

OVID METAMORPHOSES XII

His father Priam mourned for him, although
That he'd become a bird he did not know.
Then also Hector and his brothers made
An unavailing sacrifice and laid
A tomb down for him. There was only one
Who was not with them – Paris. For that son
Would bring a ravished wife to Troy, who'd be
The cause of fell war, and an argosy
Of countless ships and all the Grecian nation.
Fierce storms prevented swift retaliation 10
And held the ships at Aulis. There they planned
A sacrifice, a custom of their land,
To Jove, the god of all, and, as a flame
Glowed from the ancient altar, thither came
A blue snake that ascended a plane tree
Just as they started their solemnity.
Up high there was a nest in which there lay
Eight nestlings which it seized on as its prey,
Their mother, too, who fluttered desperately,
And Calchas saw this as an augury: 20
“O warriors, we will conquer Ilion,
Although the toil of war will carry on
For nine long years as these nine birds attest.”
And then the serpent, coiled about the nest,
Became a crooked stone. But still the sea
Raged on and every ship was stationary.
Some said that Neptune thus was bringing aid
To Troy because its massive walls were made
By him. But Calchas knew the truth and he
Told them in certain terms his prophecy - 30
A virgin's blood alone would terminate
A virgin goddess' wrath. His voice, though late,
Prevailed and so at last a monarch's role,
That they might reach a consequential goal,
Proved stronger than paternal love. When they
Ushered Iphigeneia that she may
Be sacrificed, her handmaids stood around
The altar and let out a keening sound.
The goddess, pitying the maiden, spread
A mist before their eyes, and, it is said, 40
She substituted for the maid a hind
And, as was right, Diana's rage declined
And then she calmed the anger of the sea,
The winds now urging on the argosy
To Troy. There is a place between the sky
And sea and land where anyone may spy
All things existing, whether far or near,

And any sound at all a man may hear.
 Rumour lives there in a tower which aids her view,
 And she has fixed there numerous openings, too. 50
 There are no doors – it's open night and day.
 All's bronze, and anything that one might say
 Is echoed, and there is a rustling sound:
 There is no peace, no silence can be found.
 Yet there's no clamour, just the murmuring
 Of voices, as though they were surfacing
 Above the waves, or something like the way
 A thunderclap may sound from far away.
 A crowd of fickle people congregate
 Thither, and frequently they circulate 60
 Gossip, both true and false, in disarray.
 Some take the gossip in, some go away
 To spread them elsewhere. Unchecked fiction grows
 And each man adds to what he thinks he knows.
 Rash Error, empty Joy, Credulity,
 Alarming Fear and sudden Mutiny
 Are there, and murmurs, too, whose derivation
 Is doubtful. Their entire administration
 Is placed in Rumour's hands, both in the sea,
 The sky, the land – every locality 70
 On earth. The fleet was drawing near, she said,
 With a brave army. Thus the news she spread
 Was no surprise. To meet the enemy
 The Trojans sought the shore. By the decree
 Of Fate Protesilaus was the first
 Of all the Grecian army to be cursed
 With death as Hector's javelin ran him through.
 Now to their cost the Grecian warriors knew
 His strength. The Phrygians also came to know
 No little cost of bloodshed, bringing woe. 80
 The shores were red with blood, and Cynus, who
 Could boast of Neptune as his father, slew
 A thousand men, for which Achilles bored
 His chariot straight through the Trojan horde,.
 Killing whole lines of men with just one blow
 Of his great Pelian weapon. High and low
 He sought Cynus or Hector but at last
 Found Cynus, though a decade would have passed
 Before he met with Hector. But now he
 Goaded his steeds straight at the enemy, 90
 And to the flower of Trojan youth he said,
 “Take comfort, all of you, for being dead
 In that Achilles slew you.” Then he threw
 His deadly spear, and though his aim was true
 Nevertheless the sharp point of the blade
 Had no effect – indeed it merely made

A bruise on Cynus' chest. He said, "O son
 Of the famed goddess, see what you have done!
 Why do you wonder that upon my chest
 I bear no wound? My helmet and my crest 100
 Are of no use – they're mostly decoration.
 Mars has resort to this justification
 For wearing armour thus. I still will fight
 Unharm'd without them, for it is my right
 As Neptune's son. You're but the progeny
 Of Nereus' child, while Neptune rules the sea -
 And Nereus and his daughters, too!" He cast
 His spear then at Achilles, which stuck fast
 To his bronze shield through nine layers of bull's hide,
 Stopping at ten. Achilles cast aside 110
 The spear, then hurled his own, yet Cynus stayed
 Unhurt. The third, though Cynus even laid
 Himself open to it, missed totally.
 At this Achilles raged impetuously,
 Like a wild bull that's brought to Rome to fight
 Within the amphitheatre – what a sight
 He makes, butting the purple robes, though he
 Sees they evade his fierce attacks, quite free
 From harm! Achilles started to survey
 His spear lest some point had broken away, 120
 But no! "Have I gone weak?" Achilles said.
 "I certainly was stalwart when I led
 The rush against Lynessus' walls and when
 On Tenedos I slaughtered many men
 And sacked Thebes as the river Caicus
 Ran red with Theban blood, and Telephus
 Twice felt my spear. My hand prevailed as well
 In Troy, as massive heaps of corpses tell
 That lie upon the shore." Then, as though he
 Wished to disclaim his incredulity 130
 Of former deeds, his ashen spear he threw
 At Lydian Menoetes, which bore straight through
 His armour. When he saw his dearth-marked head
 Hammer the earth, he grabbed his spear and said,
 "This is the hand, this is the spear that I
 Have conquered with in Troy, and by and by
 Again I'll use them." Then his spear he threw
 At Cynus and once more his aim was true
 To no effect. It hit his shoulder, then,
 As from a wall or rock, bounced back again, 140
 He saw some blood and revelled – fruitlessly,
 Because the blood he saw was actually
 Menoetus' blood. Then he leapt down to chase
 His lucky foe and meet him face-to-face,
 But his resistant body still remained

Unhurt. In fury then Achilles rained
 Blows on the temple of his enemy
 And in his face. Each one alternatively
 Launched his attack, allowing no respite
 From each new blow. But Cycnus now was hit 150
 With fear. Shadows now swam before his eyes.
 When he stepped back it was to realize
 A boulder blocked his path. Then with a bound
 Achilles swiftly dashed him to the ground,
 Then placed upon his chest his rugged knees,
 Then pulled upon his helmet-straps to squeeze
 His throat and stopped his breath. But then when he
 Began to strip him, the god of the sea
 Made him a bird, whose name's the one he bore
 When he was human one second before. 160
 This battle brought about an amnesty
 When both sides put aside their weaponry
 For many days. Alert sentries patrolled
 Both sides, and they decided then to hold
 A festal day, for which Achilles slew
 A heifer which he dedicated to
 Athena, and it pleased the gods on high,
 Its entrails' odour mounting to the sky.
 Then at the board the Grecian chiefs reclined
 As on a feast of roasted flesh they dined 170
 And quaffed their wine, thus banishing all cares.
 No harp or pipe or voices singing airs
 Delighted them – oh no, they spoke all night
 About their bravery in every fight
 Of both sides. What else could be spoken when
 Achilles was surrounded by his men?
 The main talk was about the subjugation
 Of Cycnus – all were filled with fascination
 That anyone could have immunity
 From spears, indeed from any weaponry. 180
 Then Nestor said, “Cycnus has been the one
 And only Grecian warrior to shun
 All weapons, thus immune to them, although
 There was a man I noticed long ago
 Who bore unharmed a thousand strokes. His name
 Was Caeneus, and from Thessaly he came.
 He lived on Mt. Othrys, and he, although
 He was a famous warrior, even so
 Had been at birth a woman.” Wholly floored
 At hearing this, each one of them implored 190
 Nestor to tell his tale. Achilles cried,
 “Old man, your eloquence can't be denied!
 The wisdom of the age, tell us what we

Hunger to know about him! Why was he
 Changed to a man? In what wars did he fight?
 And was there someone who possessed the might
 To conquer him?" He answered him with care,
 Although I'm old and therefore must beware
 Of harm and my imperfect memory
 Cannot recall my early history 200
 Too well, yet many I recall. I can
 Best bring to mind the story of that man -
 I've lived two hundred years and soon I'll be
 Able to leave my second century.
 Elatus' daughter Caenis was known best
 For her good looks, being the loveliest
 Of all the lovely maids of Thessaly,
 And many men longed for her fruitlessly
 Throughout the neighbouring cities and, my friend
 Achilles, yours. Peleus did not intend 210
 To try to win her love since he was wed
 Or pledged to your dear mother,"Nestor said.
 "Caenis never became a willing bride,
 But people say that, as she walked beside
 The sea, Neptune raped her and said to her,
 'Request of me whatever you prefer
 To have and it, I swear, won't be denied.'
 She said, 'The thing I crave is justified
 Considering what you have done to me.
 Make me immune to any injury 220
 At all! I do not wish to be a maid
 Henceforth – that's all!' Her voice had turned a shade
 Deeper – her wish was granted. Also she
 Would, as a man, obtain immunity
 From any wound. Caeneus in happiness
 Then left and revelled in his manliness
 In Thessaly. Pirithous had wed
 Hippomane and to his feast he led
 The centaurs to his cave, shaded by trees.
 Caeneus was there and other dignitaries 230
 Of Thessaly and I. The noisy crowd
 Gathered about the place and sang out loud
 The marriage-song. The fires blazed. The bride
 Came in, a throng of women at her side,
 And everyone declared Pirithous
 Blessed in a bride who was so beautiful,
 Yet by these very gifts he was betrayed,
 For Eurytus, the wildest centaur, made
 Havoc, inflamed with sudden lustfulness
 And jealousy and wine-fed drunkenness, 240
 Upsetting all the tables. Suddenly
 The banquet had been changed from amity

To uproar. Then the bride, seized by the hair,
 Was dragged away. Each centaur, here and there,
 Grabbed any maid he chose. The women screamed
 In fear and trembling, and the place now seemed
 A captured town. And we immediately
 Sprang up, and Theseus cried, 'What lunacy!
 What wickedness, Eurytus! How dare you
 Attack the groom? You don't know what you do, 250
 For one wrong injures both,' And then, as they
 Were pressing him, he thrust them all away
 And saved the maid. Eurytus could not use
 Words to defend himself, thus forced to choose
 To strike at Theseus' face and powerful chest.
 An ancient mixing-bowl was near, impressed
 With raised designs. Theseus took it and threw
 It at the face of that vile centaur, who
 Fell back, when gouts of blood began to gush,
 His brains and wine mixed in a scarlet mush. 260
 His brothers, furious at Eurytus' death,
 Began to shout out in one single breath,
 'To arms!', for wine enhanced their bravery.
 They flung the cups about primarily
 And casks and basins, things which up till then
 Were festal but now used for killing men.
 Amycus robbed the shrine, then snatched away
 A chandelier, which shone its gleaming ray,
 And raised it, as one wields an axe to split
 The neck of a white bull, propelling it 270
 At Celadon's forehead so that his face
 No-one could recognize. From out their place
 His eyes were knocked, his nose pushed back to bore
 Into his throat. Pellan Belates tore
 A maple table-leg away and thus
 With one fell blow of it felled Amycus,
 His chin thrust down into his chest; his foe
 Sent him to Tartarus with a second blow,
 As he spat out his bloody teeth. Close by
 The altar, Grineus gave a manic cry 280
 And shouted, 'Let us use this altar, too!'
 He raised it, flames and all, and then he threw
 The object at a crowd of Lapithae,
 Of whom there were two men destined to die,
 By name Boreas and Orios; Mycale.
 The latter's mother, was known frequently
 To conjure down the moon. Exadius
 Said, 'You'll not scatheless get away from us
 If I can find a weapon.' And then he
 Found antlers hanging from a tall pine-tree, 290
 A votive offering. With just one stroke

Grineus' eyes with its twin horns he could poke.
 One eye stuck to the horn and one descended
 Down to his beard, whence blood-clots were suspended.
 Rhoetus snatched up a burning plum-tree brand
 From an altar, swinging it in his right hand,
 And struck fair-haired Charaxus in the head.
 The yellow hair then blazed a flaming red:
 Like a dry cornfield it was set alight
 And blood seared from the wound – a dreadful sight! - 300
 And sizzled like an iron bar immersed
 In water. Then the wounded fellow first
 Shook the flames from his hair. When that was done,
 He raised a stone (it must have weighed a ton,
 More fitting for a team of oxen!), though,
 Due to its weight, it could not reach his foe.
 Unfortunately the massive stone *did* hit
 His friend Cometes next to him, and it
 Crushed him. Then Rhoetus, bubbling with delight,
 Yelled out, 'I pray that all you others might 310
 Be just as strong!', then with his half-burnt stake
 Went on with many heavy blows to break
 The sutures of his enemy's skull, and thus
 Bones mixed with oozing brains. Victorious,
 Upon three Lapithae he swiftly burst -
 Dryas, Evagrus, Corytus, the first
 Of these, a smooth-faced youth. When he fell dead,
 What glory do you get,' Evagrus said, 320
 'Killing a boy?' He had no time to say
 But one word more, for Rhoetus straightaway
 Into his mouth propelled the stake while he
 Yet spoke, down to his lungs. Then rapidly
 He chased fierce Dryas, brandishing the brand,
 But things did not turn out as he had planned,
 For Dryas, while his foe was revelling yet,
 With a stake pierced him where neck and shoulder met.
 With a groan then Rhoetus pulled away the stake
 And fled, while Orneus followed in his wake. 330
 Thaummas, Picanor and Mermerus flew
 Away, as did Lycabas, and Medon, who
 Was wounded in the shoulder. Mermerus,
 A man who used to be victorious
 In races, now ran slowly, recently
 Impeded by a wound. More rapidly
 Ran Melaneus and Pholus. With them, too,
 Ran Abas, he who often would pursue
 Wild boars, and Asbolus, in augury
 Well-versed, who'd urged his friends, though fruitlessly, 340
 To stay. To Nessus, who had joined the rout,
 He said, 'You need not flee, for you're picked out

For Hercules's bow!' Eurynomus,
 Arsos, Lycidas and Imbreus
 Were killed by Dryas. Caeneus was hit
 Upon his front, but when he turned to quit
 The scene, he looked back and a spear between
 His eyes was cast. Now Aphidas had been
 In drunken sleep, still holding his wine-cup
 As he lay on a shaggy bear-skin up 350
 On Ossa. Phobus saw him far away.
 Annoyed that he was idle in the fray,
 He grabbed his spear and said to him, 'Go, mix
 The wine that you are holding with the Styx.'
 His spear drove through his neck as there he lay,
 His head thrown back. There wasn't any way
 That he could feel the touch of death. He bled,
 His crimson blood cascading on his bed,
 The wine-bowl still grasped in his hand. I spied
 Petraeus in the melée as he tried 360
 To pull an oak-tree from the ground. While he
 Was struggling with the tree tenaciously,
 Pirithous hurled a well-aimed javelin
 And pierced his ribs, causing it thereby to pin
 His body to the oak. Lycus, it's said,
 And Chronis through Pirithous' might fell dead.
 A javelin killed Helops, going through
 One temple as it penetrated to
 The other. Dictys, running desperately
 In vain hope to escape his enemy, 370
 Slipped on a precipice and, with a crash,
 Fell headlong down onto a massive ash
 And was impaled there. Aphareus then tried
 To lift a rock from the steep mountainside
 In vengeance. Theseus, though, Aegeus's son,
 Picked up his mace and broke his arm. This done,
 Not bothering to make a fresh attack,
 He leapt upon the tall Bienor's back,
 Which never carried riders in the past, 380
 Then, firmly settled there and holding fast
 To his long mane, shattered the centaur's face
 And solid temples with his knotted mace.
 And with this weapon he felled Nedymnus
 And archer Lycopes and Hippasus,
 Whose lengthy beard stretched over his whole breast,
 And Rhipheus, so much taller than the rest,
 And Thereus, who in hilly Thessaly
 Took home wild bears which growled out angrily.
 Demoleon could now no longer bear
 Theseus' fortune, while struggling to tear 390
 Down an old pine. He failed, and so he threw

A branch of it at him. But Theseus drew
 Away at Pallas's advice (as he
 Would have us all believe), although the tree
 Achieved success, since, as it fell, it crashed
 Against the lofty Crantor where it slashed
 His chest and shoulder – he it was who bore
 The armour of Peleus, whom Amyntor,
 The Dolopi's king, defeated in the fight,
 Passed on to Peleus as a solemn plight 400
 Of peace. When Peleus saw him mangled, he
 Exclaimed, 'O Crantor, most beloved by me,
 Receive at least this tribute to the dead.',
 Then from his mighty arm his ash-spear sped
 And struck Demoleon's rib-cage, where it stuck.
 Although Demoleon managed to pluck
 The shaft away, the point remained inside
 His body. Though he desperately tried
 To reach it, it was caught fast in his lung.
 Steeled by the pain, Demoleon then flung 410
 Himself against his foe with many a kick,
 The blows upon his armour coming thick
 And fast, and so Peleus his weapon pressed
 Into his shoulder, piercing his twin breast.
 Before this, with his spear Peleus had spilled
 Phlegraeus' and Myles's blood and killed
 Iphinous and Clanis with his blade.
 Now he slew Dorylas, who was arrayed
 With a cap made out of wolfskin on his head
 And carried two bull's horns dyed with the red 420
 Of copious blood. Strengthened by lack of fear,
 I yelled, 'Your horns give way before my spear',
 Which then I threw. He raised his hand so he
 Could screen his forehead, but immediately.
 He shouted madly. Peleus with his sword
 Demoleon, now sadly skewered, gored,
 Who leapt up fiercely, entrails dangling
 Upon the ground he kept on trampling,
 Then died. O Cyllarus, though you were fair
 (If beauty is acknowledged anywhere 430
 Among the centaurs), you weren't from the fray
 Rescued. Your beard was starting to display
 A golden hue – your mane was gold as well,
 And from your shoulders down your flanks it fell.
 His face was fair; neck, shoulders, hands and chest,
 And all his human body parts were blessed,
 Fit almost for a sculptor, and where he
 Was equine he showed no deficiency.
 If he were wholly human, he'd have vied
 With Castor, fit for anyone to ride 440

Upon; he had a brawny chest and he
Was blacker than is pitch entirely
But for his tail and legs, all snowy-white.
The females of his race would with delight
Court him, but only one of them could claim
Him as her own – Hylonome was her name.
For she confessed her love for him through grace
(If such a thing exists in such a race).
She held his love, for now she combed her hair
And, that she might be always seen as fair, 450
She decked it out with rose or rosemary
Or violets, and she occasionally
Wore snow-white lilies and would bathe each day
Her lovely face with water that would spray
From high above in wooded Pagasae
And dip her body in the stream nearby.
On her left shoulder she would only wear
Skins that became her so that he might share
The love she bore. The mountains they would roam
Together, seeking out a makeshift home 460
In caves. Now to the Lapiths they had come
To battle in the pandemonium.
A spear (who threw it is anonymous)
Came from the left and took young Cyllarus
High in the chest, and when the spear had been
Withdrawn, the heart, though clearly it was seen
But slightly pierced, grew cold as did the rest
Of him. Hylonome, greatly distressed,
Sealed up the wound and kissed him as she tried
To save his life, but seeing that he'd died, 470
She mourned, though through the din I could not hear,
And then she threw herself upon the spear
That had killed him and with her final breath
Fell on his breast, embracing him in death.
Phaeocomus is one I can recall,
Who wore six lion-skins to cover all
His body, for a log that even two
Teams of yoked oxen couldn't move, he threw
And with it he crushed Tectaphos's head.
His nostrils and his eyes and ears all shed 480
His brains, like milk through oak or water through
A sieve. Your father knows that it is true
That, as he spoiled his victim, with my blade
I pierced his groin. Then, destined for the shade
Of death, Teleboas and Chthonius
Were dispatched there by my victorious
Weapon. Teleboas possessed a spear,
With which he wounded me (the scar's still here),
The other but a two-pronged stick. Those days

Were when I should have gone to Troy to raze 490
 Its citadel. Hector I could have stayed,
 Or even conquered outright, in a raid:
 But Hector was a boy then or, maybe,
 Unborn. But old age dulled my energy.
 Why should I tell of Periphas who slew
 Pyretus? Or why tell of Ampyx, who
 In combat marred the face of Echeclus,
 Or Macareus who pierced Erigdupus
 With a crowbar? Nessus threw a javelin
 With all his might, and it was buried in 500
 Cymalus' groin. Mopsus was never just
 A prophet, for his javelin he thrust
 Into Hodites' throat. Antimachus
 And Styphalus, Bromus and Elymus
 And Pyracmos Caeneus now sent to Hell -
 I can't recall their wounds but noted well
 Who they all were. Emathian Halesus
 Was killed and stripped by massive Latreus.
 The vigour of his youth could still be seen,
 Though he was middle-aged – his hair had been 510
 Now flecked with grey. Now he came rushing out,
 Clashing his lance and sword. I heard him shout,
 'Caeneus, why put up with the likes of you?
 No, you are still a woman in my view!
 Have you forgotten what you were, and how
 You gained the aspect of a man? Go now,
 Pick up your distaff and your wool and then
 Spin off the thread and leave war to the men!'
 Then Caeneus threw his spear into his side
 As he was stretching with his galloping stride. 520
 Latreus struck Caeneus in the face, with pain
 Made crazy. And his lance bounced back again
 Like hail on roofs or stones on drums. He tried
 To drive a sword into Caeneus's side
 But failed. 'You'll not escape,' he cried. 'Although
 My sword is blunt, I'll kill you even so.'
 Against his loins he swung his sword around
 His flank that made Caeneus's flesh resound
 Like marble, shattering Latreus's blade.
 Then, after his opponent had displayed 530
 His limbs unhurt, he was left standing there
 Amazed. Then Caeneus said, 'Let us compare
 Our sword's potential!' Through the shoulder-blade
 Of his two-natured enemy he made
 A lunge with his sharp sword, and then he turned
 It round so that the centaur's entrails churned
 With further wounds. The centaurs, clamouring
 And driven mad, turned on the youth to fling

Their weapons at him, but they fell, and he
 Remained unharmed. Ah, what a sight to see! 540
 Then Monychus cried out, 'Ah, monstrous shame
 That we, a mighty army, cannot claim
 Success against a former woman! We
 Have proven by our incapacity
 That *we* are women now! Of what avail
 Are our huge bodies if we can't prevail?
 Are we not goddess-born? How can we claim
 That we're descended from one of great fame,
 Ixion, who claimed Juno for his queen.
 How can we recognize that we have been 550
 Crushed by a semi-man? Come, let us fling
 Tree-trunks and stones and mountains on that - thing!
 That weight will serve as wounds.' Just then a tree
 Felled by a southerly wind he chanced to see,
 Which he hurled at his foe. The others there
 Responded, and Othrys would soon be bare
 Of trees, Mt. Pelion, too. Caeneus, contained
 Beneath that massive forest heap, now strained
 Against the weight, but as it grew he saw
 That he was gasping, struggling to draw 560
 A breath. He tried to reach the air and he
 Convulsed the towering mass occasionally,
 As if great Ida shook. We'll never know
 What happened to him – he was borne below
 The earth, it's thought. Mopsus, though, gave dissent,
 For from the pile we saw a bird's ascent
 On golden wings – it was a unique sight!
 When Mopsus was aware of that bird's flight
 Around the camp, he cried, 'Your reputation
 Is splendid in the Lapithaeon nation, 570
 O Caeneus, now a bird!' And we believed
 The verdict of the seer, but, as we grieved
 Our wrath increased that such a multitude
 Would kill one man. Our slaughter we pursued
 To ease our pain till half of them were dead
 As, swallowed by the night, the others fled.
 Then Hercules's son, Triptolemos,
 Could not stay mute, for he was furious
 That Hercules was overlooked. 'How can
 You leave out Hercules, 'he said. 'Old man,. 580
 My father often told to me how he
 Conquered the centaurs.' Nestor stringently
 Replied, 'Why do you force me to recall
 Old sorrows that remind me of the gall
 I feel for Hercules? His every act
 In war was wonderful – a well-known fact -
 And earned him praise, which I would wish to be

Withheld from him. I'd give no eulogy
 To many heroes. Hercules overthrew
 Messene's walls. Elis and Pylos, too, 590
 Without a cause he razed and, without shame,
 Ruined my own loved home. I cannot name
 All those he killed, but there were twelve of us,
 All warrior youths, the sons of Neleus,
 And every one of them he slew but me;
 While others perished ordinarily,
 Yet Periclymenos's death was odd.
 He had been granted by the ocean god
 The power to change his shape at will and then
 To change the shape he'd chosen back again . 600
 He changed it many times though fruitlessly
 But turned into a bird eventually,
 A taloned creature, Jupiter's favourite.
 Carrying lightnings in its talons, it
 Tore Hercules's face, and when it flew
 Away, then Hercules focussed a too-
 Unerring dart and hit it in the side:
 The wound was slight – its wings, though, were denied
 Their strength. It fell. The dart that pierced the wing
 But lightly now drove upwards, entering 610
 Its neck. O noble admiral, why should
 I praise him? But our friendship will stay good.”
 Once with his honeyed tongue Nestor had said
 These words, they took their wine and went to bed.
 The trident-god, though, now bewailed his son,
 Since changed into the swan of Phaethon,
 Though loathing Hercules still. Now, when the war
 Against the Trojans had persisted for
 Almost ten years, Apollo he addressed:
 “O my beloved nephew, precious 620
 Of all my brother's sons, we built in vain
 The walls of Troy. How you must feel the pain
 To look upon the towers so soon to fall!
 Or do you not lament the deaths of all
 Those who defended them? Do you not see
 The ghost of Hector, dragged relentlessly
 Around those walls? Achilles, though, who's more
 Savage, bloodstained and cruel than the war
 Itself, yet lives. Therefore give him to me -
 He'll feel my trident, but, since by decree 630
 I'm not permitted to contest the foe,
 Destroy him of a sudden with your bow!”
 Phoebus consented thereby to placate
 His uncle's and his own anger and hate.
 Veiled in a cloud, he found the Trojans. There
 He noticed Paris shooting through the air

His arrows at the nameless enemy
At intervals. Then, his divinity
Revealed, he said, "You'll better serve your nation
If you focus all of your concentration 640
On just one man – Achilles – and requite
Your brothers whom he gave to endless night."
He pointed out the man, who with his spear
Was laying low the Trojan warriors here
And there. And then he snatched Paris's bow
And aimed a dart. This banished Priam's woe,
The first time he was glad since Hector's death.
Thus great Achilles was deprived of breath
By a coward who seduced a Grecian wife.
If by a woman he would lose his life, 650
He'd have preferred an axe held in the hand
Of an Amazon. The scourge of Trojan land,
The powerful Achilles on the pyre
Was lying now, while Vulcan, god of fire,
Armed and consumed him. Now of life bereft,
There was but little of him that was left,
Barely enough to fill an urn. But he
Lives on, well-known to all humanity -
This is his measure, for he'll never die
And know of Tartarus. And by and by 660
His shield and arms brought conflict in the field
('Who'll have his arms?' they said. 'Who'll have his shield?').
In this dispute Diomedes dared not claim
His arms, nor Ajax who went by the name
Of 'Lesser' nor did Menelaus nor
King Agamemnon, greater still in war,
The greater Ajax, son of Telamon,
And Ulysses, 'Laertes' son, alone
Dared claim them. Agamemnon, so that he
Might circumvent any hostility, 670
Bade all the Argive chiefs to take their place
To hear and then decide upon the case.

