

AENEID IV

Long smitten with severe love-pangs, the queen
With her blood feeds them and, with fire unseen,
Is wasted. His fine stock and bravery
Comes often flying to her memory.
Within her breast are fixed his words, his face;
No peace from those love-pangs can find a place
Within her limbs. The Dawn with Phoebus' lamp
Lit up the earth and from the sky the damp
From shades she strewed. To her sister, her who shared 10
Her every thought, she, much distraught, now bared
Her soul: 'Anna, what dreams fill me with fear!
Who is this stranger who has travelled here?
How fine his words! How brave! Not bootlessly
I think him sprung from gods. Timidity
Proves souls base-born. What fates has he surmounted!
What wars, long undergone, has he recounted!
If I were not determined not to wed
Since my first love, turned traitor, now is dead;
Were I not weary of matrimony, 20
I might have to this liability
Surrendered. Since the death of my poor spouse
Sychaeus and the shattering of our house,
My wishes have been swayed by him alone,
My tottering soul unseated – this I own.
The traces of the old flame I admit.
May the earth yawn and to its deepest pit
Propel me or may I be hauled to Hell

By Jupiter's thunderbolt – where pale shades dwell
 In gloomy night – before I disobey
 Your laws, o shame! The man who took away 30
 My heart first bound me to him; may he keep
 It in his grave.' Then she began to weep.
 'O sister, dearer than the light of day,'
 Anna replied, 'will you then waste away,
 Lonely and sad, all through your youth and be
 Without love's joys nor know sweet progeny?
 Do you think dust and or buried shadows fret
 About such things? Admit that no beau yet
 In Tyre or in Libya has appeased
 Your woe: for not with Iarbas were you pleased 40
 Nor other lords reared by the African land,
 Rich in its triumphs. Will you take a stand
 Even against pleasing love? Aren't you aware
 Of where you're settled? Foes are everywhere –
 The Gaetuli on this side dwell, a race
 Invincible in war, all round this place
 Rampant Numidians and that enemy
 Syrtis, and on that side a territory
 Barren with drought and, raging everywhere,
 The Barcaei. Why should even care 50
 To mention that in Ture wars may arise?
 Your brother threatens, too. It's my surmise
 That with the gods' support and Juno's aid
 The Trojan ships with favouring winds have made
 Their landing here. O what a realm you'll see
 With such a marriage! In the company

Of Trojan arms how will it escalate
In glory! But you'll have to supplicate
The favour of the gods, make offering
And then be lavish in your welcoming, 60
Weave pleas for their delay, while out at sea
The winter rages most ferociously,
Orion's stormy, ships are pulverized,
The sky intractable.' She galvanized
The queen thus and put in her wavering mind
Some hope and this was able to unbind
The bonds of shame. First to the shrines they made
Their way and at each one for peace they prayed;
To Phoebus, Father Lyaeus and Ceres
They offered sheep, but more than all of these 70
To Juno, goddess of wedlock. The most fair
Dido from a cup poured a libation there
Between the horns of a white cow to serve
The gods, went to the altars to observe
The day with gifts. The sheep she opened wide
And gazed upon the guts that lay inside.
O foolish prophets! What aid can there be
In vows and shrines to one in slavery
To love? Flames ate her tender heart, her breast
Scarred by a silent wound. Dido, distressed, 80
Burns and in frenzy wanders here and there,
Just like a dart-struck hind which, unaware,
A shepherd in a Cretan grove runs through
Far off, a man who's armed with darts but who,
Unknowing, left the weapon in that deer;

She roams the woods of Dicte far and near,
The deadly shaft still in her. Now the maid
Took Aeneas through the city and displayed
Its riches; she began to speak but ceased.
The day was waning and she sought that feast. 90

She yearned to hear the woes of the Trojan folk
While on his lips suspended as he spoke.
When they had left, the dim moon sank her light
In turn and now the stars set to invite
Sleep. She mourned in the empty hall, bereft,
And fell upon the couch that he had left.

She hears him, sees him still; she holds his child
That this unutterable love may be beguiled,
So captured by his looks. The towers rise
No longer; the young men don't exercise 100
Their soldiery; they don't work anymore
On ports or bulwarks, useful in a war.

All work is broken off, all idle falls –
The tottering crane, the massive, threatening walls.

Jove's dear wife saw that Queen Dido was locked
In fatal passion, her frenzy not blocked
By her good name and with these words addressed

Venus: 'You and your boy are surely blessed
With splendid praise and ample spoils, and you
Are great and glorious in your power if two 110

Divinities are able to overthrow
One woman, and indeed I surely know
That lofty Carthage you have held in doubt
Through fear of Tyre. So – how will this turn out?

How long shall we keep up our rivalry?
 Why do we not both work in harmony
 And make a plighted marriage? Your desire
 Is realized – Queen Dido is on fire:
 There's madness in her veins. Then why don't we
 Govern these folk with equal sovereignty? 120
 So let her have a Phrygian husband and
 As dowry yield her Tyrians to your hand.
 Aware Juno had spoken feignedly,
 That Libya should the realm of Italy
 Possess, Venus began: 'Who would deny
 All this - a madman! – or prefer to vie
 In war with me if only what you say
 Could be fulfilled. The Fates, though, made me sway
 Wit doubt – wil Jove approve of the creation
 Of a Tyrian combined with a Trojan nation 130
 Or sanction leagues like that? It's *you* he wed –
 It's right that *you* entreat hm. Go ahead;
 I'll follow.' Then Queen Juno thus replied:
 'I will do that, but how it shall be tried
 In brief I'll tell you. . Listen now. Dido,
 Sad lady, and Aeneas plan to go
 A-hunting in the woods when the sun displays
 His face tomorrow and spreads out his rays
 Across the world. Then black rain I'll spew out
 And hail, as all the hunters chase about 140
 And gird the glade with nets, and the whole sky
 I'll wake with thunder. The both far and nigh
 The company will scatter, veiled in night.

Aenaea and Dido shall then both sight
 The same cave. I'll be there and, if I can
 Be certain of your will, I'll make the man
 And wife.' Cytherea nodded with a smile
 Because Queen Juno had discerned her guile.
 Daw rose and left the ocean. At sunlight
 A chosen band of youths came into sight 150
 Through the gates with nets and broad spears, came as well
 Massylian horsemen and, with their keen smell,
 Their hounds. Now as Queen Dido makes delay
 Inside her bower, there are at her doorway
 The Punic princes, waiting until she
 Should join them; her steeds stand, ferociously
 Champing upon his foaming bit, so bright
 In gold and purple. She comes into sight
 At last, with her a mighty company.
 A robe from Sidon whose periphery 160
 Is trimmed about her frame; a quiver made
 Of gold she holds, her tresses are inlaid
 With gold, her purple cloak is held in place
 By a gold buckle, with her, keeping pace,
 Phrygians and joyous Iulus. But the best
 Of all, Aeneas, comes to join the rest
 And to unite both bands. Just as Phoebus
 Quits wintry Lycia and the Xanthus
 And visits his mother's Delos and again
 Sets up the dance, where there are troops of men 170
 About the altars – Cretans, Dryopes,
 The ainted Agathyrsi - all of these

Raise up their voices. He himself now treads
The Cynthian ridges while his hair her threads
With golden crowns and tender greenery,
His weapons rattling on his shoulders; he
Thus went, his noble face with grace a-flame.
To mountain heights and pathless lairs they came
When goats, dislodged from rocky peaks now fled
Straight down the ridges, and elsewhere there sped 180
Stags on the open moorland, while dust swirled
Behind as from the hills they madly whirled.
Ascanius gloried in his fiery steed
All through the valleys while his greater speed
Took him past others one by one, a prayer
Upon his lips that he'd encounter there
A foaming boar amidst the timorous flocks
Or a tawny lion from the mountain rocks.
Meanwhile the sky began to roar, then rain
Ensued, mingled with hail. The Tyrian train, 190
Aeneas and the Trojan youth, all spread
Hither and yon, looked all about in dread
For shelter through the fields. From way up high
The mountain torrents spouted. By and by
To one cave Aeneas and Dido went.
The primal Earth and nuptial Juno sent
A sign, while fires flashed up in the sky
As witness to the match and way up high
The Nymphs all screamed. Thence issued death and woe.
For Dido, no more swayed by outward show 200
Or fame, no longer dreams of love concealed;

She calls it marriage and keeps unrevealed
 Her scandal by that word. Now Rumour through
 The great cities of Libya goes – he who
 Is swiftest of the sins. Her power grows
 With speed and it increase as she goes;
 First small through fear, she rises soon, her tread
 Upon the ground, though in the clouds her head.
 They say she's Mother Earth's last progeny
 (For she was angry at the gods) to be 210
 Sister to Coeus and Enceladus –
 Swift-footed, swift of wing and hideous,
 Enormous, with a multiplicity
 Of feathers, eyes, tongues, mouths, ears – equally
 In number (strange to tell!). Between the sky
 And Earth she flies by night with screeching cry,
 Unsleeping, then she watches by daylight
 On roofs or lofty turrets, causing fright
 In noble cities, sticking just like glue
 To lies and wrongs yet telling of things true 220
 As well. Now she with manifold gossip filled
 The nations and of fact and fiction trilled
 Alike: how one of Trojan pedigree
 Had come and fair Dido deigned to agree
 To marry him and how that winter they
 In wanton ease dallied the time away,
 Unmindful of their realms and captivated
 By shameless passion. She disseminated
 This news to everyone, that foul goddess,
 And then she bent her course with speediness 230

To King Iarbas and roused him mightily,
Angering him. He was the progeny
Of Hammon (for a nymph he had seduced
From Garamas). To Jove he introduced
A hundred temples in the spacious land
Which he controlled, a hundred altars and
He blessed the wakeful fire which evermore
Will guard the gods. The blood of beasts galore
The ground contains. The portals are all wreathed
With various garlands. They say Iarbas seethed, 240
Distraught at this sour tale, then stood before
The shrine and held his arms out to implore
The gods: 'Great Jove, to whom we Moors, who dine
On ornate couches, pour our Bacchic wine,
Do you see this? Father, when forth you thro
Your bolt, is it in vain we shudder so?
Is it for nothing we are filled with dread
By fiery clouds? Are all our murmurs fed
For nothing? Dido wandered here and sought
To build a tiny city which she bought; 250
A coast to plough and terms of tenancy
We gave her. Then she turned her back on me
When I proposed but welcomed to her land
Aeneas as her lord. Now with his band
Of demi-men, his scented locks within
A Phrygian cap that's tied beneath his chin,
This "Paris" grasps the spoil: meanwhile we bring
Our offerings to your temples while we cling
To a fruitless fame. The Almighty heard his prayer

As he was gripping tight the altar there. 260

His eyes upon the royal city came

To rest and on the pair whose greater fame

They had forgotten. Then to Mercury

He spoke and bade him fulfil his decree:

'Go, call the Zephyrs here, my son, and glide

Down to the Dardan chief who opts to bide

In Tyrian Carthage now and does not heed

The destined cities. Go with all due speed.

His lovely mother gave us him, it's true,

But not for this, nor did she twice rescue 270

Him from the Greeks with this in mind; no, he

Was meant to rule imperial Italy,

Which yearns for war, and bring about a race

From noble Teucer's ancestry and place

The world beneath his laws. If he's on fire

No more for glory nor has a desire

To take this burden on, would he then ban

His son from Roman power? What is his plan?

Why does he tarry in a hostile nation

And for Ausonia has no admiration 280

Nor for the Lavinian fields? And so may he

Set sail. That's all. Be messenger for me.'

He ceased to speak, and Mercury then planned

To execute great Jupiter's command.

His golden shoes he first put on his feet

Which flew him over land and sea, as fleet

As any gale. He took his wand, which he

Uses to call pale shades from Purgatory;

Others he sends to Hades' darkest gloom,
 Lulls some, awakens others, after doom 290
 Unsealing eyes. Upon this he relies
 For driving winds and skimming through the skies.
 Before him now the topmost peak unfolds
 Ad lofty, toiling Atlas who upholds
 The heavens, his pine-wreathed head eternally
 Ringed with black clouds, a superfluity
 Of wind and rain about him. Fallen snow
 Covers his shoulders, rivers ever flow
 Athwart his aged chin, whose rough, coarse hair
 Is tiff with ice. Poised evenly in the air, 300
 He stops. Down to the sea he flies headlong,
 Just like a bird around the shores, along
 The rocks where fishes stray, as they fly low
 Above the surface of the waves. Just so
 Did Mercury between the sea and land
 Fly on to Libya's coastline strewn with sand,
 Cutting the winds. As soon as, on the wing,
 He reached the huts he found, establishing
 Towers and new abodes, the Trojan lord.
 Spangles with yellow jasper was his sword, 310
 A cloak of Tyrian purple wrapped around
 His frame, which wealthy Dido had made, bound
 With golden thread. At once he laid it on
 In his attack: 'You woman's minion,
 Is lofty Carthage your main focus now?
 Are you constructing a fair city? How
 Forgetful of what you yourself should be,

The founder of a destined monarchy!
From bright Olympus Jove has sent me down –
Who over Earth and Heaven wares the crown 320
Of sovereignty; this charge he made me fly
And tell you. What is it you're planning? Why
Do you waste time here? Now if you're on fire
No more for glory nor have a desire
To take this burden on, have some respect
For Ascanius, who's growing fast: reflect
On what *he's* marked out for – all Italy
And Roman lands are your son's destiny.
While still he spoke, he left the sight of men
And vanished into thin air. It was then 330
That Aeneas was struck dumb at such a sight,
His voice stuck in his throat, his hair in fright
Standing on end. He longed to flee away
From that engaging land, in great dismay
At such a charge, such a divine decree.
Ah, what to do? Ad with what words must he
Approach the frenzied queen? How to prepare
His speech? Precipitously here and there
He casts his mind, each possibility
Given due thought. But while he wavered, he 340
Decided on one: he tells Sergestus
And Mnestheus and the valiant Serestus
To ready the fleet in silence and exhort
The crew to go down to the shore, to sort
The weapons out and then to use their guile
About the altered plans. Dido, meanwhile,

Knows not t thing, expecting nought can break
So strong a love” Aeneas plans to make
Approach to her and seek a time that’s best
To do it. Then immediately his behest 350
Was marked by all the crew. The queen divined
His guile, however (who could fool the mind
Of her whom he adores?), discovering
The coming stir and fearing everything
When all is safe. The maddening news was brought
By heartless Rumour that escape was sought,
The fleet armed. Helpless, she wanders around
He city like a Bacchant who the sound
Of shaken emblems hears in great surprise,
Cithaeron summoning her with her loud cries 360
At night. At last she spoke: ‘Did you expect
To cloak so foul a misdeed and defect
In silence? Could our love not keep you here,
Your pledge or Dido’s doom to die. I fear,
A cruel death, you faithless man? Your fleet
You labour on even in winter’s sleet
And make your plans to sail across the sea
And brave the northern winds, o cruelty!
If you were not in quest of foreign land
And new homes and old Troy were still to stand, 370
Would you seek her again? It’s me you flee?
I pray, by these tears and your pledge to me
(For I have nothing left) and by our bond,
If anything in me has made you fond,
If I have well deserved you, sympathy

You must feel for our falling dynasty.
 If there's still room for prayers, then call a halt
 To what you have in mind. It is your fault
 That the Numidian chiefs detest me so,
 As do the Libyan tribes; Tyre is my foe. 380
 Through you I have lost my celebrity.
 For whose sake, then, are you deserting me,
 O guest (the only name that I still may
 Apply – not husband)? Why do I delay?
 To see Pygmalion trample on our state
 And Iarbas capture me? At any rate,
 If I had borne a child before your flight,
 If in these halls there played a tiny mite,
 A young Aeneas, through whom I would see
 Yourself, I would not think me utterly 390
 Bereft and vanquished.' He, at Jove's behest,
 Held his eyes steadfast while he did his best
 To quench the anguish deep inside his heart.
 Briefly, he said: 'Queen, all you can impart
 In words you have deserved, I will confess.
 I'll not remember you with bitterness
 As long as I possess a memory
 And breathe upon this earth. With brevity
 I'll tell you of my course. Do not believe
 I hoped to hide from you my plan to leave. 400
 No wedding-torch I offered, no compact.
 If Fate had given me a chance to act
 As I would wish, if all my cares I could
 Arrange at my own will, my first care would

Have been for Troy and my dear family.
 Priam' high halls would have stood, and then through me
 A new Troy for the vanquished would have been
 Built. But for me there is a different scene –
 For Grynean Apollo ordered me
 By oracle to seek great Italy. 410
 She is my love, my country. If the sight
 Of Carthaginian towers brings you delight,
 You, a Phoenician, if you wish to bide
 In a Libyan city, if Fate should decide
 Ausonia for the Trojans, why should you
 Begrudge us that? A foreign land we too
 May seek. When night's moist shadows veil the land
 Ad fiery stars in Heaven may be scanned,
 My father's troubled ghost still visits me
 With fear and warnings; sleeping, still I see 420
 My dear Ascanius whose destination
 Was Hesperia and a predestined nation,
 Cheated of that by me. Jove's messenger
 Has swiftly flown to me (this I aver
 By both our heads) and brought me his decree;
 This god in day's clear brightness did I see
 Within the walls and his words I drank in.
 So don't upset both of us with the din
 Of your complaints. Not of free will I go
 To Italy; Her eyes turned to and fro 430
 As she, askance, gazed on him silently.
 Inflamed, she cried out: 'Oh, such infamy!
 No goddess was your mother, Dardanus

No founder of your line. No! Caucasus
 Begat you in some flinty, rocky den;
 Hyrcanian tigresses nursed you. Why, then,
 Should I pretend? What greater wrongs have I
 To hold me back I'm sure he didn't sigh
 As I wept. Did he even look at me?
 Did my tears crush him? Was there sympathy 440
 For her who loved him? What should I first say?
 Great Juno and her mighty partner lay
 Their eyes on your wrongdoing righteously.
 Fidelity has no security.
 I rescued you, spat out upon the sand,
 In need, made you part-ruler of my land.
 How mad was I? Your lost fleet I restored,
 I saved your crew from death. The seer, our lord
 Phoebus, his oracles, his go-between
 Bring this appalling news. Why, this has been 450
 A labour for the gods, a care to test
 Their peace. I do not keep you nor contest
 Your words. Go, find your realm; go, sail away
 To Italy. I hope, though, that, midway,
 If gods have power at all, you then shall drain
 The cup of vengeance, crying out in vain
 "Dido!" Though absent, I will give you chase
 With murky fires. I'll be in every place,
 A ghost. O shameless one, you shall repay.
 I'll hear – the tale shall reach me far away 460
 In Hades.' She broke off the speech and fled
 In anguish. Though he had much to be said,

He lingered there in fear. Her swooning frame
 Her maids supported and with her they came
 Into her marble bower, and then she
 Was put to bed. Aeneas, although he
 Would mitigate her grief and turn aside
 The sorrow that she felt and heavily sighed,
 Shaken by his great love, the gods' decree
 He yet obeyed and went to oversee 470
 The fleet. And then indeed the Trojan band
 Fell to and launched the tall ships from the strand,
 The tarred keels set afloat. Eager to flee,
 They brought forth boughs out of the greenery,
 For oars, and unhewn logs. You'd see them race
 From every nook and cranny of that place,
 Like ants who think of winter and ransack
 A field for piles of corn and take them back
 To store them, one black line across the plain
 In a narrow track carrying their precious grain; 480
 Some push the heaps along, while others play
 The part of foremen and rebuke delay,
 The path alive with toil. When all these men,
 Dido, you spied, what were your feelings then!
 Oh, how you groaned when from your citadel
 You saw, both far and near, the shoreline swell
 With labour, heard loud shouts upon the sea.
 To what do you not drive mortality,
 O tyrant Love? Once more she had to weep,
 To beg him once again and humbly sweep 490
 Her pride away lest something left untried

Determined that in vain she would have died.
 'Anna, you see the bustle all about
 The shore! They're everywhere! The sails all shout
 Out to the winds! The sailors joyfully
 Garland the sterns! If I such misery
 Anticipated, I shall undergo
 Its pain. In my bereavement one thing, though,
 Do for me, sister, please: that traitor there
 Made you his only friend: with you he'd share 500
 His inmost thoughts. It's you alone who know
 The best time to approach him. Sister, go,
 Humbly address that haughty enemy.
 I was not of that Greek conspiracy
 At Aulis to uproot his race. No fleet
 I sent to Pergamum, I didn't unseat
 His father's ashes nor disturb his shade.
 Why does he shun these statements that I've made,
 The stubborn man Where is he hastening?
 So let him grant this boon, this final thing, 510
 To his poor lover: let the man delay
 For fair winds and an easy getaway.
 No more do I pray for that marriage-tie
 That he once promised me, no more do I
 Hope that he will resign fair Latium
 And lose his realm. A moratorium,
 A respite from my frenzy is my aim,
 While Fortune teaches me my grief to tame
 When vanquished. I will ask for nothing more
 (Pity your sister). I'll repay the score 520

In full when he agrees.' Anna entreated,
Her tearful pleas repeated and repeated,
A saddened sister. But he was not moved;
To any words intractable he proved.
Thus Fate prevailed. His kindly, mortal ears
The god stopped up. As an oak, made strong through years,
Is hit with norther, Alpine winds which vie,
Now here, now there, as boisterously they try
To tear t from the earth, then comes the sound
Of roaring, leaves are strewn upon the ground 530
It quivers, though embracing even now
The rocks, and just as it appears to bow
Towards Hades, yet again it lifts its head
To Heaven – thus the man is buffeted
With ceaseless pleas; his great heart feels the pain
Of sorrow, but her weeping is in vain –
His will is steadfast. The Fates terrify
The luckless dido, who now longs to die,
Weary of life. This aim intensifies
When (dreadful sight to tell of!) she espies, 540
When she lays gifts upon the shrines which burn
With frankincense, the sacred water turn
Jet-black, the wine that has been poured now red
With gore. Of both these things she nothing said,
Not even to her sister. Her dead spouse
A marble temple, built inside the house,
Commemorated, which religiously
She cherished, decking it with greenery
And snowy fleeces. Thence she heard the sound

As of her husband, whenever the ground 550

Was veiled by night; a lone owl, too, she heard

Often upon the rooftops, where this bird

Would sing a dirge drawn out into a wail;

And, in addition, she heard many a tale

Of earlier prophets. She was terrified.

In dreams fierce Aeneas came to her side

And raised her frenzy. She seemed quite bereft,

Forever wandering in her journey, left

Companionless and in a foreign land

Seeking her subjects, as the Furies band 560

A frenzied Pentheus looks on in his fear,

While two-fold Thebes and a double sun appear,

Or mad Orestes as he tries to flee

His mother who brandishes her weaponry –

Brands and black serpents; meanwhile at the gate

Sit the avenging Furies. She, prostrate

With grief, ahs caught this lunacy and now

Resolves to die, deciding when and how,

Addressing her sad sister, although she

Adjusts her looks to veil her strategy, 570

Projecting a calm hope: 'I've found a plan,

Sister – o wish me joy! – by which I can

Restore him or let go my love. A land

Close by the ocean's limit may be scanned,

Where the sun sets, so very far from here,

Called Ethiopia, where the world's sphere,

Spangled with gleaming stars, is turned around

B mighty Atlas, and from thence I found

A Massylian who performed due obsequies,
Guarding the shrine of the Hesperides, 580
A priestess, warden of the sacred tree,
Who gives the dragon nourishment while she
Sleep-giving poppies and moist honey sprays;
With spells she can release the hearts, she says,
Of whom she pleases but inflict love's woe
On others; she can stop a river's flow
And turn back stars and wake the ghosts of night;
Ash-trees fall from the mountains in your sight
And you shall feel the earth beneath you groan.

The heavens I call to witness, o my own 590
Dear sister, and yourself – your life as well –
That I have armed myself with every spell,
Against my will. In the court secretly
Erect a pyre and then the arms that he,
That impious man, left fixed upon the wall
Within my bower and -what were my downfall –
My wedding vestments and my bridal bed.
All memories of that vile man I must shed.

So says the priestess.' Then in silence she
Grew pale. However, this chicanery 600
Deceived her sister, who did not suppose
That Dido planned to veil her death with those
Strange rites nor think her fury was so great
Nor fear more jeopardy than when of late
Her husband died. So she prepared as bidden.
The queen, though, in her inmost dwelling hidden,
The pyre with pine and ilex towering

To heaven, set herself to garlanding
The place with funeral boughs. Then, quite aware
Of what would happen, on her bedding there 610
She placed her vestments and the sword that he
Had left behind and then his effigy.
Between the shrines, the priestess, with her locks
Spread out, in thundering tones the palace rocks,
Invoking one hundred divinities,
Erebus, Chaos and, as well as these,
The three-fold Hecate and then the maid,
Three-faced Diana. Water, too, she sprayed,
That she had feigned was from Avernus' spring;
She sought herbs mown by the moon's glimmering 620
With bronze scythes, succulent with venom's jet-
Black milk. She sought, too, a love-amulet
Torn from a colts brow at its birth before
Its mother could retrieve it. Furthermore,
With sacred meal and holy hands, beside
The shrines, one foot unshod, girdle untied,
The gods she called on, at the verge of death,
And on the stars which to her final breath
Would be witnesses, then she said a prayer
To any righteous power, full of care, 630
Protecting those who love unequally.
Night fell, and on the earth tranquillity
Now fed all weary folk. Seas that had been
Savage and woods were nothing but serene.
It was the time when the stars rolled midway
Upon their gliding course. All creatures lay

In silent fields and slumbered, free of care –
 Beasts, speckled birds and those that everywhere,
 Both far and near, glide through the limpid lakes
 And those that dwell in fields with tangled brakes. 640
 Not so the sol-racked queen: sleep can't incite
 Her frame to rest, nor can she draw the night
 Into her eyes and heart. Her pangs attain
 Double their force, her love swells up again:
 She heaves with mighty passion. Thinking through
 Her plans alone, she says: 'What should I do?
 Should I make trial of my former beaux,
 Just to be mocked? Should I as suppliant go
 To wed a Nomad. Though in days gone by
 I often scorned their offers? Or should I 650
 Obey the Trojans' ultimate decrees
 And follow their fleet? Will my past kindness please
 Their hearts? But even if that were my will,
 Who, since the Trojans ever wish me ill,
 Would let me board their haughty ships? Ah me,
 Do you not understand? Do you not see
 The treason of Laomedon's race? What then?
 Shall I alone flee with those happy men?
 Or should I bid my people once again
 To hoist their sails and go across the main – 670
 Those people I could scarcely tear away
 From Sidon – and pursue him? No, I say –
 Death's my desert. Avert your woes with steel!
 Won by my tears, you first caused me to feel
 These ills and drove me to the enemy,

My sister, as I raved. Better for me
That I had lived a blameless life, unmarried,
Just like a beast, never to have been harried
By these cares! The loyalty I vowed
To Sychaeus' ashes was not kept.' Aloud 680
She wailed these thoughts. Resolved to brave the deep,
All things prepared, Aeneas snatched some sleep
On the high stern. Again the god came to
The man in sleep, like Mercury in hue,
Voice, graceful limbs of youth and golden hair,
Who'd come to warn him: 'Goddess-born, beware!
How can you sleep when menaces abound?
Do you not see the dangers all around,
Madman? Don't you hear how propitiously
The western breezes blow? Death-bent, now she 690
Is plotting craft and evil, buffeted
By varying passions. Quick, man, go ahead,
While you can still effect a hasty flight!
For soon you'll see the shore aflame with light,
The sea swarming with ships and many a brand
Ablaze, if daylight catches you on land,
Yet lingering. Go now! No dawdling!
Woman has ever been a fickle thing!'
He spoke and melted back into the night.
Aeneas tore himself from sleep in fright 700
At seeing this sudden shade and woke the crew,
Saying: 'Wake up, my friends. Quick, all of you!
Go, man the benches and immediately
Unfurl the sails! Once more you're urged to flee

By a god sent from on high. Go straightaway
And cut the twisted cables! We obey
You joyfully, whoever you may be,
O holy one. Assist us graciously
And grant us kindly stars.' He spoke and drew
His flashing sword and cut the hawsers through. 710
At once the same zeal caught them all. They race,
They leave the shoreline, and the ocean's face
Hides underneath the fleet; then lustily
They churn the foam and sweep across the sea.
The early Dawn over the earth now spread
Her new light as she left the saffron bed
Of Tithonus. Did, when she saw the light
From high up in her chamber and caught sight
Of even sails upon the sea, aware
That all the shores and harbours now were bare 720
Of oars and oarsmen, she struck with her hand
Thrice or four times her comely bosom and
Tore at her golden hair.'Is he to go,'
She said, 'and shall he mock our region so,
That stranger? Will they not rush back and bring
Their weapons, through the city rampaging,
And steal our ships? Bring fire! Quickly! And ply
The oars and fetch your weapons. Where am I?
What am I saying? What insanity
Affects my brains? Has your iniquity 730
Come home to you, sad Dido? When the crown
You offered was the time to take him down.
Is this the vow, is this the guarantee

Of one who takes with him, apparently,
His household gods and carried on his back
His aged father? Did I really lack
The means to tear him limb from limb and strew
Him to the waves? And his companions , too,
I could have skewered and his only son
I could have made his father feast upon. 740
Uncertain was the outcome of the fray,
However. On the edge of death I lay,
So what had I to fear? With fire I should
Have razed his camp, made tinder of the wood
Upon his ships and sent to the nether world
Son, father, his whole race, then to have hurled
Myself upon them. Sun, who brightly see
All things, Juno, who know my misery,
Hecate, who at city crossroads hear
Your name shrieked out by night both far and near, 750
Avenging Furies, all the divinities
Of dying Dido, hear me, if you please
And aid my plight. If that accursed wretch
Must reach his destined Italy and fetch
Up on its shores, by Jove's commandment, yet
May he, by a gallant race in war beset,
Flung from his borders, torn from the embrace
Of Iulus, sue for aid and have to face
The cruel slaughter of his friends; and when
He's yielded to an unjust peace, why then, 760
His kingdom lost, may he no longer see
Daylight but die before his time and be

Left on the sand, unburied! This I pray
As blood pours from me – the last words I'll say.
Pursue with hate his entire future race,
O Tyrians, and to my dust bring grace.
Let both our lands be enemies. Ascend,
Unknown avenger of my death, emend
This sin, pursue them with both fire and sword,
Now, later, nay, whenever the Fates afford 770
Us strength. Shore clash with shore, sea clash with sea,
Arms clash with arms, and may war ever be
With them and their descendants!' This she said
While several thoughts were twisting in her head
Of how she might cut short the life that she
Detested, and then momentarily
She had a word with Brace, who had been
Her husband's nurse (for she who'd nursed the queen
Lay buried in her ancient land): 'Bring here
To me my sister Anna, Barce dear, 780
To spray my corpse with water straightaway
And bring with her the offerings, to pay
Atonement, and the steers. Your temples veil
With a pure chaplet; I, though, must not fail
The rites of Stygian Jove, which I've begun;
My woes will end and my life will be done,
My passion for that wretch consumed by flame.'
She spoke, and with the zeal of an old dame,
The nurse now hurried. Dido, trembling
And frenzied with her dreadful plan, rolling 790
Her bloodshot eyes, while spots were seen upon

Her quivering cheeks, by imminent death made wan,
Now broke into the inner courts, where she
Mounted the lofty pyre distractedly,
Then drew the Trojan sword, a gift not meant
For such a purpose! When her eyes she bent
Upon the vestments and the bed
She knew so well, she paused before she said
Her final words and pondered tearfully,
Then threw herself upon the bed. 'Take me 800
And take my spirit, relics once held dear
When God and Fate allowed. Release me here
From pain. The path of life I walked was made
By Fortune. Now in majesty my shade
Shall pass beneath the earth. I was a queen,
I built a noble city, I have seen
Its walls. My wicked brother I repaid
For my Sychaeus. All of this had made
Me happy – o too happy! Would our strand
Had not welcomed those Trojans to our land! 810
She pressed her face against the bed. 'I'll die
Unavenged, but let me die! With joy shall I
Pass underneath the earth. From down below
May that cruel man drink in these flames that show
The hatred that is flashing from my eyes
And may he bear the omen of my demise
Forever.' As she said this, each handmaid
Observed her fall upon the weapon's blade,
Which reeked with blood; her hands were spattered red.
A scream rose to the roof, and Rumour spread 820

Throughout the startled city. Sobs abound
And lamentations and the shrieking sound
Of women through the halls; great wailings strike
The heavens all about them, not unlike
What would occur if enemies rushed down
On Carthage or perhaps the ancient town
Of Tyre, homes, shrines, all eaten with fierce flame.
Swooning, her sister heard the noise and came,
Dismayed, into the throng, both pummelling
Her breast and with the nails lacerating 830
Her face, and to her sister, as she died,
Said: 'Did you plan all this? Sister, you lied
To me! Pyre, altars, fire – was this your aim?
Bereft, what should I mourn for first? O shame!
In dying, did you spurn my company?
You should have shared with me your destiny;
We should have died together, the same blade
Should have dispatched us both. So, then, I made
This pyre and called upon the gods, did I,
So that, o cruel one, you then could lie 840
Like this when I was absent? The entire
Senate, the populace, the town of Tyre
And you yourself you killed. Your wounds let me
With water bathe, and, if there still should be
Some breath still fluttering in your body, I
Shall catch it with my lips.' She climbed up high
And clasped her dying sister, grieving sore,
And stanchd the black blood with her robe. Once more
She tried to raise her heavy eyes, then swooned;

Beneath her breast there gurgled that deep wound. 850

Three times upon her elbow then she tried

To raise herself, but only to subside

Each time. She sought the sky with wandering eyes

And, when she found it, greeted it with sighs.

Great Juno, pitying her lengthy grief

And grim death, sent Iris to bring relief

And free her limbs and struggling soul. Because

The death she died was premature and was

Fire by a sudden madness, neither fated

Nor earned, Proserpina procrastinated 860

In plucking golden tresses from her head

And sending her to Orcus. So instead

Iris, on dewy saffron wings, flew through

The sky with countless tints of varying hue

Trailing behind her, and she came to stand

Above her head. 'I, by divine command,

Have brought this offering, sacred to Dis,

And with it I can bring to you release'.

The warmth departed once she'd cut the hair

And life passed from her, blown into the air. 870

