

## AENEID VIII

As soon as Turnus gave the sign for war  
Upon his tower and with a mighty roar  
The horns rang out, the fiery horses spurred,  
Swords at the ready, people's hearts were stirred  
With worry; Latium a league had formed  
To wage war and their sons now madly stormed.  
Their generals, Ufens and Messapus,  
And he who scorned the gods, Mezentius,  
Began to muster men from every side  
And stripped the fields of farmers far and wide.     10  
Venulus, too, was sent out from Arpi,  
Great Diomedes' town, to remedy  
The dearth of arms and say in Latium  
Were Trojans, that their leader now had come,  
Their vanquished gods aboard their ships, that he  
Proclaimed himself a king by Destiny,  
That many men had joined him and his name  
Each day in Latium was gaining fame.  
Should Fortune smile, what outcome of the fight  
He hankered for could be guessed more aright     20  
By Diomedes than the Latian king  
Or Turnus. That was what was happening  
In Latium. Seeing all, the progeny  
Of Spartans tossed upon a mighty sea  
Of troubles, shifting rapidly from one  
Thought to another, just as when the sun  
Or glittering moon flings back the flickering beam

In brazen bowls of water, and the gleam  
Flits far and wide and rises high to smite  
The fretted ceiling up above. Now night                      30  
Had fallen: every creature everywhere,  
Both birds and beasts alike, were in the care  
Of heavy sleep. The air cut like a knife  
As on the bank Aeneas lay, the strife  
Of war distressing him, and finally  
He slept. Tiberinus, the divinity  
Of that sweet stream, raised up his aged head,  
It seemed, amid the poplar leaves and said,  
In his grey linen mantle, with his hair  
Crowned with dark leaves, words that dispelled his care:40  
'O god-born one, who from your enemy  
Bring back our Troy and keep eternally  
Her towers, you've been longed for in Latium.  
Do not draw back, for to your home you've come,  
Your gods secure; of war be not afraid,  
For Heaven's swelling wrath has been allayed.  
Lest you think what I say is nothing more  
Than dreams, under the oaks upon the shore  
You'll find a sow with thirty young around  
Her teats, white too, as she lies on the ground.    50  
And thus in thirty years Ascanius  
Shall found a city, Alba, glorious  
In name. You must not doubt this prophecy.  
How you may manage this in victory  
I'll briefly tell you. There are hereabout  
Arcadians, a race created out

Of Pallas' seed: accompanying their king  
Evander, and his banner following,  
They chose a site upon the hills whose base  
Became their city and they named the place        60  
Palladeum to hail their ancestry.  
With Latium they wage war constantly;  
Ally with them; guided by me, you'll go  
Upstream along the banks that you may row  
Against the current, then, at dawn's first light,  
Offer your prayers to Juno as is right,  
O goddess-born, and with your vows allay  
Her wrath and threats: victorious, you'll pay  
Tribute to me. You see me spattering  
My banks in cataracts and cascading        70  
Between the teeming fields. The gods adore  
The azure Tiber – I am he! – much more  
Than other streams. My stately home you see,  
The fount of lofty cities.' Instantly,  
Upon these words he spoke, he submerged deep  
Into his lowest depths. Both night and sleep  
Now left Aeneas. Rising up, his gaze  
He kept upon the eastern sun's bright rays,  
Then some of Tiber's waters in his hands  
He scooped and duly followed his commands        80  
And prayed to Heaven: 'Nymphs of Laurentum (for from you  
All rivers are created) and you, too,  
O holy Father Tiber, now receive  
Aeneas and of jeopardy relive  
Him finally; wherever you may be

In all your lovely grace, our misery  
You pity. You with many an offering  
I'll honour, father of each stream and spring.  
O horned one. Aid me and prove your vow  
Assuredly.' Those were his words and now 90  
He chose two ships and manned them, furnishing  
Them all with arms. But an astonishing  
Sign suddenly appeared, for there was seen  
Amid the wood upon the bank of green  
A white owl with her milk-white brood. Now he  
Arranged the mother and her progeny  
Upon the altar as an offering  
To great Juno. His water's billowing  
All night long Tiber calmed and silently  
Flowed back, and like a gentle tributary 100  
Or silent marsh he smoothed his watery bed  
And gave the oars no toil. With cheers they sped  
Away. The well-pitched pine flowed on. The stream  
And woods in wonder viewed the splendid gleam  
Of shields and painted barks. All day and night  
They plied their oars and passed each lengthy bight;  
Shaded by various trees, they rowed between  
The green woods placidly. And now was seen  
The fiery sun at mid-arch when they spied  
Walls, citadel and houses far and wide, 110  
Now raised by Rome to Heaven, although the reign  
Evander held then spanned a scant domain.  
They landward turned their prows immediately  
And neared the city. That day chanced to be

The day the Arcadian king was offering  
Due homage to the gods and honouring  
Great Hercules as well within a stand  
Of trees before the city, and a band  
Of foremost citizens, his progeny,  
Pallas, and the impoverished company                      120  
Of senators were with him, offering  
Incense The tepid blood was billowing  
Upon the shrines. When the high ships they spied  
Between the shady woodland, whose crew plied  
Oars that were noiseless, this surprising sight  
Caused them to rise and quit the feast in fright.  
But stalwart Pallas would not let them flee  
And halt the rites – seizing his weapon, he  
Ran to the strangers; yelling from a mound  
Afar, he cried: ‘Why do you seek new ground,              130  
Young men? Where are you going to? What race  
Are you? From where? Do you bring to this place  
Concord or war?’ Aeneas, in reply,  
Holding a branch of peaceful olive high  
Up on the stern, said: ‘Men of Troy are we,  
Foes to the Latins, whose effrontery  
Caused them to drive us out. We seek the king,  
Evander. Chosen Trojan chieftains bring  
A plea for an alliance. Please proclaim  
This news to him. ‘At such a mighty name                      140  
Pallas was stunned. ‘Whoever you are,; said he,  
‘Speak to my father face-to-face and be  
Our guest.’ He welcomed him and took his hand.

They left the river and into the stand  
Of trees they went. Aeneas cordially  
Addressed the king: 'O noble progeny  
Of Greeks, whom Fortune destines now to bend  
Your ear to my appeals as I extend  
These peaceful tokens. I did not feel fear  
That you were A Greek captain, living here           150  
As well as claiming consanguinity  
With Atreus' twin sons. My probity,  
The oracles, my own ancestral name,  
The fact that through the world has spread your fame  
Have joined us both and readily my Fate  
I followed. Dardanus (the Greeks relate),  
Our founder, came to us, the progeny  
Of great Atlas' Electra (it is he  
Who on his shoulders bears the heavenly sky).  
Mercury is your father, who was by           160  
Fair Maia born upon the chilly mount  
Of Cyllene: she, if such tales we may count  
As true, was Atlas' child – one pedigree,  
Then, bound them. Thus I planned no embassy,  
No crafty overtures. Myself I place  
Before you as a suppliant. That race  
Of Daunia pursues both you and us  
In cruel war. If they're victorious  
In ousting us, they think that not one thing  
Will stay their placing underneath the sting  
Of thralldom all Hesperia and gain  
Control of both the Adriatic main

And the Etruscan. Let us, then, unite!  
 We're valiant, our manhood proved in fight.'  
 Aeneas ceased. Evander long had eyed  
 His face, his frame. Now briefly he replied:  
 'O bravest man of Troy, I happily  
 Know and accept you. How my memory  
 Retains your father's words. I'd recognize  
 Yet great Anchises' tone of voice, his eyes.                180  
 For I remember Priam, visiting  
 His sister's realm while he was travelling  
 To Salamis before he came to chill  
 Arcadia. A bloom in those days still  
 Was on my youthful cheeks. I wondered at  
 Troy's chiefs and King Priam, but more than that  
 I wondered at Anchises. Flames were fanned  
 In my young soul to take him by the hand.  
 I came to him and led him eagerly  
 Into Arcadia. He gave to me                                        190  
 His splendid quiver in which he had placed  
 Lycian arrows and a cape enlaced  
 With gold and two gold bits which Pallas now  
 Possesses. Here's the hand you seek, my vow  
 To join with you. I'll send you at first light  
 An escort and supplies. This yearly rite,  
 Which we must not defer, now celebrate  
 With us, since we are friends. Participate  
 In feasting with us, too.' When he had said  
 These words, he ordered that the guests be fed,    200  
 The cups replaced. He seated every guest

Upon the grass but above all the rest  
He placed Aeneas on a maple chair  
Set with a lion's shaggy hide. Then there  
Appeared some chosen youths and the shrine's priest  
Who vied in haste to serve the roasted feast  
Of bulls' flesh, baskets piled with grain, and wine.  
Aeneas and the youths on a long chine  
Of ox and sacrificial meat now fed.  
Once their desire for nourishment had fled,           210  
Evander said: 'This solemn liturgy,  
This feast, this shrine to a divinity  
Of great import come from no idle fear  
Of the unknown. Saved from perils severe,  
We pay the rites, renewing worship due.  
Look on that hanging cliff that faces you,  
Scattered afar, its mountain-dwelling bare,  
The rocks in total devastation. There  
A cave once stood, deep and remote, unfelt  
In any season by the sun, where dwelt           220  
Cacus, that dreadful, semi-human *thing*;  
The ground always from recent slaughtering  
Was warm and on the lofty doors were nailed  
Men's faces which through foul decay had paled.  
This beast was Vulcan's son, who belched black fire  
While lumbering about. To our desire  
Time finally brought us godly aid. There came  
Hercules to avenge us, gaining fame  
In slaying triple Geryon. Then he  
Drove in his mighty bulls in victory.           230



His oxen filled the vale and river both.  
But Cacus, frenzied in his wits, was loath  
To miss out any crime of trickery:  
He drove four bulls of fine anatomy  
Out of their stalls, and four young cows as well,  
All beautiful: lest anyone could tell  
Their whereabouts from hoof-prints, Cacus drew  
Them backwards by the tail and brought them to  
His gloomy cave and hid them there. Someone  
Who sought them would detect no marks – not one -240  
That led to them. The son of Amphytrion,  
Meanwhile, was getting ready to move on  
The well-fed beasts, which filled the grove with lowing,  
The hills resounding at their clamorous going.  
Deep in the cave a cow returned the call;  
Then Hercules was seized with blazing gall.  
With heavy, knotted club and weapons he  
Sped to the mountaintop: our company  
Saw Cacus first with terror in his eye  
And faster than the East Wind saw him fly                    250  
Back to his cave, his terror fastening  
Wings to his feet; once inside, shattering  
The chains, he dropped the massive hanging rock,  
By Vulcan cast in iron as a block.  
Hercules came, enraged, and looked about  
For some approach, teeth gnashing. He would scout  
The mountain and that rocky gate in vain  
Three times, then sank back to the vale again.  
A pointed rock of flint could there be found,

High up above the ridge and sheared all round, 260

A nest that's fit for birds of prophecy.

Leftwards it leaned towards the tributary,

And so he took the strain upon the right

And shook the rock of flint with all his might,

Wrenching it from its roots. Then suddenly

He flung it, and great Heaven clamorously

Thundered, the banks leapt back and, in its fright,

The river shrank back, and there came in sight

Cacus's cavern, his vast monarchy,

As though the earth through some great potency 270

Had gaped, revealing an infernal land,

Pale, hated by the gods; on high he scanned

The vast abyss; at this intruding light

The spectres trembled; now into his sight

Came Cacus, caught by daylight suddenly,

Pent in his cave and braying horribly;

With any missies that now came to hand,

Hercules pelted him with branches and

Great millstones. Cacus, with no other way

To flee this danger, belched – wondrous to say! – 280

Dense smoke and in darkest obscurity

He veiled his home, at which precipitously

Hercules – for he would not tolerate

Such tricks – leapt downwards to insinuate

Himself where smoke was rolling at its height

As in that vast cave black mist doused all light.

As Cacus belched fire – unsuccessfully! –

He took him in a vice-like grip; then he

Squeezed Cacus till his eyes popped from his head,  
His throat drained of all blood. The doors were shred290  
In pieces, the dark den now opened wide,  
The stolen herd, the plunder he'd denied  
Now clearly seen. Cacus was by his feet  
Dragged out, and no-one's heart could be replete  
With gazing on the eyes of this dread thing,  
His face, his shaggy breast, the now-quenched sting  
Of fire in his throat. Posterity  
Has since that day performed religiously  
A celebration – first Potitius  
And then the family of Pinarius, 300  
The keepers of the shrine that Hercules  
Set in the grove for his solemnities,  
Which we shall call the Mightiest evermore,  
And mightiest shall it ever be. Therefore,  
In honour of his glorious deeds, young men,  
Bind up your hair with wreathes of leaves and then  
Hold out your cups and pour wine joyously  
And call upon our god.' Accordingly,  
After those precepts, he began to braid  
His hair with two-hued poplar, which gave shade 310  
To Hercules, now hung with many a strand,  
The sacred goblet held in his right hand.  
Quickly they poured libations on the board  
With joy and prayed. Now evening drew toward  
The vault of Heaven, and now the priests were led,  
Dressed in their furs, Potitius at their head,  
And bearing brands. The banquet they renewed,

Brought welcome gifts and heaped the shrines with food

In platters. Now the Salii were there

That round the flaming altars they could share 320

Their chants, their brows in poplar wreathed; now these,

Some young, some old, the deeds of Hercules

Extolled – how he had strangled, as a tot,

The twin snakes that were sent into his cot

By Juno, how in war he had dashed down

Troy and Oechalia, each a peerless town,

And bore a thousand labours under King

Eurystheus through Queen Juno's meddling.

'Unconquered one, with your own hands you shed

The blood of those two bi-formed creatures bred 330

Of clouds, Pholus and Hylaeus, and you slew

The Cretan monsters, that vast lion, too,

Beneath the Nemean rock. You cast a spell

Of fear on Styx; the keeper, too, of Hell

Would shake before you as he lay upon

Half-gnawn-at bones in his dominion,

That bloody cavern; you were not alarmed

By aught – not huge Typhoeus, even armed,

Nor Lerna's multi-headed snake as he

Encompassed you. Hail, Jove's true progeny, 340

An added glory to the gods. Come near,

Attend our rites and favour us with cheer.'

Such were their hymns of praise, the crowning one

The hymn about the rocky dominion

Of fire-breathing Cacus. With the sound

The woodland land and the hills all around

Re-echoed, and then when they had completed  
The sacred rites, to the city they retreated.  
The aged king walked with them, at his side  
Aeneas and his son, and mollified 350  
The walk with varied talk. Aeneas gazed  
With ready eyes at everything, amazed;  
Charmed with the scene, he sought and, one by one,  
Learned of the deeds their ancestors had done.  
And then the founder of Rome's citadel,  
Their king Evander, said: 'There used to dwell  
Both Fauns and Nymphs in these woods and a race  
Of men sprung from tough oak, who had no trace  
Of rule nor culture, no ability  
To yoke an ox, lay up their stores or see 360  
To husbanding their gains; no, they were fed  
By branches and the huntsman's game instead.  
First Saturn came down from Olympus' height,  
Exiled from his own realm and taking flight  
From Jupiter's weapons. This unruly race,  
Scattered among the peaks, into one place  
He gathered, gave them laws and for its name  
Chose Latium because thither he came  
And found a refuge. Under Saturn's sway  
This was the Golden Age (that's what men say): 370  
He ruled in perfect peace till gradually  
They grew worse, colourless; avidity  
And lust for war crept in. The Ausonian band  
And the Sicani came, and now the land  
Would often doff its name, and then kings came,

And fierce, huge Thybris, whence arose the name  
Of Tiber here in Italy. Now lost  
Is Albula, its true name. I have crossed  
The ocean's bounds, an exile, finally  
Arriving here by potent destiny. 380

My mother, the nymph Carmentis, who gave dread  
Advice to me, and Lord Apollo led  
Me hither. ' He advanced immediately,  
Once he had said these words, and showed to me  
The shrine and the Carmental Gate, the name  
The Romans gave it to advance the fame  
Of the nymph Carmentis, the dread prophetess,  
Who first foretold to men the loftiness  
Of great Pallanteum and the progeny  
Of Aeneas, then the splendid sanctuary 390

Within a massive grove of trees which stout  
Romulus restored, and then he pointed out  
Beneath a chilly rock the cave whose name  
Was Lupercal to celebrate the fame  
Of Lycaean Pan, and then the grove he showed  
Of sacred Argiletum, then the mode  
He told of Argus' death, who'd been his guest,  
And called upon that thicket to attest  
His innocence of murder. On he strode  
And led them to the Tarpeian abode 400

And the Capitol – now golden, though once filled  
With bristling brakes. The country folk still thrilled  
With terror at the region's sanctity:  
The wood, the rock yet caused anxiety

Among them all. 'This leafy elevation,  
This grove,' he said, 'is a god's habitation  
(We don't know which, though). Those of Arcady  
Believe that they've seen Jove himself as he  
Oft shook the darkening aegis with his hand  
And raised the storms. He two towns in this land, 410  
Their walls all overthrown, possess, you see,  
The relics of men of antiquity.  
This fort was built by Father Janus, while  
That one was built by Saturn – this we style  
Janiculum, that other bears the name  
Saturnia.' In suchlike talk they came  
To poor Evander's house. Round this abode  
They looked on herds of cattle as the lowed  
In the Forum and the shining Keel. He cried,  
'Victorious Alcides went inside 420  
This mansion. Dare to scorn prosperity,  
My guest: be worthy of divinity  
And don't disdain our poverty.' This said,  
Beneath the lowly dwelling's roof he led  
The great Aeneas and on greenery  
And a Libyan bearskin laid him Instantly  
Came night which with dark wings embraced the earth.  
But Venus, she who gave Aeneas birth,  
Was captured by no idle fear for, stirred  
By the Laurentians' threats which they had heard 430  
And their harsh insurrection, she addressed  
Vulcan, beginning her loving behest  
In her gold chamber: 'While doomed Pergamum bore

Destruction from the Argive kings in war,  
Her walls fated by hostile fire to fall,  
I asked you for no aid, no arms at all  
To help those wretches: I'd not have you sweat  
In vain, although I owed a massive debt  
To Priam's sons, dear spouse, and often wept  
For Aeneas's toil. Now he's been swept 440  
Onto Rutulian shores by the decree  
Of Jove: therefore of the sweet deity  
I love I ask for arms for him I bore.  
The child of Nereus swayed you once before,  
Aurora, too. You see what folk have met,  
You see what cities closed their gates and whet  
Their swords against me and my own.' Then she  
Threw snowy arms about him fervently  
Ad softly fondled him. At once he caught  
The wonted flame, the familiar warmth now sought 450  
His marrow, running though his melting frame,  
Just as at times a sparkling streak of flame  
Bursts through the storm-clouds with its dazzling light  
Amid the thunder's peal. In her delight  
In her own artifice and revelling  
In her fair form, she felt it. Answering,  
Enchained by deathless love, the Father said:  
'Where, goddess, has your confidence in me fled?  
Why do you seek so far for pleas? If you  
Had asked me then, it was yet fitting to 460  
Equip the Trojans. There was no intent  
Either in the Fates or Jupiter to prevent



Both Troy and Priam lasting ten years more.  
 So now, if you are resolved on war,  
 Whatever art that I possess I swear  
 I'll ply for you – whatever fire and air,  
 Iron or molten amber may avail.  
 Cease begging me – your powers will prevail,  
 Doubt not. Then with these words his spouse he caught  
 In his embrace and slumber sought 470  
 Upon her bosom. When Night was halfway  
 Upon her journey, brushing sleep away,  
 The time when womenfolk, who must endure  
 Minerva's humble toil, attempt to lure  
 A slumbering fire to life, thus adding night  
 To their day's work, their handmaids by lamplight  
 Long toiling, that their husband's beds may be  
 Unstained and that their little progeny  
 Be reared, the Fire-God far from lazily  
 Left his soft bed to labour busily 480  
 Inside his smithy. There is very near  
 To Sicily an island, with its sheer  
 And smoking rocks, not far from Lipare:  
 Beneath this isle a cave thunders away  
 In Aetna's vaults, scooped by the Cyclopes;  
 Strong strikes produce loud groans and inside these  
 Chalyb steel hisses and the furnace-flame  
 Breathes – Vulcan's home (Volcania is its name).  
 Thither he went before the lightening  
 Of day, the Cyclopes all labouring 490  
 At forging iron in that vast cave – Brontes

Was there and Pyramon and Steropes,  
Limbs bared. A thunderbolt, which they by hand  
Had shaped, was there, which oft upon the land  
Lord Zeus had cast from Heaven and, although  
Polished, a part remained unfinished. So  
They added to it as accessory  
Three rays of twisted hail, then fastened three  
Of watery cloud and three of ruddy flame  
And the swift southern wind; and then they came 500  
To blending frightful flashing flares and, traced  
By flames, anxiety; elsewhere they raced  
To build a speedy chariot for the god  
Of war, wherewith both men and states he'll prod  
To battle; the dread aegis eagerly  
They burnished (for such is the weaponry  
That wrathful Pallas carries), fastening  
Gold serpents' scales and the intertwining  
Snakes and the Gorgon, which they chiselled out  
O Pallas' breast, her eyes darting about, 510  
Her neck sliced through. 'Leave all of that,' he said,  
'You Cyclopes, and turn your thoughts instead  
To this – arms for a hero! You need muscle,  
Swift hands, all of your masterful skill. Now hustle!  
That's all he said; they set to speedily,  
Dividing up the labour equally.  
Both brass and molten ore in streams now flowed  
And in the giant furnace, too, there glowed  
The molten Chalyb steel. A mighty shield  
They shaped that just one warrior could wield 520

Against all Latin arms, and then around  
Their work full seven times in circles wound  
Their welding. Some used bellows, some immersed  
The hissing brass in the lake, and many a burst  
Of groans the anvils hammered out. With strength,  
Now one, now another, in a measured length  
Of time, raised arms and with the gripping bite  
Of tongs twisted the metal. Kindly light  
And bird-song from the eaves, while on that strand  
The Lemnian lord sped on the work in hand,        530  
Roused up Evander from his humble family seat.  
He rose, put on his tunic, wrapped his feet  
In his Tyrrhenian sandals. On his side  
He fit his Tegean sword, a panther's hide  
Draped on his left, and from the lofty door  
Two dogs attended him and went before  
As guardians. He went then to his guest,  
Aeneas, mindful of how he'd professed  
His help: Aeneas, too, was bustling  
Early. Achates walked with him, the king        540  
Walked with Pallas, his son, and at first meeting  
They took each other's hand in friendly greeting  
And settled down between the buildings where  
They conversed freely in the open air  
At last. "Great Trojan captain" (in this way  
The king began) – "for never will I say,  
While you yet live, that Trojan wealth and might  
Is vanquished – we are scarcely ripe for fight:  
We're hemmed in by the Tuscan river here,

While there we are confined by the severe 550

Rutulians. But I have plans to bring

You mighty folk and camps with many a king -

An unsought chance of safety. Destiny

Has brought you here There's a community

That's built on ancient stone not far from here:

It's called Argylla where, many a year

Ago, the Lydian folk, a war-famed nation,

Made on the Etruscan heights their habitation.

They prospered long till King Mezentius

Used methods arrogant and barbarous 560

To rule them. Why recount the savagery

And carnage waiting on his tyranny?

The gods protect us from him and his kind!

Dead men with living ones he used to bind,

Affixing hand to hand and face to face

In the oozy poison of a dread embrace

And slow demise (grim torture!). Finally,

Outworn his citizens with weaponry

Besieged the madman in his palace, slew

His followers, then burned his rooftop, too. 570

Mid the carnage to the Rutuli

He fled for shelter, finding sanctuary

Among his ally Turnus' arms. Therefore

Etruria has demanded instant war

In righteous rage, demanding for the king

Punishment. Of these thousands I would bring

You in as chief, Aeneas. On the strand

The ships all throng in clamorous ardour and

Demand the standards; but the ancient seer  
With prophecies of fate would keep them here. 580

‘Chosen Maeonian youth, the chivalry  
And flower of an ancient race,’ says he,  
‘Just anger launches you against the foe;  
That king inflames your righteous wrath, yet no  
Italian mat subdue such a proud race.

Choose foreign chiefs!’ The troops then took their place  
Upon that plain. The soldiers were appalled  
By the seer’s words. Tarchon has envoys called  
With both the royal crown and staff to me  
And offered me the reins of mastery 590

And bad me join the soldiery and seize  
The Tyrrhenian throne. The frosty miseries  
Of age, my waning power deny me  
This task. I’d urge my son the captaincy  
To take upon himself, but in his case,  
Born of a Sabine mother, his own race  
Is mixed. But you, to whom the Fates have handed

Youth and an unmixed race, who is demanded  
By Heaven, brave lord of Troy and Italy,  
Come join us, our hope and security. 600

I’ll give you Pallas, too, that he ay learn  
To suffer warfare and t know the stern  
Labour of Mars from you, that he may see  
Your actions and from his minority  
Admire you. I’ll give to you ten score  
Arcadian horsemen, tw hundred more  
Shall Pallas give to you, the choicest men

Among our flowering youth." Aeneas, then,  
And loyal Achates, with their eyes cast down,        610  
Would long have brooded, and with many a frown,  
On diverse perils if there had not been  
A sign from her who was Cythera's queen  
From cloudless Heaven, when there came a flash,  
Quivering, unforeseen, with a thunderous crash:  
All seemed to reel at once, and a trumpet-blare  
From the Etruscans filled the open air.  
They looked up as the sound repeatedly  
Was heard and through the clouds saw weaponry  
Gleaming and clashing. All the rest stood there  
Aghast, but Aeneas was well aware                620  
Of Venus' promise in that sound. He cried,  
'Don't ask, my friend, what these portents betide!  
No, Heaven wants me; I would be sent for,  
My goddess mother once foretold, if war  
Was close; the arms of Vulcan through the air  
She'd send. The hapless Laurentines will share  
Such carnage! Turnus, such a penalty  
You';; pay me! What a multiplicity  
Of helmets, shields, brave warriors shall you sweep,  
Tiber, beneath your waves. Well, let them keep        630  
Their covenants no more and call for fight!  
When he'd said this, he rose from his throne's height  
And roused the altar's fires for Hercules,  
Approaching the household divinities  
With joy. Evander and Troy's fighting men  
Gave up some duly chosen ewes and then

He visited the men on board once more  
And picked the boldest ones to go to war;  
The others floated downstream lazily  
To tell Ascanius his son's destiny. 640  
To those of Troy who sought the Tuscan ground  
Were given steeds; for Aeneas, though, they found  
A horse with a tawny lion's skin decked out,  
A special one, gold hooves gleaming about.  
In a flash a rumour through the little town  
Was spread that horsemen now were speeding down  
To sea to aid the king. Mothers in fear  
Doubled their vows, while, coming very near  
To peril, fright appeared, while larger swelled  
The God of War. Father Evander held 650  
His son's hand as he left, continually  
Weeping, and said, "I would that I could to me  
Would bring back all those years I've spent and show  
Him who beneath Praeneste's walls aid low  
The foremost ranks and burned the piled-up shields,  
Victorious, and sent to Tartarus' fields  
King Erulus, whose mother at his birth  
Gave him three chance to survive on earth  
(Horrible to relate!) and gave him three-  
Fold armour- hence a triple destiny. 660  
Yet all three lives I snuffed out on that day  
And all three suits of armour snatched away.  
Then never, son, from your precious embrace  
Had I been torn, nor would scorn and disgrace  
Have by Mezentius been heaped on me,

His neighbour, nor would his cruel weaponry  
Have caused so many deaths nor made away  
With countless mothers' sons. To you I pray,  
You gods and mighty Jove, feel sympathy  
For the Arcadian king and hear my plea: 670

If my son Pallas, by your holy will  
And fate, may be kept safe and I may still  
Behold him, then let me on earth remain;  
I'm able to put up with any pain.

But, Fortune, if you have in mind for me  
Some dread mischance, then may the misery  
Of life be cut away – while doubtful fear  
And an uncertain future keeps me here,  
While you, my late and sole delight, I hold,  
May no more grievous tidings yet be told 680

To wound my ears.' Thus at this last farewell  
He spoke; his servants caught him as he fell  
And bore him to the palace. On his steed  
Each horseman issued through the gates, the lead  
Taken by Aeneas and his faithful friend  
Achates, followed then from end to end  
By the other Trojan princes – at their core,  
Conspicuous in his cloak and dressed for war  
With blazoned arms, rode the king's progeny,  
Pallas, like Lucifer, come from the sea 690

To lift his head and melt the dusky night –  
Lucifer, who is Venus's chief delight  
Of all the stellar fires. Every wall  
Held trembling mothers who observed them all



As they stirred up the dust, gleaming with brass;  
Into the wooded brush they saw them pass  
To take the shortest way. There rose a shout:  
The columns formed, the horse-hooves all about  
Shook the fragmenting plain. A vast grove stands  
Near Caere's cold stream – folk from many lands 700  
Revere it with ancestral awe; all round  
Are curving hills and dusky fir-trees bound  
This grove. The old Pelasgians. they say,  
Dedicated both the grove and festal day  
To Silvanus, god of fields and flock. Back then  
The borders of the Latin lands these men  
Inhabited. The Tuscan company  
And Tarchon pitched camp in security  
Not far from there, and from a lofty height  
The entire legion was within one's sight, 710  
Camped in the wide fields. Aeneas came there  
With his picked warriors, where they took care  
Of all the steeds and rested. Drawing nigh,  
However, came fair Venus from on high  
With gifts; from far away her son she spied –  
In a secluded vale, he sat aside  
By the cool stream. Appearing willingly  
Before him, 'By my husband's artistry,'  
She said, 'these gifts were made lest you draw back,  
My child, from quickly threatening an attack 720  
On Turnus and the proud Laurentian race.'  
At this Cytherea sought her son's embrace  
And placed the bright arms under a oak-tree

Nearby, and he rejoiced exceedingly  
In such great gifts and honour as he eyed  
The gifts insatiably, turning from side  
To side, wondering at and handling  
Each piece – the splendid helmet glorying  
In plumes and flames, the cuirass, brazen, stiff, 730  
Blood-red and huge, the deadly sword – as if  
They were a dark-blue cloud that's set alight  
By the sun's rays and from afar gleams bright;  
Then the smooth greaves in gold and amber cast  
And the perfect shield. For in the furnace blast  
Vulcan had forged the tale of Italy,  
The Roman triumphs, for of prophecy  
He was not ignorant: each future race  
Sprung from Ascanius the god could trace  
And every war that they had ever fought.  
The she-wolf, too, the lord of Fire wrought, 740  
Outstretched in Mars' green cave: the twin boys played  
About her teats and suckled, unafraid;  
Her smooth neck bent back, she successively  
Fondled and licked them into shape. Then he  
Set Rome nearby and the Sabine women carried  
Off from the Circus seating to be married  
To Romans. Then a fresh war suddenly  
Broke out between Romulus' progeny,  
The steely Cures and the ancient king  
Tatius. Later, their strife abandoning, 750  
Before Jove's altar these kings came to stand,  
Each in his armour, a cup in his hand,

Effecting concord with an offering  
Of swine. Nearby, four-horse cars, travelling  
In four directions, quickly toe apart  
Mettus (but, Alban one, would that your heart  
Had matched your words!). Th liar's guts were spread  
By Tullus through the woods, the brambles red  
With gore. There, too, Porsenna bade them bring  
The banished Tarquin back while pressuring        160  
The city with a mighty siege; the sons  
Of Aeneas rushed to arm themselves at once  
For liberty. He rampaged threateningly  
Because Cocles had the temerity  
To tear the bridge down and Cloeolia burst  
Her chains and swam the river; in the first  
Scene, he who guarded Tarpeia's redoubt  
Stood in front of the temple, keeping out  
All enemies from the high Capitol,  
Manlius. The palace seemed uncomfortable        770  
With Romulus' fresh thatched rooftop; there through  
The gilded colonnades a white goose flew  
To warn that Gauls were at the entryway:  
Between the bushes near the fort they lay  
And captured it, screened by the gift of night.  
Their locks were gold, their raiments shining bright  
With gold, their striped cloaks glittering; around  
Their milk-white necks gold fastenings were bound.  
Two Alpine pikes were brandished in each hand  
While lengthy shields guarded their bodies, and        781  
He had wrought here the dancing Salii

And the naked Luperi for all to see,  
Their crests tied up with wool, and shields that came  
From Heaven; through the city many a dame  
In cushioned chariots ceremonially  
Paid worship. Far from these the residency  
And gates of Dis were wrought and suffering  
For sin and, hanging from a menacing  
Cliff, Catiline, you hung and quaked to see  
The Furies; those who'd lived in piety                    790  
Were far from there, among them he who gave  
Them laws, Cato, while, swelling wave on wave,  
The sea was seen, all gold, but billowing  
With snow-white foam and dolphins gambolling  
In shining gold, tails circling; at its core  
He had contrived the brazen ships at war  
In Actium; Leucas's promontory  
Was there, aglow with Martian panoply,  
The waves ablaze with gold. The emperor  
Augustus led his people out to war,                    800  
With the great household gods; above his crew  
He stood upon the stern, while twin flames flew  
From his glad brows. Elsewhere high-towering  
Agrippa, winds and gods all favouring  
His exploit, led his column, while around  
His brows a proud war-emblem could be found,  
The naval crown, and there was Antony  
With foreign might and varied weaponry  
From the Dawn's people and the ruddy strand:  
With him came Egypt, eastern manpower and                    810

Furthest Bactra and Egypt's queen (o shame!).  
The whole sea foamed beneath them as they came,  
By triple-pointed beaks and oarsmen churned.  
They sought the deep at once – one might have learned  
That they had torn apart the Cyclades  
Or mountain clashed with mountain. On the seas  
Great ships assailed those towered sterns. They threw  
Hot flames forth while winged steel-shafts flew  
Out of their hands and unknown butchery  
Stained Neptune's fields. Upon the company        820  
The queen called with her rattle, with no mind  
To turn and look at the twin snakes behind.  
Barking Anubis and horrendous creatures  
Which, though divine, possessed all kinds of features,  
Were wielding all their weapons from above  
At Neptune, Minerva and the goddess of love,  
Mars raged among them, steel-embossed; the fell  
Furies from on high were there as well.  
Discord in her rent robe was striding out  
Exultantly; Bellona, with her knout                830  
All bloody, followed. Gazing at this sight  
Above, Apollo drew his bow. In fight  
All Egypt, India, all the Sabaei  
And all the Arabian army turned to flee.  
The queen was seen to woo the winds, spread sail  
And loose the sheets: the Fire-God made her pale  
At thought of death amid the butchery  
By lap'yx' zephyrs borne across the sea.  
The mighty Nile, in mourning, opened wide

Her folds and called the vanquished hordes to slide 840  
Into his streamlets, blue ad sheltering.  
But back at home Caesar was glorying  
In a triple victory and paying for  
This issue with the gift of thirty score  
Immortal shrines in Rome. Now all about  
The city shouts of happiness rang out  
And games were held. Each temple now possessed  
A shrine around which bands of matrons pressed;  
Before each shrine slain heifers strewed the ground;  
The emperor himself was to be found                    850  
On shining Phoebus' white threshold where he  
Reviewed the gifts from the community  
And hung them on the proud posts. In a file  
The vanquished moved along, mile after mile,  
Diverse in language, dress and weaponry,  
Each group distinct in nationality –  
The Nomads and the sensual Africans,  
The Carians, quivered Gelonians  
And Leleges; Euphrates, now subdued,  
Flowed on, his waves in a more humble mood;       860  
There were the Morini from a distant land,  
The river Rhine with its twin outlets and  
The untamed Dahae and the Araxes  
Who fretted at the bridge. He fixed his gaze  
On all these things that Vulcan's shield had shown,  
His mother's gift; though these deeds were unknown  
To him, he loved them. His descendants' fame  
And fortune he now held against his frame.

