move well back and leave the whole space clear.
In rode the boys, the pride of their parents' eyes,
In shining lines upon their bridled horses,
And as they passed were met with admiring cheers
From the grown men of Sicily and Troy.
All had their hair bound, as the custom was,
With a chaplet of clipped leaves, and carried a pair
Of corn-shafted javelins tipped with iron.
And some had polished quivers slung from their shoulders
And pliant chains of twisted gold were wound
Over their chests and twined about their necks.
They were in three groups of horse for their performance
And each group had its leader and twelve followers,
All divided alike, an equal glittering glory.
One band of the boys was led in its proud career
By a little Priam, whose name revived his grandsire's,
Your prince of a son, Polites, destined to found
A line of Italians—he rode a Thracian horse,
A piebald, the fetlocks of whose forefeet showed
All white as he pranced, with a white blaze on his forehead.
The second leader was Alys from whom the house
Of the Latin Aii spring—a little boy
And dear to Iulus as boys are dear to each other.
Then last of all, and exceeding all in beauty
Iulus rode on a Sidonian steed
Which lovely Dido had given him in remembrance,
And witness of her love for him. The rest
Rode on Sicilian horses provided for them
By Acestes their elder ally. The Trojans welcomed
The shy young lads with reassuring applause
And quizzed them with delight, remarking in them
Family and ancestral likenesses.
After the boys had joyfully paraded
The length of the whole gathering, under the gaze
Of their families, Epyrtides' voice of command
Rang out across the arena to where they were ready,
And he gave his whip a crack. They galloped away
In equal bands, then broke up into threes
As if for a figure of a dance, and then
At the next command they wheeled and charged each other
With lances couched. Then they engaged in a series
Of matching evolutions as the two
Companies faced each other, and then they rode
In interlocking circles left and right
And finally engaged in a mock battle,
Now with their backs exposed to flight, and now

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Turning to the attack with lances poised,
Now making peace and riding side by side.
The story goes that once in the heights of Crete
There was a labyrinth with a tortuous path
Running between blind walls and treacherous
With a thousand twists and turns, whose baffling maze
Defied the following of any trail:
No man could solve it, no man retrace his step.
The course of these Trojan boys was not unlike it
As they wove in and out in mock attack
And mock retreat. They were like dolphins, too,
That sport their indolent way among the wave-tops
Of the Carpathian or the Libyan sea.
When he was building the walls round Alba Longa
It was Ascanius who was first to revive
This kind of tourney and taught the early Latins
To celebrate it, as he had done in his boyhood
With all the Trojan boys. The Albans taught
Their sons, and from them Rome in the days of her greatness
Received and kept alive the old tradition.
So even now the boys are "Troy" and their troop
Is called "The Trojan Troop."
This was the end
Of the games held in holy Anchises' honor.
Now for the first time Fortune turned against them.
For while the Trojans with their various games
Were paying their due obsequies at the tomb,
Saturnian Juno posted Iris down
To the Trojan fleet from heaven, wafting her
On the wings of a fair wind; pondering many things,
Her deep long-standing wrath as yet unsated.
Iris, speeding her passage along her bow
Of a myriad colors, and seen by no one, swiftly
Completed her journey. She marked the vast assembly
And made for the shore where she saw the harbor empty
And the fleet unmanned. But on a hidden beach,
Far off the Trojan women were keening for Anchises,
And weeping one and all cast wistful eyes
Out to the ocean deep and every heart
Was full of the same yearning cry: "Alas!
Such wastes of water for such weary souls,
So great a sea to cross!" They prayed for a city;
The toils of another voyage were too grim:
They could bear no more. So into their midst snapped Iris,
No tiro in the ways of making trouble,

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And putting off the mien and garments of the goddess
 She became Beroë, the aged wife of Doryclus
 Of Tharus, a woman whose name once was a name
 To conjure with, who had borne sons—as Beroë
 She joined the group of Trojan women and cried:
 “O wretched women that you were not dragged
 To death by the Greeks under the walls of the city!
 Unhappy nation! What more disastrous death
 Has Fate in store for you? It is now the end
 Of the seventh summer since the sack of Troy
 And all the time we are being harried onwards
 From land to land, at the menace of every rock
 In every sea, under every star in the sky,
 And rolled from rolling wave to rolling wave
 Seeking an ever-receding Italy.
 And here is the country of our brother Erys,
 And Acestes is our host—who shall prevent us
 From laying foundations here and giving our people
 The city they crave? O fatherland, O gods
 Snatched from the foe in vain—shall there *never* be
 Walls we can call Troy walls? Shall we *never* see
 Streams such as Hector loved? no Xanthus? no Simois?
 Well, then! come follow me and set on fire
 These accursed ships! For in my sleep I dreamed
 The prophetess Cassandra handed me
 Brands all ablaze and said ‘Seek here your Troy,
 Here is your home! Now is the time to act—
 So great a portent admits of no delay.
 Seel! Four of Neptune’s altars! The god himself
 Provides us fire and fires our courage too!’
 So saying she sprang to the fire and fiercely snatched
 A burning brand and drawing her right arm back
 She whirled it round and sent it violently spinning.
 The Trojan women stood appalled and dumbstruck.
 Then Pyrgo, the oldest of their party, once
 The royal nurse of Priam’s many sons
 Cried “Ladies! I tell you, this is not Beroë
 From Rhoeteum, the wife of Doryclus!
 Do you but mark those signs of a heavenly beauty,
 Those burning eyes: what presence, what pride of feature,
 What tone of utterance, what dignity in her gait!
 It was but a moment ago that I myself
 Took leave of Beroë and she was sick and resentful
 That she alone should fail to take her place
 At such a ceremony and could not give to Anchises
 His meed of honor.” Such were her words and the women

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were in a quandary, balefully eyeing the ships
 And torn between their pitiable yearning
 To stay in the land they were in, and the call of the land
 Promised by fate, when the goddess spread her wings
 And soared up into the sky cleaving the clouds
 With the huge arc of her bow as she flew away.
 Then truly dazed and mazed with the apparition
 And driven to frenzy they screamed and snatched up fire
 From their household hearths—some of them sacked the
 altars,
 And flung on the ships brushwood and brands and cuttings.
 The Fire God raged unchecked along bench and oar
 And sterns of painted pine.
 It was Eumelus
 Who brought the news back to the tomb of Anchises
 And the spectators sitting in the arena:
 The fleet was on fire! And indeed from where they sat
 They could see with their own eyes the sparks flying up
 And the black smoke billowing.
 The first to respond
 Was Ascanius who was still at the head of his troop
 Gaily trotting along—then all of a sudden
 Galloping off to the uproar by the fleet
 Before his breathless aides had time to stop him.
 “What new madness is this?” he cried, “you unhappy women,
 What do you think you are doing? It is no Greek foe
 Nor hostile camp you are burning—it is your own
 Hopes for the future—Seel! It is I, your Ascanius!”
 He took the helmet off which he had worn
 In the mock battle and flung it down at his feet.
 Up dashed Aeneas then and a host of Trojans
 Hard on his heels. But the women scuttled away
 In panic about the shore, making for cover
 In every direction, seeking the woods or caves.
 Already appalled at what they had done they dared
 Not face the light of day: they had recovered
 Their senses, knew who their friends were, and Juno’s spell
 Over their hearts was broken, but this return
 To sanity had no power to extinguish
 The fires which burned with an unquenchable violence;
 For deep in the moistened timber the calking caught
 And in slow coils the smoke came thickly up,
 The creeping fires fastened upon the keels
 And the danger threatened every part of the ships.
 Though every hero slaved with all his might
 And they poured in floods of water, they made no headway.

113

Then good Aeneas stripped the cloak from his shoulders
And stretching his hands to heaven invoked his aid:
"Almighty Jove, if you do not excrete
The Trojans to a man; and if your ancient compassion
Is yet aroused by human suffering, grant
Our fleet to escape from the flames, even now, O Father,
And save from extinction Troy's last slender hopes!
Or, if it is my desert, hunt down the wrath
Of your thunderbolt upon our remnant and destroy us,
Dash us to death now with your own right hand."
His prayer was scarcely prayed when a wild black storm
Boiled up, the rain poured in a torrent
And thunder shook the hills and shivered the plains.
The whole sky opened in a blinding cloudburst
Blown thick and black on the blast of the south wind.
The ships were filled, the smoldering timbers soaked
Till not a spark was left and all the vessels,
But for the loss of four, saved from disaster.

But Aeneas, reeling from the bitter blow,
Now set his mind, as leader of his people,
And conscious of the weight he had to bear,
To consider the question from every angle: should he
Forget the behest of fate and settle in Sicily,
Or should he still make for the Italian coast?
It was then that Nautes—an aged man and the one
The only pupil to whom Tritonian Pallas
Had taught the gift of prophecy and made him
Renowned for his powers—for schooled by her he was ready
To interpret the grim signs of the gods' anger,
Or what was the stern sequence of events
Ordnained by destiny—it was then that Nautes
Addressed these words of comfort to Aeneas:
"O Goddess-born, we must follow the will of Fate
Foreward or backward—come what may, our fortunes
Can only be controlled by our own endurance.
You have Acestes here, a Dardan, divinely descended:
Make him your confidant—ask for the help
He is surely willing to offer you—hand over
To him the crews of our lost ships and all
Who have had enough of our great endeavor, more
Than they can bear—the older men and women
Are exhausted with seafaring—choose them out
And any more who are fragile or timorous.
Let the weary build the walls of their rest here,
And call their city Acesta, if leave be given."

114

The words of his old friend threw Aeneas' thoughts
Into a turmoil—never before had he suffered
Anxieties so complex and perplexing.
And now dark Night had driven her chariot
To the heights and held the canopy of heaven,
When down from that very sky a sudden semblance
Of his father Anchises seemed to materialize
Before his inward eye and spoke these words:
"My son, more dear to me than life itself
While life I had, my son whose burden is
The fate of Troy, I come at High Jove's command
Who saved your fleet from fire and at long last
Took pity upon you from his throne in heaven.
Obey the counsel wise old Nautes has given you,
None could be better. Take with you to Italy
An elect few, none but the bravest hearts.
In Latium there awaits for you to conquer
A people of tough fiber, of stubborn willpower.
Before you embark, though, you must make your way
To the Land of the Dead and, crossing deep Avernus,
Seek to meet me, my son. Do not imagine
That I am immersed in ungodly Tartarus
Or some glum place of sorrows, no, I dwell
In Elysium in a concord of the blessed.
A Holy Sibyl shall conduct you thither
After the sacrificial blood has flowed
From sable beasts. There you shall learn the tale
Of your posterity, every one, and the fortified city
That shall be granted you. But now, farewell!
For misty night has passed its turning point
And at my back I hear the panting breath
Of dawn's relentless team." Like smoke he vanished
Into the lapse of air. And Aeneas cried:
"Where are you rushing off in such a hurry?
Who are you flying from? What power denies you
To my embrace?" As he spoke he stirred the embers
Till their sleeping fires were roused, and in reverence
Prayed to the household gods of Pergamus
And the shrine of white-haired Vesta, dutifully
Offering holy meal and a full censer.

Immediately he called his comrades, calling
Acestes first and gave them an account
Of Jove's commands and his dear father's precepts
And the conclusions he himself had come to.
There was no argument: Acestes agreed

115

At once to these proposals. So they transferred
The elder women and all who wished to remain—
Ambitionless men without an itch for fame.
But the rest repaired the benches and replaced
Charred timbers in the hulls, refashioned oars
And renovated ropes, they were few in number
But each was a war-man of outstanding valor.

Meanwhile Aeneas took to the plough and cut
The city bounds and allotted sites for the houses:
This district was to be "Ilion," that one "Troy."
Acestes, loyal Trojan, was delighted
With his new subjects, chose a suitable place
For public meetings and promulgated laws
To the assembled councillors. And next
On the heights of Eryx, neighborly to the stars,
They founded for Idalian Venus a temple
Within a glade of widespread holiness,
And with a priest to tend Anchises' tomb.

And now the whole of this Trojan gathering
Had feasted for nine days and every altar
Had had its due of honor. Gentle winds
Had lulled the swell and the continual susurrs
Of the south wind enticed them towards the deep.
Then all along the winding shore there arose
A mighty weeping; in each other's arms
They lingered out the day and night—even those mothers,
Even those men, who had so lately quailed
At the sea's rough aspect and unbearable menace
Crawled now to go, and endure whatever hardships
The journey had in store. And to them Aeneas
In goodness of heart spoke words of consolation:
Commending them with tears to his kinsman Acestes.
Then he commanded the offering of three calves
To Eryx, and to the gods of Storm a lamb,
And gave the order to cast off—whilst he
With his head crowned in a wreath of close-trimmed olive
And a mixing bowl in his hand took his high place
On the prow and scattered the entrails into the waves,
And poured a shining river of pure wine.
A following wind sprang up and speeded them,
And his crews in friendly rivalry struck the water
And swept the wave-tops.

In the meanwhile Venus,
Frank with cares, unburdened herself to Neptune

116

In a flood of heart-felt complaints: "I am compelled
By Juno's implacable anger, by Juno's insatiable spirit,
To resort to any and every sort of entreaty
However humble, Neptune; no length of time
Nor pitey of men softens her heart;
She is neither curbed nor chastened by the Fates
Nor by the command of Jove: it is not enough
To have torn Troy heaving from the breast of Phrygia
In her monstrous hate, nor to have dragged the city
Through a gamut of vengeful torment—no! she pursues
The few survivors—even the bones and ashes!
Who knows but she the cause of rage so insensate?
But you yourself are my witness to the storm
She raised just lately in the Libyan sea,
The sudden mountainous waves that she reared up
To meet the lowering sky, daring to meddle
In your domain when the winds of Aeolus
Had failed her purpose. And look at her latest deed:
She has even driven our Trojan women to crime,
She has wickedly burnt our ships compelling us
To leave the crews of the lost ships behind
In a strange land. As for these last poor few
I pray you—if my prayer be valid and if
The Fates allow their walled city—let them
Sail safely over your seas and let them touch
Laurentine Tiber's mouth." Then Saturn's son,
Lord of the ocean deeps, gave utterance:
"It is entirely right, Cytherean, to place your trust
In my realm of sea, from whence you arose yourself.
I too have earned your trust—I have often calmed
The rages, the ramping madness of sea and sky.
Nor less on earth—I call to witness the Xanthus
And the Simois—has been my guardianship
Of your Aeneas. For when Achilles was hunting
The breathless Trojan ranks and crushing them
Against their walls, despatching them in thousands,
And choked with bodies the rivers moaned and the Xanthus
Could find no course to wind his way to sea,
Even then, as Aeneas confronted mighty Achilles,
Though not his equal in strength, nor in the help
He could hope from Heaven, I rustled him away
In a hollow cloud—though I myself craved
With my whole being to raze to their foundations
The walls of perjured Troy which I myself
Had built. Nor have my feelings changed one whit.
Dispel your fears: Aeneas shall safely reach

117

The port of Avernius, just as you desire,
There shall be one and only one man lost—
Nor shall the sea restore him for all your asking:
One life, one life alone shall be given for many."

These soothing words rejoiced the heart of the goddess,
Then Father Neptune yoked his mettlesome horses
With a golden yoke and put the bits between
Their champing jaws and gave them a free rein.
The sea-blue chariot plumed over the tops of the wavetops,
And the waves fell, the swelling waste of waters
Subsided under the thunder of his wheels,
The storm-clouds fled from all the firmament.
Then there appeared his manifold retinue:
The vast sea-creatures, the ancient train of Glaucus,
Palæmon son of Ino, the speedy Tritons,
The whole parade of Phorcus and on the left
Thetis and Melitè, and Panopæa the virgin;
The Nereid Neseë, Cymodoce, Thalia and Spio.

And now through the anxious mind of father Aeneas
There was suffused a comfort of bliss abounding:
He bid every mast be raised and sail be broken
On every yardarm as speedily as possible.
Then all sprang to the ropes and now on the portside
Now on the starboard ran up sail and together
Swung on the yards and favorable winds
Bore the fleet on. At the helm of the leading ship
Sat Palinurus and he set the course
For the whole convoy. And now the dewy night
Had almost reached the zenith of its darkness
And the sailors lying stretched on the hard benches
Beneath the oars relaxed their limbs in sleep,
When the Lord of Sleep slipped softly down from the stars,
Slid through the dusk and dispelled the shadows, alas,
Seeking you, Palinurus, bearing dreams
Of doom you had done nothing to deserve.
In the guise of Phorbas, the God took his place
On the high stern and so began: "Palinurus,
Iasus' son, the seas bear on the fleet,
The winds blow square astern and steadily;
This is the hour for sleep! Lay down your head;
Absent your weary eyes from working oar!
Just for a while I will take your place at the helm!
Hardly raising his eyes, Palinurus answered:
"What, me of all men, do you expect *me*"

To misread a calm? Do you really expect *me*
To trust this devil sea? Do you think I'd trust
Aeneas to this cunning calm, this cheat
Of a fair wind?—me?—they've cheated me to my sorrow
Too often before!" And he hung on to the tiller
And never relaxed his grip and kept his eyes
On the useful stars. But see! the god has taken
A branch dripping with Lethe's flood and drugged
With the properties of the Stryx and made passes
Across his brows—and luckless Palinurus
Resist as he would could not resist and closed
His drooping eyes. And scarcely had this sleep
He had never asked begun to relax his limbs,
When the god bent over him and flung his body
Headlong into the sea and he ripped off
Part of the stern and rudder which were still
Tight in his grip, but none heard him call
And call and call and call and call for help,
While the God of Sleep soared up into the air
On his light wings. And the fleet ran safely on
Over the sea in Neptune's promised surety.
And now it had sailed so far, it had reached the Rocks
Of the Sirens, hard to weather in days of old,
And while with sailors' bones, and the roar of the surf
Beat ceaselessly upon the ear from afar,
When chief Aeneas felt his ship was yawing
And found her pilot lost and took the helm
Through the midnight sea with many a bitter sigh,
His spirit scored and scarred by his friend's loss.
"O Palinurus, did you trust too well
In a calm of sea and heaven? You will lie
A naked corpse cast on an unknown shore."

BOOK VI

So he spoke and wept, and bade his fleet full sail
And at last touched on the coast of Euboean Cumae.
They turned their prows to seaward and then each ship
Made fast with its anchor fluke and the shore was lined
With the curved stems.

An eager band of youths
Leapt down to this Western shore and some of them searched
For the seeds of fire that lie deeply embedded
In veins of flint; others quartered the woods
Beating the tangled thickets for game, and marking
The streams' courses. But noble Aeneas sought
The height where great Apollo had his throne,
And the deep hidden abode of the dread Sibyl,
An enormous cave; for there the Delian prophet
Inspired in her the spiritual power
Of his own mighty mind, revealing things to be.
And, now he neared the sacred groves of Diana
And the golden temple.

The story goes that Daedalus
Fleeing the rule of Minos dared to commit
His life to the air on speedy wings and sailed
To the cold north along a way unknown
And finally lightly landed on this Euboean hilltop,
And to you, Apollo,—for the land that first received him—
He dedicated his feathery gear and built
A majestic temple. On its doors was depicted
The murder of Androgeos and thereafter
The Athenians' dreadful penance—the yearly tribute
Of seven youths—O cruel expiation!
And there was the urn from which the lois were drawn.
Opposite this on the other half of the doors
To balance it, was Crete with the town of Knossos

120

Rising out of the sea, and the animal Inst
Of the Bull, and Pasiphaë, and her stealth in love;
And there, as a horrible warning of such passions,
The dreadful offspring half-human and half-beast
The Minotaur; and there, too, was the palace
In all its grandeur, the maze none could escape from—
None, had not Daedalus taken pity on Ariadne
Because of her steadfast passion and himself
Guided the blind footsteps of her lover
With a thin clue of thread, and unraveled all
The treacherous windings of the labyrinth.
You, Icarus, too, in such a grand design
Would have had your place but for your father's grief:
Twice he tried to figure your fate in gold,
Twice the craft of his hands failed and he let them fall. . . .
They would have traced out every design in detail
Had not Achates, sent ahead, returned
That instant with Deiphobe, Glaucus' daughter,
The Priestess of Apollo and Diana.
"This is no time to gawk at pictures—come!
Separate seven bullocks never yoked
From the herd, for sacrifice and seven two-year sheep
Properly picked from the flock!" It was so she spoke
To Aeneas—(he made no delay, but obeyed her),
And so she summoned the Trojans, in her office
As priestess, to the temple on the hilltop.
One vast side of the Euboean hill had been hollowed
Into a cave—and a hundred broad tunnels
Led into it, and out of it a hundred
Voices poured out, the Sibyl's prophetic answers.
They came to the threshold and the priestess cried
"It is the time to make trial of the oracle!
Behold the god! Behold the god is here!"
As she stood at the door her mien was suddenly altered,
Her hair rose on her head, her color changed,
Her breasts heaved, she fell into a trance
She seemed to grow, she spoke in no mortal voice,
And the spirit of the god, his very breath, came nearer,
nearer . . .

"What are you doing, Aeneas man of Troy?
No offerings—no prayers—are you too lazy?
Unless you pray, the great doors of the cavern
Will never vibrate and open in holy marvel. . . ."
Then, not another word. A cold shudder
Ran through the Trojans' marrow, tough though they were,
And their Prince prayed then, with his full heart's fervor:

121

"Apollo always you fitted the plight of Troy,
 It was you who leveled Paris' bow and drew
 His Trojan arrow straight to strike Achilles,
 It was you who led me over so many oceans
 That beat against great continents, and led me to probe
 The remote Massylians, and coasts enclosed by quicksands.
 Now, we have foothold in Italy at last
 Let Troy's ill luck no longer dog our steps!
 And all you other gods and goddesses,
 Spare now the Trojan people though your eyes
 Fell foul on Troy and our too glorious glory.
 You, O most holy prophetess, foreseeing the outcome—
 And I ask no powers outside the scope of my destiny—
 Grant to my Trojans and their wandering gods,
 Our travel-stained, our storm-tossed Trojan Gods,
 A home in Latium. There will I build a temple
 Of solid marble to Apollo and The Goddess,
 The Triple One, and dedicate festival days
 In Apollo's name, and we shall raise for you
 A splendid shrine in our domains to house
 The runes and secret oracles you shall speak
 To my nation. And we shall consecrate
 Priests for your pure service. Only one thing I beg,
 Do not commit your prophecies to leaves,
 Lest they become the mock and sport of the whirl
 Of the wind. Speak with your mouth, I beg you!"
 Amen to his prayer, he closed his lips in silence.
 Meanwhile the prophetess, not yet resigned in willing
 Submission to Apollo, mowed round the huge cavern
 As if she hoped to shake off the god's grip on her being.
 Yet all the fighter did he draw the bit
 In her foaming mouth, breaking her wild heart
 And crushing her spirit, molding it to his will.
 And now of their own accord the hundred doors
 Of the shrine swung open and the inspired answers
 Were wafted through the air: "O you survivors
 Of such mighty perils by sea—(yet there are mightier
 In store on land), you sons of Dardanus
 Shall come to Lavinia's realm—upon that score
 You need have no fear—but there shall be no pleasure
 In your arrival—Woe! I see savage War
 And the Tiber seething blood! You shall not lack
 Another Simois, nor Xanthus, nor a camp
 Of Greeks. Another Achilles, and he, too, the son
 Of a goddess breathes in Latium already!
 Juno, your bane, will never be far away—

122

While you are suppliant—what city of Italy,
 What nation will not have heard your beggar's knock?
 And once again will a foreign bride be cause
 Of calamity to the Trojans—a bride, too,
 From the house of a host.
 But still you must not yield
 To affliction, but the bolder therefore go
 To meet it, in so far as your Fate allows you,
 And the first way to safety lies where you least expect it—
 From a Greek City."
 Such the oracular words.
 The Sibyl of Cumae spoke, awesome and strange,
 As the cavern loudened her voice to a roaring boom
 And the truth was wrapped in gnomic utterance.
 Such was Apollo's power on the rein as she raved,
 So deep was his spur driven into her heart.
 But when the frenzy flagged and her mouth no more
 Was possessed by madness Aeneas the hero answered:
 "O Priestess no new aspect of suffering
 Could take me by surprise—I have foreseen
 In my secret meditation every possible.
 But one thing I pray: it is told that herabouts
 Is the gate to Pluto's realm and the dark pool
 Of Acheron's overflow—may I be granted
 Passage to within sight of my dear father
 And meet him face to face. O tell me the way
 And open the holy gates. It was on these shoulders
 I rescued him from the ruck of our enemy,
 Bore him through fire and the hail of a thousand javelins.
 He was ill, he was old,—and old age should not suffer
 Such ills as he endured as my companion—
 Menaced by all that sea or sky could fling at us,
 Yet he was my companion and he bade me—
 The constant prayer he craved I should fulfill—
 To visit you and kneel before your throne.
 Pure one, I pray, take pity on father and son:
 All things are in your power: how else had Hecate
 Given you sway over the grove of Avernus?
 If Orpheus had the power to beckon back
 The ghost of his bride, by playing the Thracian lyre
 With its resonant strings—if Pollux redeemed his brother
 With his own death, in alternation passing
 So often and repassing on death's road . . .
 And what of Theseus? of Hercules? Need I go on?
 I too am a true offspring of Jove's loins."
 So he prayed, his hands fast on the altar.

123

And even while he prayed began her answer:
 "O seed of divine blood, O Trojan son of Anchises,
 The way down to Avernus is easy going—
 Night and day the door of the Dark God
 Is open wide—but to retrace your steps,
 To re-climb to the upper air: what a task, what toil!
 Some few whom Love was right to love or whose innate
 Virtues singled them out from the common run have done so.
 The way is wholly a tangle of woods and Cocytus
 Slides round in a black running noose of waters.
 If any man has such a passionate yearning
 As twice to float upon the mere of Styx,
 As twice to see the dark of Tartarus,
 If you are set upon this maniac venture,
 Listen to what is imperative first to do.
 There lies deep hidden in the shade of a tree
 A Golden Bough—both leaf and limber stem—
 Sacred to Juno of the Underworld,
 Shrouded by all the forest, in the shadow
 Of a shadowy valley. No man that has not gathered
 That sprig of gold is given leave to penetrate
 The hidden world beneath the mortal world—
 Persephone has decreed it must be borne
 To her as a proper tribute. Pluck one branch and
 Another sprouts unfailingly, as pure
 A golden twin. Keep a sharp eye, therefore,
 To espy it, and when you do, be quick to pick it—
 It will come easily, willingly, to your hand
 If yours is the call of Fate—if not, no power
 Of hand will wrench, nor blade will hack it off.
 Meanwhile, though (alas you do not know it) the lifeless
 Corpse of your friend lying unburied taints
 The whole of your fleet with the odor of death, while you
 Loiter here at my door in search of oracles.
 Bear him to his due place, raise him a tomb.
 Lead out black cattle. Let this expiation
 Be as a first step—for so will you look on
 The forests of Styx, regions where are no ways
 For living men." She spoke. She closed her lips.

124

Whose body was to be buried? As they came—
 Suddenly! there on the dry sand they saw it!
 Misenuus—son of Aeolus—Misenuus
 Whose sudden death was wholly undeserved:
 No man excelled his skill on the brazen trumpet
 To rouse men's hearts to battle by his calls;
 Henechman of great Hector, at whose side
 He faced the onset, famous for trumpet and spear.
 And after Hector was conquered by Achilles
 This most illustrious of heroes joined
 Dardan Aeneas—no less a flag to follow.
 But then by chance as he blew on a hollow shell
 And his music rang across the seas, possessed
 By mad conceit he challenged the Gods to outdo him.
 And jealous Triton, if the story is true,
 Trapped him and drowned him where the seas are a smother
 Among the rocks. So all men stood there keening
 With a great cry—Aeneas most of all.
 Without delay they followed the Stryx's orders.
 Weeping still they gathered a funeral pyre,
 Striving to pile the tree-trunks to the sky.
 They went to the ancient forest, the lairs of the beasts,
 And down crashed pine trees and the holm-oaks shuddered
 At the thud of the ax, and beams of ash and oak
 A wedge can split were split, and mighty rowans
 Rolled down the hillside. And there, of course, was Aeneas,
 Carrying tools like the rest, cheering them on.
 But in his sad heart pondering his problem,
 Surveying the vast forest, by chance arose this prayer:
 "If only that Golden Bough would reveal itself
 Somewhere in this huge welter of woods . . . for, alas,
 In what she said of you, my poor Misenuus,
 The prophetess was right—she was all too true!"
 He had hardly spoken when a pair of doves
 Chanced to come gliding down out of the sky
 Before Aeneas' very eyes and alighted
 On the green turf. Then the great hero knew
 These birds were his mother's, and prayed joyfully:
 "Lead me, you two, if there be any way,
 And through the air direct my steps to the grove
 Where, in the fruitful earth, the precious Branch
 Casts down its shadow. O my divine mother,
 Forsake me not in this my hour of need!"
 He spoke, and stopped still in his tracks to watch
 What sign they would give and where they intended to fly
 to.

125

The doves flew on, then fell, then flew again
As far as any follower could keep them just in eyeshot,
Then when they came to the jaws and stench of Avernus
Swiftly they soared and gliding through clear air
Alike together on one chosen tree,
Through whose dark branches shone a glint of gold.
As in the depth of winter-cold in the woods
The mistletoe is green with sprouting leaf,
The mistletoe that no tree seeds, that wreathes
Their trunks with its pale pearl-colored berries—so
In the evergreen-gloom of the dark ilex-tree
The leaty gold looked—so in the gentle winds
Jangled its metal foil. At once Aeneas
Eagerly pulled it down, though it withstood him,
And carried it to the prophetic Sibyl's home.

Meanwhile on the shore the Trojans bitterly weeping
Paid their last dues to Misenuus—albeit it was
Beyond his powers to thank them. First they built
A pyre high-heaped with planks of oak and resinous
With pine, and wreathed its sides with gloomy leaves
And set in front a wreath of funeral cypresses,
And piled his glittering armor on the top.
Some warmed up water in caldrons simmering
Over their fires and washed the cold dead corpse
And anointed it. And then the keen was raised,
And they laid the body on the funeral litter
And cast upon it purple robes, as is meet.
Then some raised up the bier, a sad office,
Performed according to ancestral lore
And, heads averted, held a torch to it.
The heaped pile burst ablaze,—the offerings
Of food, incense, and oil from the votive bowls.
And when the flames died down and the ash caved in,
They drenched with wine the remains and the thirsty embers,
And Corynaeus gathered together the bones
And sealed them in an urn of bronze. It was he
Who purified his comrades encircling them
Three times and sprinkling from the fertile branch
Of an olive tree pure water; finally
He intoned the last valediction over the dead.
And good Aeneas raised a huge monument
Over the place and set up the hero's arms,
His trumpet, his spear, there at the mountain's foot
Which is named Misenuus after him to this day
And keeps his memory green eternally.

126

This done he hastened to fulfill the commands of the Sibyl.
There was a vast cave with its jagged mouth
Gaping and guarded by a jet black mere—
So rank an exhalation reeked up to the sky
No bird could fly across its filthy jaws
And live.—*Aornus* the Greeks named it, "The Birdless."
Here as the first office of the sacrifice
The Sibyl stationed four black bullocks. Next
She poured wine on their foreheads and plucked out
The tufts of bristles growing between their horns
And laid them on the sacrificial flame,
As an outset of the rites, and cried aloud
To Hecate, mistress of Heaven and Hell.
Others applied the sacrificial knife
To the victims' throats and caught the still-warm blood
As it gushed in bowls. Aeneas drew his sword
And slaughtered a lamb of sable fleece in offering
To the mother of the Furies and to her mighty sister;
And, Proserpine, to you a barren cow.
Then he consecrated to the King of Skyx
His altars for the Rites of Darkness piling
Whole carcasses of bulls on the flames and pouring
Rich oil on the glowing entrails. Then behold
Before the first glimmer of the rising sun
The ground beneath their feet began to bellow,
The woods heaved tossing to the mountain tops,
And in the shadows the howling of spectral hounds
Proclaimed the goddess at hand.

"Keep off! keep off!
Whoever is unhallowed!" shrieked the priestess,
"Keep clear from the whole grove! You, Aeneas,
Step forth upon your way! Draw your sword from the scabbard!
Now is the time for courage, now for a steadfast heart!"
In very ecstasy she flung herself
Into the cavern's mouth. Without a falter
He followed in her footsteps pace for pace.
You gods whose sway is over the silent Shades,
You Souls, and Chaos, and you Phlegethon, river
Of rippling fire, and Night's broad still savannas,
Grant me the gift to speak without taint or flaw
What I have heard, and with your divine favor
Reveal things hidden deep in the dark of the earth!
On they went in the dark, their shadowy way,
The night aloof above them, through Pluto's void
Vacant dominion, through its lifeless homes—

127

It was like making way through a wood by the mean
Light of a fitful moon when almighty Jove
Has shrouded the sky with cloud, and black night sucked
All color out. And there was the very threshold,
The very mouth of Hell where Agony
And the Ache of Remorse had laid their beds: there—
O horrifying sights!—Jay wan Diseases,
Unhappy Old Age, Fear, Hunger-that-gods-to-Evil,
Despicable Want, and Suffering and Death;
There Sleep, own-brother of Death, and Joy-in-Guilt,
And on the threshold of Death its herald War.
There were the iron cells of the Furies, there
Was Raving Revolution, her snake-locks
Bound with a bloodstained ribbon.

In the midst
There stood an elm, enormous in its shade,
Ancient and branchy, where, so the legend goes,
False dreams cling clutched under every leaf.
And there besides are many shapes of monster,
Centaur stabled, Scyllas half-beast half-man,
Briareus, hundred-handed, Lerna's Hydra
Hissing horribly, the Chimæra armed with flame,
Gorgons and Harpies, and the three-bodied ghost
Of Geryon. Suddenly seized with dread, Aeneas
Unsheathed his sword and poised the naked blade
To counter any attack—but his companion
Of her own deeper knowledge acquainted him
That these were bodiless forms that fitted empty
Of substance—or he would have run upon them
Lunging at mere shadows, thrusting to no purpose.
From here the road led to the Tartarean waters
Of Acheron. Here seethed the whirlpool in its deep
Abyss of filth disgorging all its waste
Into Cocytus. Here was the hideous Charon,
The keeper of this ford, revoltingly dirty,
A matted straggle of white beard on his chin,
His eyes glaring, a disgusting cloak
Knotted and dangling from his shoulder—as he poled
His ferry or trimmed the sails, and himself heaved over
The dead-weight of the dead in his dusky barge.
An old man—but a god with a god's evergreen age.
Towards him a whole multitude came flooding,
Pouring towards the bank—mothers, and heroes
Whose deeds of bodily prowess in life were done,
Boys and unwedded girls; and young men laid
On the funeral pyre before their parents' eyes,

As many as the leaves that droop and fall
When the first frost of autumn shivers the woods,
Or as the birds that flock in from the deep
And cluster upon the shore when the winter drives them
Over the sea to roost in more clement air—
So they stood begging Charon to take them first,
But the glum ferryman picked now these, now those,
And fended others, barring them from the brink.
Aeneas indeed distressed and puzzled by this tumult
Cried to the virgin priestess, "Tell me the meaning
Of this gathering to the stream? What seek these spirits?
What choice decides who shall withdraw from the bank,
While some are rowed over these leaden waters?"
The ancient prophetess briefly made answer:
"Son of Anchises, scion assuredly
Of a God, you see the deep still pools of Cocytus,
And the Marsh of Styx, and if the gods swear
By this dread Power they dare not break their bond
All this concourse are helpless because unburied:
Charon is Warden here—he only conveys the buried.
It is forbidden him to give any passage
From the dread shores and across the gury swirling
Before their bones have found a resting place.
For a hundred years they are doomed to swither here
Hovering on this brink and then at last
They are let embark and see in truth these waters
They have longed so long to cross."

The son of Anchises halted in his tracks
And meditated deeply, his mind moved
To pity at the unequal fates of men.
For there he saw Leucaspis and Orontes
The captain of his Lycian ships—and both
Had sailed with him from Troy over the stormy waters,
But a gale from the south caught them, capsized their ship
And down to the bottom she went—lost with all hands.
And there was Palinurus one of his helmsmen.
It was not long since, on the voyage from Libya,
While he was plotting his course by observing the constella-
tions
That he fell overboard from the tiller into the deep.
In such dark shadows to recognize anyone
Was hardly possible but Aeneas recognized
Palinurus, first of the two of them, and addressed him:
"Palinurus, what god was it snatched you from us
And drowned you in mid-ocean? Tell me, Apollo
Never deceived me, but this is the one time

It seems his oracle lied: Did he not promise
 You would safely cross the sea and land in Italy?
 Is this how he kept his promise?" Palinurus
 Answered him then, "O Lord of Anchises' line
 Apollo's oracle never was false, no god
 Drowned me—it was an accident; my fault.
 I was at the helm, my proper place, and suddenly
 I wrenched the stern post and the tiller with it
 Clean out—we peeled off suddenly over the side,
 And that was that—I was far more concerned
 For the safety of your ship without a helm,
 Without a helmsman, than with what rising seas
 Could do to me, and the sea was rising steeply.
 Three nights the gale blew southerly and I bobbed
 On mountainous seas of storm; and then at dawn
 On the fourth day I sighted Italy
 From a wave crest, and little by little I paddled
 In to the shore—I should have been safe then,
 Sudden as I was, but a party of wreckers seized me
 As I was scrabbling at the first cliff-edge,
 Supposing I was something worth. And so
 The sea has got my bones and the winds play
 The shore for the fotsam and jetsam of me. Please,
 By the light of happy heaven, by the air you breathe,
 By all your hope for your son as he grows up
 O unconquered one, rescue me from these evils—
 (The gods are with you, or you could not now
 Attempt to cross the Stygian Marsh, these breadths
 Of mighty waters, I know it.) If there's a way,
 If your divine mother can show you the way,
 Give your poor comrade your right hand and conduct him
 Across the stream and release him from his misery
 And let him rest at last in death, in a calm repose."
 These were his words and to him the prophetic answered—
 "Palinurus! How dare you be so impertinent!
 Why should you, you unhurled as you are,
 See the dread flow of the Styx, the Furies' forgiveless river?
 Why should you come to the bank before your time?
 The ordinances of Gods are not to be swayed by prayers,
 But listen to me and comfort yourself with this:
 Far and wide through the cities, divine revelations
 Shall cause your bones to be revered as holy:
 They shall build you a monument, they shall year by year
 Perform rites in your honor for evermore,
 And the place shall have the name of Palinurus."
 These words brought balm to the grief of his heart,

The pain was assuaged in a little while—he delighted
 In thinking a site would always bear his name.
 So on they went and neared the river, and Charon
 Who had seen them from aloft as they scrambled through
 The silent grove and approached the river bank,
 Challenged them sharply before they could utter a word:
 "Whoever you are who come in arms to my river
 Stay where you are, halt and speak from there.
 This is the place of Shadows, of sleep-inducing Night,
 It is forbidden to ferry the living across the Styx.
 I have no pleasant memories of conveying
 Hercules over these waters, nor Theseus nor Pirithous,
 Sons of gods though they were, unconquerably strong.
 One came to kidnap from under the very throne
 Of Pluto his watchdog Cerberus and drag him off
 Trembling upon a chain; the other two
 Tried to abduct Persephone from the very
 Bridal bed of King Pluto!"—and the priestess
 Of Apollo gave brief answer, "Have no fear;
 We are not here to deceive you—nor do we bear
 Our arms to attack a soul; the vast bulk
 Of your gate-guard is safe—he can howl for ever
 And make the silvers of shadowy ghosts shiver—
 Faithful Persephone is safe—she need not
 Bar any door of her homestead. Trojan Aeneas,
 Famed for his feats of arms, as famed for his piety,
 Has come to the depths of the darkness of Erebus
 To seek his father. If such great piety
 Makes no impression upon you—let this branch—
 (It was hidden under her robe—now, she produced it).
 This you must recognize!" He said nothing more
 But fixed his gaze in awe on the holy offering,
 That fateful Bough before his eyes again
 After so long a lapse of time. Stern first
 He maneuvered his dark boat in towards the bank.
 Then he shooed out those spirits who already
 Were sitting upon the benches, cleared the gangways,
 And straight away took the bulk of Aeneas on board.
 Under his weight the seams gaped open, she sprang
 A leak and shipped a deal of mud and water;
 But in the end they crossed the river safely
 And Charon disembarked the hero and the priestess
 Safely upon the sludge and the gray rushes.
 This was the region which huge Cerberus
 Made echo with his three-fold howling throat
 Slumping his vast length all across the cave-mouth.

Seeing the snakes on his neck beginning to rear,
The prophetess tossed him a scrap of food—doped
With honey and drugged corn. And the famished brute
Snapped it up slavered with his triple jaws
And settled his huge back and stretched his length
Along the floor of the cave. Aeneas seized
His chance as the monster lay unconscious and quickly
carried

The entrance and put safe behind him the waters
Of no return. And immediately was heard
A crying—the vast wailing of infant souls
There in the very portal, snatched away
On a black death-day from their mother's breasts
Before they had tasted the sweet of life, doomed
To bitter death. And next to them the souls
Delivered to death on perjured evidence:
But here their place was not without appeal,
For Minos sits on judgment with a jury
Chosen by lot and bids the silent gathering
Listen to evidence of their lives and the charges
Preferred against them. Then next in their place
Were the grievous souls who committed suicide,
Though guiltless, in sheer hatred of the dayspring
Casting themselves away. How willingly now
They would bear every pain of poverty, every
Impost of toil in the bright air above!
Not far from here extending on every side
Were to be seen the Mourning Fields—for so
They were called, and here among secret paths and
Amid the seclusion of a wood of myrtles
Dwell those whom wasting love in its grim cruelty
Has brought to death—and even in death their sorrows
Do not loose their hold of them—and in this place,
Aeneas saw Phaedra, Procris, and grieving Eriphyle
Displaying still the wounds inflicted on her
By her brutal son; Evadne he saw, Pasiphaë,
And with them Laodamia, and there was Caeneus—
A young man for a while, but now a nymph restored
By the turn of fate to her original sex.
Among them wandering in the mighty wood
Was Dido the Phoenician her death-wound still
Livid upon her—and when the Trojan hero
Found he was near beside her and through dim shadows
Just recognized her (as a man might think
He sees or seems to see a young moon rising
Through banks of cloud), the tears rose to his eyes,

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And in soft loving tones he said to her:
"O Dido, unhappy one, was the story true
That was brought to me? They told me you had bidden
A sword conduct you to journey's end—and I—
Was I the cause of that? I swear by the stars,
By the Gods above, by whatever there is true
In the earth beneath to its deepest depth, I swear
It was not of my own desire I left your land.
O Queen, it was the inexorable bidding of heaven
Which now has forced me to explore this wilderness
Of Darkness here, driving me through deep night
And dank decay—what could I do but obey?
How could I know my leaving you would cause
Such a paroxysm of grief? Oh stay your steps!
Do not withdraw yourself from my sight I beg you!
Whom do you fly from? I—these are the last
Words I shall ever speak to you; fate allows me
No more. . . ." Aeneas yearned to appease her inflexible fury,
And to induce her tears. But she, with her head averted,
And eyes fixed on the ground, was starkly adamant.
His pleading overtures moved her no more
Than had she been a flint or a block of marble.
At length she flung herself away and fled
Into the shadowy wood, implacable still,
And there, Sychaeus, her husband at the first,
Comforted her distress and gave her love for love.
Aeneas, none the less, shocked by her unjust fate
Followed her far, weeping, and pitied her as she went.
Thereafter he bent his utmost to the journey.

Already they were approaching those farthest acres,
Those final fields where only the great war-heroes
Had their preservers. Here Tydeus ran to meet him,
Parthenopaeus famous in arms, and the pallid
Shade of Adrastus, here the Dardanids,
Fallen in battle and deeply mourned in the world,
And now as he saw them here in their long ranks
He grieved aloud—Glaucus, Therislochus, Medon,
The three sons of Antenor, Polyphoetes
The priest of Ceres, and Idaeus still
Handfast to his armor and his chariot.
These spirits thronged around him, left and right,
Nor was one look enough for them; they delighted
To linger with him step by step and discover
The reason for his coming. But when the Greeks,
Agamemnon's chiefs, and their massed followers

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Saw the great hero in his glittering armor
 Stride through the shades, they were convulsed with terror.
 Some turned tail, as once towards their ships,
 Some tried to raise a war-cry—but it died
 Into a whimper, their mouths silently gaping.
 And then he saw Deiphobus son of Priam,
 His white body a mangled shambles; his face,
 Both arms, his ears shorn from his head, his nostrils
 Silt with a horrible wound—he scarcely knew him
 As he covered away to hide this ghastly vengeance.
 But Aeneas addressed him in the voice he knew:
 ‘Deiphobus, great warrior, born of the blood of Teucer,
 Who was it craved to inflict so brutal a vengeance?
 Who was allowed such a power over you?
 On that last night the report of you I heard
 Was that you sank down spent on a heap of bodies,
 Worn out with slaughtering Greeks. Then I myself
 Built on the Rhoecean shore an empty tomb,
 And loudly called three times upon your spirit—
 Your name and your arms are there to keep the place
 In memory warm—but you yourself, my friend
 I could not see nor lay your body to rest
 In our native earth—the land I was forced to flee.”
 And the son of Priam answered, “You, my friend,
 Left nothing undone—everything that was owed
 To me or my shade, you have paid it in due order.
 It was my own Destiny and the deadly
 Wickedness of Helen that engulfed me
 In this disaster—It is she that has left
 These tokens of her love—you know yourself
 How that last night was spent in false rejoicing:
 One cannot but remember—with good reason—
 When at one leap the Fateful Horse surmounted
 The heights of our citadel, its womb heavy
 With infantry full-armed, and she pretending
 To lead a ritual dance ramped through the city
 With a band of Trojan women in Bacchic frenzy
 And, in their midst, held high a mighty firebrand
 And from the top of the citadel summoned the Greeks.
 But as for me, worn out with cares and sunk
 In heavy sleep in our luckless bridal chamber
 I lay and a sweet deep calm came over me
 Most like the peace of death. But in the meanwhile
 My splendid wife—she even had extracted
 My trusty sword from under my own pillow—
 Summoned Menelaus into the house and

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Flung open the door—hoping, I have no doubt,
 That doing such a favor to her lover
 Would soften his heart and erase the memory
 Of all her evil misdeeds. But why should I
 Drag out the story? Into the room they burst,
 Ulysses with them instigator as ever
 Of all things evil. O Gods, if the lips that pray
 For retribution are pure, requite the Greeks
 With equal barbarities!
 But tell me, Aeneas,
 What chance has brought you living to this place?
 Did you lose your bearing at sea? Or have you come
 At the behest of heaven? Or what dire fortune
 Has driven you to visit these sad sunless halls,
 This place of confusion?”
 As they were thus engrossed,
 The goddess of dawn in her rose-colored chariot
 Had passed the zenith of her heavenly course,
 And maybe in such talk they would have spent
 The whole of their allotted time but the Sibyl
 Upraided her companion curty and said:
 “Night falls fast, Aeneas: yet we pass the time in weeping.
 This is the spot where the road forks into two:
 The right-hand path under the battlements
 Of mighty Pluto—there lies my own way to Elysium.
 But the left-hand path leads evil men to Tartarus
 And the exaction of due punishments.”
 Deiphobus answered: “Do not rage, great priestess,
 I shall depart now and take my place again,
 Back in the dark. But you Aeneas, go—
 Our nation’s glory—go on your way—go
 And may Fate treat you better than I was treated.”
 Speaking these final words he turned and went.
 Aeneas looked about and suddenly saw
 At the foot of a crag to his left wide battlements
 Battered by a triple wall and round the wall
 In cataracts of flame the Phlegethon,
 River of Tartarus, roared and tumbled its tumbling boulders.
 To the fore was a huge gate with columns of adamant
 So strong no mortal force nor the embattled
 Gods of heaven themselves could root them up.
 Up in the air there rose one iron tower
 And there Tisiphone sat, wrapped in a mantle
 Sudden with blood, and sleepless guarded the courtyard
 Day-and-night-long. And from within were heard

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Deep groans and the savage crack of whips and the rattle
Of metal from dragging shackles. Aeneas stopped,
Horrified with this din, and asked: "O priestess,
What manner of crimes have men committed, tell me,
And with what punishments are they expiated?"
Why these appalling howls that rise to heaven?"
Then answered she: "Illustrious leader from Troy,
It is forbidden to an upright man
To cross that threshold, but when Hecate
Gave me authority over the groves of Avernus
She led me through all these regions and herself
Explained to me the punishments of Heaven.
Rhadamanthus of Krossos rules this place
With an iron hand: hearing each case of deceit
And fifty condemning it he compels each victim
To confess to the gods those crimes whose expiation
They had postponed in life—in their fatuous self-
congratulation at having concealed them—and death came.
And it was too late. And in a flash Tisiphone
The torturer has pounced on the criminal
Whirling her scourge in her right and in her left hand
Brandishing a tangle of snakes and calling
The savage horde of her sisterhood . . . Look! Look!
(With a creak of hinges that struck terror to the soul
The sacred gates were swinging open) Do you see
What manner of sentry guards the courtyard? What shape
Keeps safe the threshold? Inside there sits a Hydra,
A monster fiercer far with fifty throats
Hungriily gaping. Then there is the abyss
Of Tartarus itself falling sheer to the darkness
Twice as far as an upward-looking eye
Can see from earth to heaven.

And down there
In the uttermost depths flung down by a thunderbolt
Valow that ancient race, the Titans, born of the earth.
And here I saw the twin sons of Aioeus,
Fuge giants who with their own hands had tried
To pull down the vault of heaven and dispossess
Almighty Jove of his kingdom. And I saw
Salmoenus suffering cruel punishment:
He had counterfeited the thunder of Olympus:
Driving four horses, flourishing a torch,
He went through the tribes of the Greeks, he went
Through the midst of the city of Elis in a triumph
Demanding the homage only a god should have,—
Mad!—If he thought that he could counterfeit

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With a rattle of brass and the beat of hoary hooves
The storm-cloud, the indomitable bolt.
But the Almighty Father hurried his own
Bolt from the core of his clouds—it was no wispy,
No smoky brand, and hurried him headlong down
On the wings of a whirlwind.

And there to be seen
Was Tityos, child of the all-fostering Earth
Whose body lies stretched over nine acres
And a great vulture with its hooked beak plucks
At his undying liver, and gripes his entrails,
Rich source of agony, mingling its every meal
From his deep heart perpetually and giving
No respite to the ever-renewing sinew.
Why call to mind Ixion, Pirithous, or the Lapiths
Over whom towers a dark crag in the split
Second of ever-falling. Or tell of the banquetts,
The luscious fare piled on the banquetting tables
With props of gold—but there at the head crouches
The chiefest of the Furies and bars their hands
From touching a crumb but leaps up clutching a torch
And shrieking with all her might.

And here are those
Who in their lives detested their own brothers;
Who struck their parents; inveigled relatives
Into deceit; who grew rich and became
Misers and gloated alone, and never shared
A piece with their dependants—(these were the most),
Adulterers killed for their crimes, traitors in war
Betraying their masters without fear or shame:
All are penned here, to await their punishments.
Ask now what punishment, what form of doom,
Must overwhelm these men in their grim destiny.
Some roll huge stones, others spreaddeagled hang
From the spokes of a wheel; Theseus sits in despair
And so will sit for ever. From the depth
Of his misery Phlegyas moans his message loudly
Through all the shades. "Be warned! Learn to be righteous
And do not despise the gods! And here is a man
Who sold his country for gold, and let in a dictator;
—This man could be bribed to make or unmake laws
—This one committed incest with his daughter—
All of them dared some hideous crime and did it.
Why, if I had a hundred tongues and mouths
And a voice of iron I could not complete the list
Of every crime, and name each punishment."

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The ancient priestess ceased—and then she added,
“Come now, you must move on, you must fulfill
Your chosen duty—we must quicken our steps—
I see the ramparts forged in the Cyclops’ furnace
And in that archway standing opposite
Is the spot divinely ordained for us to set
Our offering.” Then step for step they traversed
The dim-lit way between, and came to the door.
Aeneas gained the entrance, sprinkled his body
With pure spring-water and fixed the Golden Bough
Upright upon the threshold.

So all was duly done,
Her rites performed for the Goddess, and at last
They reached the realms of Joy, the green delights
Of the Groves of Bliss, and the Halls of the Blessed.
Here, a fuller air envelops the plains
In a glittering sheen—and the blessed beheld a sun
And stars which shine for ever for them alone.
Some of these spirits flex their immortal limbs
In the grassy wrestling-ring, for the sheer sport,
Or throw each other in the saffron sand;
Others chant songs or beat out with their feet
The rhythms of choric dance. And there is Orpheus,
The Priest of Thrace in his long robe, on the lyre
Tuning its seven notes in time to the measure,
Now with his fingers, now with an ivory plectrum.
Here is the ancient lineage of Teucer,
Most comely family, heroes of high courage
Born in happier times: Ilus, Assaracus,
And Dardanus founder of Troy. From afar Aeneas
Gazed in wonder at these heroes’ armor
And idle chariots: their spears standing
Rooted in earth, and everywhere their horses
Loosed to graze in freedom over the plain.
All the delight they took, when living, in their armor,
Their chariots and their horses, their grooming and feeding—
All this delight went with them under the earth.
Then, lo, Aeneas looked to left and to right
Where other spirits feasted upon the grass
And sang in chorus hymns of joy. In a grove
Of scented bay they were, whence the full flood
Of the river Eridanus wound its forest way
To the upper world.

Here was the band of those
Who suffered wounds in war for the fatherland;
Of those who were chaste priests, in earthly life;

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Of those who were faithful prophets, whose utterance
Was worthy Apollo’s ear; there were those who had
Embellished life by the skill of their inventions;
Those called to mind by many for acts of grace;
And round their brows all wore a snow-white wreath
And as they crowded about her the Sibyl addressed
Musesus, for he stood out in their midst,
Head and shoulders above the crowd, and seemed
Their spokesman. “Tell us dear spirits, tell us,
O best of poets, in what part, what place,
Does Anchises dwell? It is to visit him
That we have crossed the flood of Erebus.”
Briefly the hero answered her: “No one here
Has one fixed dwelling—we consort in the shade
Of the groves, on the moss-soft river banks;
We live in the meadows sweetened by little streams,
But, if it be your pleasure, climb to this hill
And I can set you on an easy pathway.”
So saying he went ahead and from the crest
Showed them a glistening land below, and down
From the crest they clambered.

Now at this time Anchises,
Deep in a green valley, was surveying
With fatherly fond scrutiny the souls
Confined there with him, soon to make their way
To the light of day again—and as it so happened
Reviewing the whole strength of his own clan,
His dear posterity, their fates and fortunes,
Their bearing and their deeds. And when he saw
Aeneas coming towards him over the meadow
He opened his arms to him eagerly, the tears
Coursed down his cheeks and he cried out—“At last!
Have you come? Has your steadfast faith surmounted
The perils of the journey? I knew you would
Fulfill your father’s hope, O my son, and I truly
Let look upon your face and hear your voice
And talk with you? Why, in my own mind
That was indeed what I reckoned—calculating
The passage of time, nor have I been deceived
For my pains—You are here, my son—after what perils
By land and seal Oh sport of what terrible dangers!
How fearful I was the Libyan powers might harm you!”
Aeneas answered, “Father, it was you—
Your grief-engendering spirit time and again
Appeared to me and constrained me to make my way
To the edge of this world. My fleet rides safe at anchor

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In the Euruscan sea. Oh father, your hand—
Give me, give me your hand to clasp in mine!
Do not draw back from my embrace!" The tears
Streamed down his face as he spoke. Three times he tried
To fling his arms round that dear neck, three times
The spirit melted from his hands
That clutched in vain, like the wind's breath it was
Or the swift dissolution of a dream.
And now Aeneas saw at the remote vale-head
A hidden grove and woodland-rustling spinneys,
And saw the River Lethe as it flowed
By these abodes of peace. And round about it
Hovered the souls of countless tribes and peoples
Like bees in the fields of a fine summeride
Fitting from flower to flower and everywhere
White lilies grow and the whole plain is humming.
Amazed at the sudden sight benumbed Aeneas
Asked what it meant, what were those distant waters
And who the mass that clustered on the banks.
"They are the souls," answered his father Anchises,
"Whose destiny it is a second time
To live in the flesh and there by the waters of Lethe
They drink the draught that sets them free from care
And blots out memory.

For a long time
It has been my wish to tell you about these souls
And to parade them before your very eyes,
And number them, the inheritors of my blood,
And now that you have landed in Italy,
Rejoice with me the more."

—"But father, truly,
Am I to believe that any of these souls
Go hence to the upper air and again put on
The shackles of flesh? How could such an insane
Lust for the light delude these unhappy creatures?"
"Son, I will tell you and put your mind at rest."
Anchises then began his exposition:

"In the beginning know that heaven and earth,
The river plains, the glittering orb of the moon,
And the Titanic stars were animated
By a Spirit within, and a Mind interfused
Through every fiber of the universe
Gave vital impulse to its mighty form.
From these there spring the races of men and beasts,
The birds that fly, and all the strange shapes of creatures

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The sea beings forth beneath its marbled surface.
Their life-force is drawn from fire, their creative seeds
Are of heavenly source, except as they are clogged
By the corrupting flesh, and dulled by their earthly
Habitations, and limbs imbued with death.
From these derive our fears and our desires,
Our grief and joy, nor can we compass the whole
Aura of heaven shut as we are in the prison
Of the unseeing flesh. And furthermore,
When on the last day we are lost to the light,
We do not shed away all evil or all the ills
The body has bequeathed to us poor wretches,
For many flaws cannot but be ingrained
And must have grown hard through all our length of days.
Therefore we souls are trained with punishment
And pay with suffering for old felonies—
Some are hung up helpless to the winds;
The stain of sin is cleansed for others of us
In the trough of a huge whirlpool; or with fire
Burned out of us—each one of us we suffer
The afterworld we deserve: and from thence are sent
Through wide Elysium, and some few maintain
Ourselves in the Fields of Bliss, until length of days
When time has come full circle, cleanses us
To corruption's very core and leaves a pure
Element of perception, a spark of the primal fire.
After the cycle of a thousand years
God summons all these in a great procession
To the waters of Lethe, so that when they visit
The sky-encircled earth, being bereft
Of memory, they may begin to want
The body on again."

So spoke Anchises
And he led his son and the Sibyl both together
Into the midst of the chattering throng and took
His stand on a mound from which he could review
The whole of that long line and recognize
Each passing face.

"Come then, I shall show you the whole span
Of your destiny, I shall make manifest
What glory lies in store for the seed of Dardanus,
And what posterity, Italian-born,
Your blood shall fill, illustrious spirits all,
And heirs-to-be of our name. Do you see that youth
Leaning upon his yet unpointed spear?"

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Nearest he is to the light of day—so the lot
 Has chosen—he will be the first to rise
 To upper air with Italian blood in his veins—
 His name is Silvius, an Alban name,
 He is your son—to be born after your death—
 Your wife Lavinia late in her life will rear him
 Out in the woods, a king and father of kings:
 Our ruling house in Alba Longa traces
 Its origin from him. Then next is Procas
 The pride of the Trojan people; then Capys; Numinor;
 Then Silvius Aeneas, bringing your name
 Back into use, and equally distinguished
 In piety and warfare, if ever he shall sit
 On Alba's throne—O look what splendid youths!
 What strength of build—see how their brows are shaded
 With circures of the civic oak-leaf? They
 Shall build Nomentum for you and Gabii,
 Fidenæ's city and the mountain fortress
 Of Collatia; they shall build you Pometi
 And Inuus, Bola and Cora, with their camps.
 These sites are nameless—they shall give them names,
 And Romulus, too, the son of Mars shall come,
 His grandfather at his side—that Romulus
 Sprung from the blood of Assaracus, and his mother
 Is to be Ilæa, named from Troy and she
 Is to bring him up—do you see the double plumes
 That start from his helmet?—see how even now
 He is marked out by his divine father,
 With his own emblem, for the Upper World?
 Behold, my son! Under his tutelage
 Our glorious Rome shall rule the whole wide world,
 Her spirit shall match the spirit of the gods;
 Round seven citadels shall she build her walls;
 In her breed of heroes blest—as the goddess Cybele,
 Charioted and wearing a towered crown,
 Parades through the cities of Phrygia rejoicing
 In all her brood of gods, her hundred grandsons
 All heaven-dwellers, holders of the heights!
 Now turn the gaze of your eyes this way—look!
 Look at this people, your own Roman people.
 Here is Caesar and all Iulus' line,
 Destined to pass beneath the great arch of the sky;
 Here is the very man whom you have heard
 So often promised you, Augustus Caesar,
 Your child of the Divine who shall refound
 A golden age for Latium—in those lands,

Those very lands where Saturn once was king,
 Who shall extend the frontier of our title
 Beyond the Garamanians and the Indians
 (A land that lies outside the track of stars,
 Outside the course of the year and of the sun,
 Where Atlas the sky-bearer humps on his shoulder
 The spinning pole of the world with its inlay
 Of blazing constellations). And even now,
 In expectation of his coming, the realm
 Of Caspia quakes and the regions round Mæotis
 Quiver in fear of the prophetic of the Gods,
 And at the sevenfold mouth of the river Nile
 A welter of confusion seethes.

Indeed,
 Not even Hercules covered so much of the world
 Although he shot the brazen-footed deer
 And brought peace to the Erymanthan forest
 And intimidated Lerna with his bow.
 No, nor Bacchus when in triumph he drove
 His tigers in a harness of vine tendrils
 Down from the heights of Nysa.

Then shall we
 Still hesitate to prove our worth in deeds?
 Shall fear prevent our setting a firm foot
 On Italian soil? But who is that in the distance,
 On his head a wreath of olive and in his hand
 The sacred vessels? I know by his white locks
 And snowy beard he is that King of Rome
 Who first shall base the city on firm foundations
 Of Law—from little Cures called, from its barren
 Fields, to supreme authority. And next
 Tullus doomed to disrupt his country's peace
 And rouse to battle warriors grown torpid
 And columns lost to the habit of the triumphal march.
 Next follows the braggart Ancus—why even now
 He is far too pleased at catching the popular favor—
 But do you wish to see the line of the Tarquins?
 Or the proud spirit of Brutus the avenger
 And the fasces he won back? He shall be first
 To assume a consul's power, the cruel axes,
 And in the sweet name of liberty put to death
 (Unhappy father) his own sons when they raised
 The standard of new revolt: whatever is said
 About these deeds in after times—that victory
 Is love's—a patriot's love and a measureless passion
 For acclamation. But see, there in the distance,

The Drusi and the Decii and Torquatus
 Ruthless in wielding the ax and Camillus too
 Who retrieved the standards. But those spirits, there,
 Whom you see clad alike in glittering armor—
 In harmony, now, and so long as this dark confines them—
 But oh! if ever they come to live, alas,
 How huge a war will they wage against each other,
 What hosts of men! What heaps of dead! Caesar
 Selling from the ramparts of the Alps
 And the fort of Monœcus, Pompey his son-in-law
 With the whole force of the East disposed to meet him.
 Children, O children, never submit your minds
 To become injured to such appalling wars,
 Nor turn the sterling strength of your fatherland
 To stab its very vitals—you be the first
 In mercy, you who trace your line from Olympus
 And have my blood in your veins—cast down your weapons!
 —That man there, shall drive his chariot in triumph
 To the high Capitol of defeated Corinth
 After a memorable massacre of Greeks.
 He, there, shall raze Argos and Agamemnon's
 Own city Mycenæ, and kill that Aæcid
 Whose blood is the blood of Achilles in battle,
 Avenging his Trojan forbears and Minerva's
 Polluted temple. And who would leave you, Cato,
 Without an admiring word, or you Cossus?
 Or the house of Gracchus? or those twin bolts of war
 The Scipios, the scourge of Africa?
 Or Fabricius powerful in poverty? Or Serranus
 Sowing seed in his furrows. And where, you Fabii,
 Do you foret my weary way? You, Maximus,
 The one man with the power to save who saved
 The State by your wise policy of delay.
 And there are others, assuredly I believe,
 Shall work in bronze more sensitively molding
 Breathing images, or carving from the marble
 More lifelike features; some shall plead more eloquently,
 Or gauging with instruments the sky's motion
 Forecast the rising of the constellations:
 But yours, my Roman, is the gift of government,
 That is your bent—to impose upon the nations
 The code of peace; to be clement to the conquered,
 But utterly to crush the intransigent!"

So spoke father Anchises and while they wondered he added,
 "See how Marcellus advances, wearing his General's trophies,

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A conductor towering over all his troops,
 And when the state of Rome is rocked by rebellion
 He shall restore order; his charger's hoof shall
 Trample the Carthaginian, the risen Gaul,
 And for the third time he shall dedicate
 The captured suit of armor to Quirinus."
 —Here interjected Aeneas, for he saw
 Beside Marcellus walked a beautiful youth
 In gleaming armor, yet with downcast eyes
 And little joy in his visage—"Tell me, father,
 Who is his young companion—is it his son
 Or one of the great line of his descendants?
 What presence he has, how loud the hum of approval
 Among his followers! Yet his head is veiled
 In a drear cloud as black as night!" Anchises,
 His father, answered through a flood of tears:
 "My son do not inquire of the great grief of your people,
 The fates allow the world to catch but a glimpse of him
 And then no more. Oh Powers of Heaven, the power
 Of Rome would have seemed too strong had such a gift
 Been theirs to keep. How the whole field of Mars
 Shall ring to his own great cry the weeping of warriors!
 Tiber, what funeral rites what a tomb you will see
 New-buit as you glide by! No other boy
 Of the Ilian breed shall raise so high the hopes
 Of his Latin ancestors, never again
 Shall the Land of Romulus take such a pride
 In any son she bears! Oh weep for his pley!
 His faith like the faith of old! His invincible valor!
 None could have brooked him in battle whether on foot
 His onset, or driving the spur into his foaming charger.
 Ah piteous boy! if there were any hope
 Of bursting the bands of fate, you would be Marcellus. . . .
 Bring lilies by the handful—let me strew
 Bright wreaths of flowers and do his soul what honor
 A grand sire may—an ineffectual office. . . ."

And so they wandered far and wide on the plain
 In the shining air and marked all that was there.
 Sleep has two gates they say: one is of Horn
 And spirits of Truth find easy exit there,
 The other is perfectly wrought of glistening Ivory,
 But from it the Shades send false dreams up to the world
 And it is from this Ivory Gate that Anchises,
 Now he had finished speaking, sped his son and the Sibyl.

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