

The
Aeneid
of Virgil

A Verse Translation by
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B A N T A M C L A S S I C

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BOOK IV

Too late. The queen is caught between love's pain
and press. She feeds the wound within her veins;
she is eaten by a secret flame. Aeneas'
high name, all he has done, again, again
come like a flood. His face, his words hold fast 5
her breast. Care strips her limbs of calm and rest.

A new dawn lights the earth with Phoebus' lamp
and banishes damp shadows from the sky
when restless Dido turns to her heart's sharer:
"Anna, my sister, what dreams make me shudder? 10
Who is this stranger guest come to our house?
How confident he looks, how strong his chest
and arms! I think—and I have cause—that he
is born of gods. For in the face of fear
the mean must fall. What fates have driven him! 15
What trying wars he lived to tell! Were it not
my sure, immovable decision not
to marry anyone since my first love
turned traitor, when he cheated me by death,
were I not weary of the couch and torch, 20
I might perhaps give way to this one fault.
For I must tell you, Anna, since the time

Sychaeus, my poor husband, died and my
own brother splashed our household gods with blood,
Aeneas is the only man to move 25
my feelings, to overturn my shifting heart.
I know too well the signs of the old flame.
But I should call upon the earth to gape
and close above me, or on the almighty
Father to take his thunderbolt, to hurl 30
me down into the shades, the pallid shadows
and deepest night of Erebus, before
I'd violate you, Shame, or break your laws!
For he who first had joined me to himself
has carried off my love, and may he keep it 35
and be its guardian within the grave.”
She spoke. Her breast became a well of tears.

And Anna answers: “Sister, you more dear
to me than light itself, are you to lose
all of your youth in dreary loneliness, 40
and never know sweet children or the soft
rewards of Venus? Do you think that ashes
or buried Shades will care about such matters?
Until Aeneas came, there was no suitor
who moved your sad heart—not in Libya nor, 45
before, in Tyre: you always scorned Iarbas
and all the other chiefs that Africa,
a region rich in triumphs, had to offer.
How can you struggle now against a love
that is so acceptable? Have you forgotten 50
the land you settled, those who hem you in?
On one side lie the towns of the Gaetulians,
a race invincible, and the unbridled
Numidians and then the barbarous Syrtis.
And on the other lies a barren country, 55
stripped by the drought and by Barcaean raiders,
raging both far and near. And I need not
remind you of the wars that boil in Tyre
and of your brother's menaces and plots.
For I am sure it was the work of gods 60
and Juno that has held the Trojan galleys
fast to their course and brought them here to Carthage.
If you marry Aeneas, what a city

and what a kingdom, sister, you will see! 65
 With Trojan arms beside us, so much greatness
 must lie in wait for Punic glory! Only
 pray to the gods for their good will, and having
 presented them with proper sacrifices,
 be lavish with your Trojan guests and weave
 excuses for delay while frenzied winter 70
 storms out across the sea and shatters ships,
 while wet Orion blows his tempest squalls
 beneath a sky that is intractable."

These words of Anna fed the fire in Dido.
 Hope burned away her doubt, destroyed her shame. 75
 First they move on from shrine to shrine, imploring
 the favor of the gods at every altar.
 They slaughter chosen sheep, as is the custom,
 and offer them to Ceres the lawgiver,
 to Phoebus, Father Bacchus, and—above all— 80
 to Juno, guardian of marriage. Lovely
 Dido holds the cup in her right hand;
 she pours the offering herself, midway
 between a milk-white heifer's horns. She studies
 slit breasts of beasts and reads their throbbing guts. 85
 But oh the ignorance of augurs! How
 can vows and altars help one wild with love?
 Meanwhile the supple flame devours her marrow;
 within her breast the silent wound lives on.
 Unhappy Dido burns. Across the city 90
 she wanders in her frenzy—even as
 a heedless hind hit by an arrow when
 a shepherd drives for game with darts among
 the Cretan woods and, unawares, from far
 leaves winging steel inside her flesh; she roams 95
 the forests and the wooded slopes of Dicte,
 the shaft of death still clinging to her side.
 So Dido leads Aeneas around the ramparts,
 displays the wealth of Sidon and the city
 ready to hand; she starts to speak, then falters 100
 and stops in midspeech. Now day glides away.
 Again, insane, she seeks out that same banquet,
 again she prays to hear the trials of Troy,
 again she hangs upon the teller's lips.

But now the guests are gone. The darkened moon,
 in turn, conceals its light, the setting stars
 invite to sleep; inside the vacant hall
 she grieves alone and falls upon the couch
 that he has left. Absent, she sees, she hears
 the absent one or draws Ascanius,
 his son and counterfeit, into her arms,
 as if his shape might cheat her untellable love.

Her towers rise no more; the young of Carthage
 no longer exercise at arms or build
 their harbors or sure battlements for war;
 the works are idle, broken off; the massive,
 menacing rampart walls, even the crane,
 defier of the sky, now lie neglected.

As soon as Jove's dear wife sees that her Dido
 is in the grip of such a scourge and that
 no honor can withstand this madness, then
 the daughter of Saturn faces Venus: "How
 remarkable indeed: what splendid spoils
 you carry off, you and your boy; how grand
 and memorable is the glory if
 one woman is beaten by the guile of two
 gods. I have not been blind. I know you fear
 our fortresses, you have been suspicious of
 the houses of high Carthage. But what end
 will come of all this hate? Let us be done
 with wrangling. Let us make, instead of war,
 an everlasting peace and plighted wedding.
 You have what you were bent upon: she burns
 with love; the frenzy now is in her bones.
 Then let us rule this people—you and I—
 with equal auspices; let Dido serve
 a Phrygian husband, let her give her Tyrians
 and her pledged dowry into your right hand."

But Venus read behind the words of Juno
 the motive she had hid: to shunt the kingdom
 of Italy to Libyan shores. And so
 she answered Juno: "Who is mad enough
 to shun the terms you offer? Who would prefer
 to strive with you in war? If only fortune

favor the course you urge. For I am ruled
 by fates and am unsure if Jupiter
 would have the Trojans and the men of Tyre
 become one city, if he likes the mingling
 of peoples and the writing of such treaties.
 But you are his wife and it is right for you
 to try his mind, to entreat him. Go. I'll follow."

Queen Juno answered her: "That task is mine.
 But listen now while in few words I try
 to tell you how I mean to bring about
 this urgent matter. When tomorrow's Titan
 first shows his rays of light, reveals the world,
 Aeneas and unhappy Dido plan
 to hunt together in the forest. Then
 while horsemen hurry to surround the glades
 with nets, I shall pour down a black raincloud,
 in which I have mixed hail, to awaken all
 the heavens with my thundering. Their comrades
 will scatter under cover of thick night.
 Both Dido and the Trojan chief will reach
 their shelter in the same cave. I shall be there.
 And if I can rely on your goodwill,
 I shall unite the two in certain marriage
 and seal her as Aeneas' very own;
 and this shall be their wedding." Cytherea
 said nothing to oppose the plan; she granted
 what Juno wanted, smiling at its cunning.

Meanwhile Aurora rose; she left the Ocean.
 And when her brightness fills the air, select
 young men move from the gates with wide-meshed nets
 and narrow snares and broad-blade hunting spears,
 and then Massylian horsemen hurry out
 with strong, keen-scented hounds. But while the chieftains
 of Carthage wait at Dido's threshold, she
 still lingers in her room. Her splendid stallion,
 in gold and purple, prances, proudly champing
 his foaming bit. At last the queen appears
 among the mighty crowd; upon her shoulders
 she wears a robe of Sidon with embroidered
 borders. Her quiver is of gold, her hair
 has knots and ties of gold, a golden clasp

holds fast her purple cloak. Her Trojan comrades
 and glad Ascanius advance behind her.
 Aeneas, who is handsome past all others,
 himself approaches now to join her, linking
 his hunting band to hers. Just as Apollo, 190
 when in the winter he abandons Lycia
 and Xanthus' streams to visit his maternal
 Delos, where he renews the dances—Cretans,
 Dryopians, and painted Agathyrsi,
 mingling around the altars, shout—advances 195
 upon the mountain ridges of high Cynthus
 and binds his flowing hair with gentle leaves
 and braids its strands with intertwining gold;
 his arrows clatter on his shoulder: no
 less graceful is Aeneas as he goes; 200
 an equal beauty fills his splendid face.
 And when they reach the hills and pathless thickets,
 the wild she-goats, dislodged from stony summits,
 run down the ridges; from another slope
 stags fling themselves across the open fields; 205
 they mass their dusty bands in flight, forsaking
 the hillsides. But the boy Ascanius
 rides happy in the valleys on his fiery
 stallion as he passes on his course
 now stags, now goats; among the lazy herds 210
 his prayer is for a foaming boar or that
 a golden lion come down from the mountain.

Meanwhile confusion takes the sky, tremendous
 turmoil, and on its heels, rain mixed with hail.
 The scattered train of Tyre, the youth of Troy, 215
 and Venus' Dardan grandson in alarm
 seek different shelters through the fields; the torrents
 roar down the mountains. Dido and the Trojan
 chieftain have reached the same cave. Primal Earth
 and Juno, queen of marriages, together 220
 now give the signal: lightning fires flash,
 the upper air is witness to their mating,
 and from the highest hilltops shout the nymphs.
 That day was her first day of death and ruin.
 For neither how things seem nor how they are deemed 225
 moves Dido now, and she no longer thinks
 of furtive love. For Dido calls it marriage,

and with this name she covers up her fault.

Then, swiftest of all evils, Rumor runs
 straightway through Libya's mighty cities—Rumor, 230
 whose life is speed, whose going gives her force.
 Timid and small at first, she soon lifts up
 her body in the air. She stalks the ground;
 her head is hidden in the clouds. Provoked
 to anger at the gods, her mother Earth 235
 gave birth to her, last come—they say—as sister
 to Coeus and Enceladus; fast-footed
 and lithe of wing, she is a terrifying
 enormous monster with as many feathers
 as she has sleepless eyes beneath each feather 240
 (amazingly), as many sounding tongues
 and mouths, and raises up as many ears.
 Between the earth and skies she flies by night,
 screeching across the darkness, and she never
 closes her eyes in gentle sleep. By day 245
 she sits as sentinel on some steep roof
 or on high towers, frightening vast cities;
 for she holds fast to falsehood and distortion
 as often as to messages of truth.
 Now she was glad. She filled the ears of all 250
 with many tales. She sang of what was done
 and what was fiction, chanting that Aeneas,
 one born of Trojan blood, had come, that lovely
 Dido has deigned to join herself to him,
 that now, in lust, forgetful of their kingdom, 255
 they take long pleasure, fondling through the winter,
 the slaves of squalid craving. Such reports
 the filthy goddess scatters everywhere
 upon the lips of men. At once she turns
 her course to King Iarbas; and his spirit 260
 is hot, his anger rages at her words.

Iarbas was the son of Hammon by
 a ravished nymph of Garamantia.
 In his broad realm he had built a hundred temples,
 a hundred handsome shrines for Jupiter. 265
 There he had consecrated sleepless fire,
 the everlasting watchman of the gods;
 the soil was rich with blood of slaughtered herds,

and varied garlands flowered on the thresholds.
 Insane, incited by that bitter rumor, 270
 he prayed long—so they say—to Jupiter;
 he stood before the altars in the presence
 of gods, a suppliant with upraised hands:
 “All-able Jove, to whom the Moorish nation,
 feasting upon their figured couches, pour 275
 Lenaeon sacrifices, do you see
 these things? Or, Father, are we only trembling
 for nothing when you cast your twisting thunder?
 Those fires in the clouds that terrify
 our souls—are they but blind and aimless lightning 280
 that only stirs our empty mutterings?
 A woman, wandering within our borders,
 paid for the right to build a tiny city.
 We gave her shore to till and terms of tenure.
 She has refused to marry me, she has taken 285
 Aeneas as a lord into her lands.
 And now this second Paris, with his crew
 of half-men, with his chin and greasy hair
 bound up beneath a bonnet of Maeonia,
 enjoys his prey; while we bring offerings 290
 to what we have believed to be your temples,
 still cherishing your empty reputation.”

And as he prayed and clutched the altar stone,
 all-able Jupiter heard him and turned
 his eyes upon the royal walls, upon 295
 the lovers who had forgotten their good name.
 He speaks to Mercury, commanding him:
 “Be on your way, my son, call up the Zephyrs,
 glide on your wings, speak to the Dardan chieftain
 who lingers now at Tyrian Carthage, paying 300
 not one jot of attention to the cities
 the Fates have given him. Mercury, carry
 across the speeding winds the words I urge:
 his lovely mother did not promise such
 a son to us; she did not save him twice 305
 from Grecian arms for this—but to be master
 of Italy, a land that teems with empire
 and seethes with war; to father a race from Teucer’s
 high blood, to place all earth beneath his laws.
 But if the brightness of such deeds is not 310

enough to kindle him, if he cannot
attempt the task for his own fame, does he—
a father—grudge Ascanius the walls
of Rome? What is he pondering, what hope
can hold him here among his enemies, 315
not caring for his own Ausonian sons
or for Lavinian fields. He must set sail.
And this is all; my message lies in this.”

His words were ended. Mercury made ready
to follow his great father's orders. First 320
he laces on his golden sandals: winged
to bear him, swift as whirlwinds, high across
the land and water. Then he takes his wand;
with this he calls pale spirits up from Orcus
and down to dreary Tartarus sends others; 325
he uses this to give sleep and recall it,
and to unseal the eyes of those who have died.
His trust in this, he spurs the winds and skims
the troubled clouds. And now in flight, he sights
the summit and high sides of hardy Atlas 330
who props up heaven with his crest—Atlas,
whose head is crowned with pines and battered by
the wind and rain and always girdled by
black clouds; his shoulders' cloak is falling snow;
above the old man's chin the rivers rush; 335
his bristling beard is stiff with ice. Here first
Cyllene's god poised on his even wings
and halted; then he hurled himself headlong
and seaward with his body, like a bird
that, over shores and reefs where fishes throng, 340
swoops low along the surface of the waters.
Not unlike this, Cyllene's god between
the earth and heaven as he flies, cleaving
the sandy shore of Libya from the winds
that sweep from Atlas, father of his mother. 345

As soon as his winged feet have touched the outskirts,
he sees Aeneas founding fortresses
and fashioning new houses. And his sword
was starred with tawny jasper, and the cloak
that draped his shoulders blazed with Tyrian purple— 350
a gift that wealthy Dido wove for him;

she had run golden thread along the web.
 And Mercury attacks at once. "Are you
 now laying the foundation of high Carthage,
 as servant to a woman, building her 355
 a splendid city here? Are you forgetful
 of what is your own kingdom, your own fate?
 The very god of gods, whose power sways
 both earth and heaven, sends me down to you
 from bright Olympus. He himself has asked me 360
 to carry these commands through the swift air:
 what are you pondering or hoping for
 while squandering your ease in Libyan lands?
 For if the brightness of such deeds is not
 enough to kindle you—if you cannot 365
 attempt the task for your own fame—remember
 Ascanius growing up, the hopes you hold
 for Iūlus, your own heir, to whom are owed
 the realm of Italy and land of Rome."
 So did Cyllene's god speak out. He left 370
 the sight of mortals even as he spoke
 and vanished into the transparent air.

This vision stunned Aeneas, struck him dumb;
 his terror held his hair erect; his voice
 held fast within his jaws. He burns to flee 375
 from Carthage; he would quit these pleasant lands,
 astonished by such warnings, the command
 of gods. What can he do? With what words dare
 he face the frenzied queen? What openings
 can he employ? His wits are split, they shift 380
 here, there; they race to different places, turning
 to everything. But as he hesitated,
 this seemed the better plan: he calls Sergestus
 and Mnestheus and the strong Serestus, and
 he asks them to equip the fleet in silence, 385
 to muster their companions on the shore,
 to ready all their arms, but to conceal
 the reasons for this change; while he himself—
 with gracious Dido still aware of nothing
 and never dreaming such a love could ever 390
 be broken—would try out approaches, seek
 the tenderest, most tactful time for speech,
 whatever dexterous way might suit his case.

And all are glad. They race to carry out
the orders of Aeneas, his commands. 395

But Dido—for who can deceive a lover?—
had caught his craftiness; she quickly sensed
what was to come; however safe they seemed,
she feared all things. That same unholy Rumor
brought her these hectic tidings: that the boats 400
were being armed, made fit for voyaging.
Her mind is helpless; raging frantically,
inflamed, she raves throughout the city—just
as a Bacchante when, each second year,
she is startled by the shaking of the sacred 405
emblems, the orgies urge her on, the cry
“o Bacchus” calls to her by night; Cithaeron
incites her with its clamor. And at last
Dido attacks Aeneas with these words:

“Deceiver, did you even hope to hide 410
so harsh a crime, to leave this land of mine
without a word? Can nothing hold you back—
neither your love, the hand you pledged, nor even
the cruel death that lies in wait for Dido?
Beneath the winter sky are you preparing 415
a fleet to rush away across the deep
among the north winds, you who have no feeling?
What! Even if you were not seeking out
strange fields and unknown dwellings, even if
your ancient Troy were still erect, would you 420
return to Troy across such stormy seas?
Do you flee me? By tears, by your right hand—
this sorry self is left with nothing else—
by wedding, by the marriage we began,
if I did anything deserving of you 425
or anything of mine was sweet to you,
take pity on a fallen house, put off
your plan, I pray—if there is still place for prayers.
Because of you the tribes of Libya, all
the Nomad princes hate me, even my 430
own Tyrians are hostile; and for you
my honor is gone and that good name that once
was mine, my only claim to reach the stars.
My guest, to whom do you consign this dying

woman? I must say 'guest': this name is all
 I have of one whom once I called my husband. 435
 Then why do I live on? Until Pygmalion,
 my brother, batters down my walls, until
 Iarbas the Gaetulian takes me prisoner?
 Had I at least before you left conceived 440
 a son in me; if there were but a tiny
 Aeneas playing by me in the hall,
 whose face, in spite of everything, might yet
 remind me of you, then indeed I should
 not seem so totally abandoned, beaten." 445

Her words were ended. But Aeneas, warned
 by Jove, held still his eyes; he struggled, pressed
 care back within his breast. With halting words
 he answers her at last: "I never shall 450
 deny what you deserve, the kindnesses
 that you could tell; I never shall regret
 remembering Elissa for as long
 as I remember my own self, as long
 as breath is king over these limbs. I'll speak
 brief words that fit the case. I never hoped 455
 to hide—do not imagine that—my flight;
 I am not furtive. I have never held
 the wedding torches as a husband; I
 have never entered into such agreements.
 If fate had granted me to guide my life 460
 by my own auspices and to unravel
 my troubles with unhampered will, then I
 should cherish first the town of Troy, the sweet
 remains of my own people and the tall
 rooftops of Priam would remain, my hand 465
 would plant again a second Pergamus
 for my defeated men. But now Grynean
 Apollo's oracles would have me seize
 great Italy, the Lycian prophecies
 tell me of Italy: there is my love, 470
 there is my homeland. If the fortresses
 of Carthage and the vision of a city
 in Libya can hold you, who are Phoenician,
 why, then, begrudge the Trojans' settling on
 Ausonian soil? There is no harm: it is 475
 right that we, too, seek out a foreign kingdom.

For often as the night conceals the earth
 with dew and shadows, often as the stars
 ascend, afire, my father's anxious image
 approaches me in dreams. Anchises warns 480
 and terrifies; I see the wrong I have done
 to one so dear, my boy Ascanius,
 whom I am cheating of Hesperia,
 the fields assigned by fate. And now the gods'
 own messenger, sent down by Jove himself— 485
 I call as witness both our lives—has brought
 his orders through the swift air. My own eyes
 have seen the god as he was entering
 our walls—in broad daylight. My ears have drunk
 his words. No longer set yourself and me 490
 afire. Stop your quarrel. It is not
 my own free will that leads to Italy."

But all the while Aeneas spoke, she stared
 askance at him, her glance ran this way, that.
 She scans his body with her silent eyes. 495
 Then Dido thus, inflamed, denounces him:

"No goddess was your mother, false Aeneas,
 and Dardanus no author of your race;
 the bristling Caucasus was father to you
 on his harsh crags; Hyrcanian tigresses 500
 gave you their teats. And why must I dissemble?
 Why hold myself in check? For greater wrongs?
 For did Aeneas groan when I was weeping?
 Did he once turn his eyes or, overcome,
 shed tears or pity me, who was his loved one? 505
 What shall I cry out first? And what shall follow?
 No longer now does mighty Juno or
 our Father, son of Saturn, watch this earth
 with righteous eyes. Nowhere is certain trust.
 He was an outcast on the shore, in want. 510
 I took him in and madly let him share
 my kingdom; his lost fleet and his companions
 I saved from death. Oh I am whirled along
 in fire by the Furies! First the augur
 Apollo, then the Lycian oracles, 515
 and now, sent down by Jove himself, the gods'

own herald, carrying his horrid orders.
 This seems indeed to be a work for High Ones,
 a care that can disturb their calm. I do not
 refute your words. I do not keep you back. 520
 Go then, before the winds, to Italy.
 Seek out your kingdom overseas; indeed,
 if there be pious powers still, I hope
 that you will drink your torments to the lees
 among sea rocks and, drowning, often cry 525
 the name of Dido. Then, though absent, I
 shall hunt you down with blackened firebrands;
 and when chill death divides my soul and body,
 a Shade, I shall be present everywhere.
 Depraved, you then will pay your penalties. 530
 And I shall hear of it, and that report
 will come to me below, among the Shadows."

Her speech is broken off; heartsick, she shuns
 the light of day, deserts his eyes; she turns
 away, leaves him in fear and hesitation, 535
 Aeneas longing still to say so much.
 As Dido faints, her servants lift her up;
 they carry her into her marble chamber;
 they lay her body down upon the couch.

But though he longs to soften, soothe her sorrow 540
 and turn aside her troubles with sweet words,
 though groaning long and shaken in his mind
 because of his great love, nevertheless
 pious Aeneas carries out the gods'
 instructions. Now he turns back to his fleet. 545

At this the Teucrians indeed fall to.
 They launch their tall ships all along the beach;
 they set their keels, well-smear'd with pitch, afloat.
 The crewmen, keen for flight, haul from the forest
 boughs not yet stripped of leaves to serve as oars 550
 and timbers still untrimmed. And one could see them
 as, streaming, they rushed down from all the city:
 even as ants, remembering the winter,
 when they attack a giant stack of spelt
 to store it in their homes; the black file swarms 555
 across the fields; they haul their plunder through

the grass on narrow tracks; some strain against
 the great grains with their shoulders, heaving hard;
 some keep the columns orderly and chide
 the loiterers; the whole trail boils with work. 560

What were your feelings, Dido, then? What were
 the sighs you uttered at that sight, when far
 and wide, from your high citadel, you saw
 the beaches boil and turmoil take the waters,
 with such a vast uproar before your eyes? 565
 Voracious Love, to what do you not drive
 the hearts of men? Again, she must outcry,
 again, a suppliant, must plead with him,
 must bend her pride to love—and so not die
 in vain, and with some way still left untried. 570

“Anna, you see them swarm across the beaches;
 from every reach around they rush to sea:
 the canvas calls the breezes, and already
 the boisterous crewmen crown the sterns with garlands.
 But I was able to foresee this sorrow; 575
 therefore I can endure it, sister; yet
 in wretchedness I must ask you for this
 one service, Anna. Treacherous Aeneas
 has honored you alone, confiding even 580
 his secret feelings unto you; and you
 alone know all his soft approaches, moods.
 My sister, go—to plead with him, to carry
 this message to my arrogant enemy.
 I never trafficked with the Greeks at Aulis
 to root the Trojans out, I never sent 585
 a fleet to Pergamus, never disturbed
 his father’s ashes or Anchises’ Shade,
 that now Aeneas should ward off my words
 from his hard ears. Where is he hurrying?
 If he would only grant his wretched lover 590
 this final gift: to wait for easy sailing
 and favoring winds. I now no longer ask
 for those old ties of marriage he betrayed,
 nor that he lose his kingdom, be deprived
 of lovely Latium; I only ask 595
 for empty time, a rest and truce for all
 this frenzy, until fortune teaches me,

defeated, how to sorrow. I ask this—
 pity your sister—as a final kindness.
 When he has granted it, I shall repay
 my debt, and with full interest, by my death.” 600

So Dido pleads, and her poor sister carries
 these lamentations, and she brings them back.
 For lamentation cannot move Aeneas;
 his graciousness toward any plea is gone. 605
 Fate is opposed, the god makes deaf the hero's
 kind ears. As when, among the Alps, north winds
 will strain against each other to root out
 with blasts—now on this side, now that—a stout
 oak tree whose wood is full of years; the roar 610
 is shattering, the trunk is shaken, and
 high branches scatter on the ground; but it
 still grips the rocks; as steeply as it thrusts
 its crown into the upper air, so deep
 the roots it reaches down to Tartarus: 615
 no less than this, the hero; he is battered
 on this side and on that by assiduous words;
 he feels care in his mighty chest, and yet
 his mind cannot be moved; the tears fall, useless.

Then maddened by the fates, unhappy Dido 620
 calls out at last for death; it tires her
 to see the curve of heaven. That she may
 not weaken in her plan to leave the light,
 she sees, while placing offerings on the altars
 with burning incense—terrible to tell— 625
 the consecrated liquid turning black,
 the outpoured wine becoming obscene blood.
 But no one learns of this, not even Anna.
 And more: inside her palace she had built
 a marble temple to her former husband 630
 that she held dear and honored wonderfully.
 She wreathed that shrine with snow-white fleeces and
 holy-day leaves. And when the world was seized
 by night, she seemed to hear the voice and words
 of her dead husband, calling out to Dido. 635
 Alone above the housetops, death its song,
 an owl often complains and draws its long
 slow call into a wailing lamentation.

More, many prophecies of ancient seers
now terrify her with their awful warnings. 640
And in her dreams it is the fierce Aeneas
himself who drives her to insanity;
she always finds herself alone, abandoned,
and wandering without companions on
an endless journey, seeking out her people, 645
her Tyrians, in a deserted land:
even as Pentheus, when he is seized by frenzy,
sees files of Furies, and a double sun
and double Thebes appear to him; or when
Orestes, son of Agamemnon, driven 650
across the stage, flees from his mother armed
with torches and black serpents; on the threshold
the awful goddesses of vengeance squat.

When she had gripped this madness in her mind
and, beaten by her grief, resolved to die, 655
she plotted with herself the means, the moment.
Her face conceals her meaning; on her brow
she sets serenity, then speaks to Anna:
“My sister, wish me well, for I have found
a way that will restore Aeneas to me 660
or free me of my love for him. Near by
the bounds of Ocean and the setting sun
lies Ethiopia, the farthest land;
there Atlas, the incomparable, turns
the heavens, studded with their glowing stars, 665
upon his shoulders. And I have been shown
a priestess from that land—one of the tribe
of the Massylians—who guards the shrine
of the Hesperides; for it was she
who fed the dragon and preserved the holy 670
branches upon the tree, sprinkling moist honey
and poppy, bringing sleep. She promises
to free, with chant and spell, the minds of those
she favors but sends anguish into others.
And she can stay the waters in the rivers 675
and turn the stars upon their ways; she moves
the nightly Shades; makes earth quake underfoot
and—you will see—sends ash trees down the mountains.
Dear sister, I can call the gods to witness,
and you and your dear life, that I resort 680

to magic arts against my will. In secret
 build up a pyre within the inner courtyard
 beneath the open air, and lay upon it
 the weapons of the hero. He, the traitor,
 has left them hanging in my wedding chamber. 685
 Take all of his apparel and the bridal
 bed where I was undone. You must destroy
 all relics of the cursed man, for so
 would I, and so the priestess has commanded."
 This said, she is silent and her face is pale. 690
 But Anna cannot dream her sister hides
 a funeral behind these novel rites;
 her mind is far from thinking of such frenzy;
 and she fears nothing worse than happened when
 Sychaeus died. And so, she does as told. 695

But when beneath the open sky, inside
 the central court, the pyre rises high
 and huge, with logs of pine and planks of ilex,
 the queen, not ignorant of what is coming,
 then wreathes the place with garlands, crowning it 700
 with greenery of death; and on the couch
 above she sets the clothes Aeneas wore,
 the sword he left, and then his effigy.
 Before the circling altars the enchantress,
 her hair disheveled, stands as she invokes 705
 aloud three hundred gods, especially
 Chaos and Erebus and Hecate,
 the triple-shaped Diana, three-faced virgin.
 And she had also sprinkled waters that
 would counterfeit the fountain of Avernus; 710
 she gathered herbs cut down by brazen sickles
 beneath the moonlight, juicy with the venom
 of black milk; she had also found a love charm
 torn from the forehead of a newborn foal
 before his mother snatched it. Dido herself— 715
 with salt cake in her holy hands, her girdle
 unfastened, and one foot free of its sandal,
 close by the altars and about to die—
 now calls upon the gods and stars, who know
 the fates, as witness; then she prays to any 720
 power there may be, who is both just and watchful,
 who cares for those who love without requital.

Night. And across the earth the tired bodies
 were tasting tranquil sleep; the woods and savage
 waters were resting and the stars had reached 725
 the midpoint of their gliding fall—when all
 the fields are still, and animals and colored
 birds, near and far, that find their home beside
 the limpid lakes or haunt the countryside
 in bristling thickets, sleep in silent night. 730
 But not the sorrowing Phoenician; she
 can not submit to sleep, can not admit
 dark night into her eyes or breast; her cares
 increase; again love rises, surges in her;
 she wavers on the giant tide of anger. 735
 She will not let things rest but carries on;
 she still revolves these thoughts within her heart:
 “What can I do? Shall I, whom he has mocked,
 go back again to my old suitors, begging,
 seeking a wedding with Numidians whom 740
 I have already often scorned as bridegrooms?
 Or should I sail away on Trojan ships,
 to suffer there even their harshest orders?
 Shall I do so because the Trojans once
 received my help, and gratefulness for such 745
 old service is remembered by the mindful?
 But even if I wish it, would they welcome
 someone so hated to their haughty ships?
 For, lost one, do you not yet know, not feel
 the treason of the breed of Laomedon? 750
 What then? Shall I accompany, alone,
 the exultant sailors in their flight? Or call
 on all my Tyrians, on all my troops
 to rush upon them? How can I urge on
 those I once dragged from Sidon, how can I 755
 now force them back again upon the sea
 and have them spread their canvas to the winds?
 No; die as you deserve, and set aside
 your sorrow by the sword. My sister, you,
 won over by my tears—you were the first 760
 to weigh me down with evils in my frenzy,
 to drive me toward my enemy. And why
 was it not given me to lead a guiltless
 life, never knowing marriage, like a wild
 beast, never to have touched such toils? I have not 765

held fast the faith I swore before the ashes
of my Sychaeus." This was her lament.

Aeneas on the high stern now was set
to leave; he tasted sleep; all things were ready.
And in his sleep a vision of the god 770
returned to him with that same countenance—
resembling Mercury in everything:
his voice and coloring and yellow hair
and all his handsome body, a young man's—
and seemed to bring a warning once again: 775
"You, goddess-born, how can you lie asleep
at such a crisis? Madman, can't you see
the threats around you, can't you hear the breath
of kind west winds? She conjures injuries
and awful crimes, she means to die, she stirs 780
the shifting surge of restless anger. Why
not flee this land headlong, while there is time?
You soon will see the waters churned by wreckage,
ferocious torches blaze, and beaches flame,
if morning finds you lingering on this coast. 785
Be on your way. Enough delays. An ever
uncertain and inconstant thing is woman."
This said, he was at one with the black night.

The sudden apparition terrifies
Aeneas. And he tears his body free 790
from sleep. He stirs his crewmen: "Quick! Awake!
Now man the benches, comrades, now unfurl
our sails with speed! Down from the upper air
a god was sent to urge us on again,
to rush our flight, to slice our twisted cables. 795
O holy one among the gods, we follow
your way, whoever you may be; again
rejoicing, we shall do as you command.
Be present, help us with your kindness, bring
your gracious constellations to the heavens." 800
He spoke; and from his scabbard snatches up
his glowing sword; with drawn blade, strikes the hawsers.
And all are just as eager, hurrying
to leave the shore; the ships conceal the sea.
They strain to churn the foam and sweep blue waters. 805

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Now early Dawn had left Tithonus' saffron
 bed, scattering new light upon the earth.
 As soon as from her lookout on the tower
 the queen could see the morning whitening,
 the fleet move on with level sails, the shores 810
 and harbors now abandoned, without oarsmen,
 she beat against her lovely breast three times,
 then four, and tore her golden hair, and cried:
 "O Jupiter, you let him go, a stranger
 who mocked our kingdom! Will my men not ready 815
 their weapons, hunt him down, pour from my city
 and rip the galleys from their moorings? Quick!
 Bring torches, spread your sails, and ply your oars!
 What am I saying? Where am I? What madness
 has turned awry what I had meant to do? 820
 Poor Dido, does his foulness touch you now?
 It should have then, when you gave him your scepter.
 This is the right hand, this the pledge of one
 who carries with him, so they say, the household
 gods of his land, who bore upon his shoulders 825
 his father weak with years. And could I not
 have dragged his body off, and scattered him
 piecemeal upon the waters, limb by limb?
 Or butchered all his comrades, even served
 Ascanius himself as banquet dish 830
 upon his father's table? True enough—
 the battle might have ended differently.
 That does not matter. For, about to die,
 need I fear anyone? I should have carried
 my torches to his camp and filled his decks 835
 with fire, destroyed the son, the father, that
 whole race, and then have thrown myself upon them.
 You, Sun, who with your flames see all that is done
 on earth; and Juno, you, interpreter
 and witness of my sorrows; Hecate, 840
 invoked with shrieks, by night, at every city's
 crossways; and you, the Furies; and the gods
 that guard dying Elissa—hear these words
 and turn your power toward my pain; as I
 deserve, take up my prayers. If it must be 845
 that he, a traitor, is to touch his harbor,
 float to his coasts, and so the fates of Jove

demand and if this end is fixed; yet let
 him suffer war and struggles with audacious
 nations, and then—when banished from his borders 850
 and torn from the embrace of Iulus—let him
 beg aid and watch his people's shameful slaughter.
 Not even when he has bent low before
 an unjust peace may he enjoy his kingdom,
 the light that he has wished for. Let him fall 855
 before his time, unburied in the sand.
 These things I plead; these final words I pour
 out of my blood. Then, Tyrians, hunt down
 with hatred all his sons and race to come;
 send this as offering unto my ashes. 860
 Do not let love or treaty tie our peoples.
 May an avenger rise up from my bones,
 one who will track with firebrand and sword
 the Dardan settlers, now and in the future,
 at any time that ways present themselves. 865
 I call your shores to war against their shores,
 your waves against their waves, arms with their arms.
 Let them and their sons' sons learn what is war."

This said, she ran her mind to every side,
 for she was seeking ways with which to slice— 870
 as quickly as she can—the hated light;
 and then, with these brief words, she turned to Barce,
 Sychaeus' nurse—for Dido's own was now
 black ashes in Phoenicia, her old homeland:
 "Dear nurse, call here to me my sister Anna; 875
 and tell her to be quick to bathe her body
 with river water; see that she brings cattle
 and all that is appointed for atonement.
 So must my sister come; while you yourself
 bind up your temples with a pious fillet. 880
 I mean to offer unto Stygian Jove
 the sacrifices that, as is ordained,
 I have made ready and begun, to put
 an end to my disquiet and commit
 to flames the pyre of the Trojan chieftain." 885
 So Dido spoke. And Barce hurried off;
 she moved with an old woman's eagerness.

But Dido, desperate, beside herself
 with awful undertakings, eyes bloodshot

and rolling, and her quivering cheeks flecked
with stains and pale with coming death, now bursts
across the inner courtyards of her palace. 890

She mounts in madness that high pyre, unsheathes
the Dardan sword, a gift not sought for such
an end. And when she saw the Trojan's clothes 895
and her familiar bed, she checked her thought
and tears a little, lay upon the couch

and spoke her final words: "O relics, dear
while fate and god allowed, receive my spirit
and free me from these cares; for I have lived 900
and journeyed through the course assigned by fortune.

And now my Shade will pass, illustrious,
beneath the earth; I have built a handsome city,
have seen my walls rise up, avenged a husband,
won satisfaction from a hostile brother: 905

o fortunate, too fortunate—if only
the ships of Troy had never touched our coasts."
She spoke and pressed her face into the couch.

"I shall die unavenged, but I shall die,"
she says. "Thus, thus, I gladly go below 910
to shadows. May the savage Dardan drink
with his own eyes this fire from the deep
and take with him the omen of my death."

Then Dido's words were done, and her companions
can see her fallen on the sword; the blade 915
is foaming with her blood, her hands are bloodstained.

Now clamor rises to the high rooftop.
Now rumor riots through the startled city.
The lamentations, keening, shrieks of women
sound through the houses; heavens echo mighty 920
wailings, even as if an enemy

were entering the gates, with all of Carthage
or ancient Tyre in ruins, and angry fires
rolling across the homes of men and gods.

And Anna heard. Appalled and breathless, she 925
runs, anxious, through the crowd, her nails wounding
her face; her fists, her breasts; she calls the dying
Dido by name: "And was it, then, for this,

my sister? Did you plan this fraud for me?
Was this the meaning waiting for me when 930
the pyre, the flames, the altar were prepared?

What shall I now, deserted, first lament?
 You scorned your sister's company in death;
 you should have called me to the fate you met;
 the same sword pain, the same hour should have taken 935
 the two of us away. Did my own hands
 help build the pyre, and did my own voice call
 upon our fathers' gods, only to find
 me, heartless, far away when you lay dying?
 You have destroyed yourself and me, my sister, 940
 the people and the elders of your Sidon,
 and all your city. Let me bathe your wounds
 in water, and if any final breath
 still lingers here, may my lips catch it up."
 This said, she climbed the high steps, then she clasped 945
 her half-dead sister to her breast, and moaning,
 embraced her, dried the black blood with her dress.
 Trying to lift her heavy eyes, the queen
 falls back again. She breathes; the deep wound in
 her chest is loud and hoarse. Three times she tried 950
 to raise herself and strained, propped on her elbow;
 and three times she fell back upon the couch.
 Three times with wandering eyes she tried to find
 high heaven's light and, when she found it, sighed.

But then all-able Juno pitied her 955
 long sorrow and hard death and from Olympus
 sent Iris down to free the struggling spirit
 from her entwining limbs. For as she died
 a death that was not merited or fated,
 but miserable and before her time 960
 and spurred by sudden frenzy, Proserpina
 had not yet cut a gold lock from her crown,
 not yet assigned her life to Stygian Orcus.
 On saffron wings dew-glittering Iris glides 965
 along the sky, drawing a thousand shifting
 colors across the facing sun. She halted
 above the head of Dido: "So commanded,
 I take this lock as offering to Dis;
 I free you from your body." So she speaks
 and cuts the lock with her right hand; at once 970
 the warmth was gone, the life passed to the winds.