XI

MOURNING, DEBATE, AND
THE DEATH OF CAMILLA

A Dead Warrior’s Arms

Meanwhile Dawn rose, leaving Ocean behind her. Aeneas, though pressed to take time for the careful burying of friends, though deeply disturbed by the killing, thanked and pledged to the Gods at first light for his triumph. He stood the trunk of a large oak on a barrow, stripped it of branches and hung it with glittering armor, the spoils of a leader, Mezentius—gifts for the potent War-God now. He attached the blood-dripping head-crest, the man’s broken lances, the breastplate (with punctures in twelve places), the shield of brass on the left side. The ivory-hilted sword hung from the neck-place.

Then he began to encourage men who had crowded closely around him, all the leaders who cheered him: “The greatest work’s been done, men. All your remaining fear can vanish. Here are the spoils of a once-proud king, the first fruits of my hand: Mezentius lies here! Now we’ll march on the Latin king and his ramparts. Be spirited, hopeful. Be ready with arms for the forthcoming battle.

No one will stall or confuse us. Flags will be pulled up, Gods will approve, our men will be led from the campground: no sluggish thoughts or worries will stop or delay us. First we’ll commit our friends’ unburred bodies to earth—the only honor they need in Acheron’s death-world. Go and adorn with your last rites their excellent spirits.
They made a pact of blood to win us this country.
Let Pallas be sent first to the town of Evander
in mourning. The man was never lacking in courage.
A black and bitter day killed and removed him.”

Mourning for Pallas

He stopped, in tears, turned and walked to an entrance.
30 Pallas’ lifeless body lay inside and Acoetes,
an old man who’d carried the arms of Evander
back in Arcadia, kept watch. He’d gone with that foster
child he loved into war, but signs had opposed them.
Servants gathered now, a large number of Trojans,
women of Troy, accustomed to grief, letting their hair down.
Indeed when Aeneas himself moved through the doorway
mourners beat their breasts and lifted a raucous
cry to the stars. The building groaned with their sorrow.
Aeneas, regarding the snow-pale features of Pallas,
the propped head and the smooth chest with its open
wound from a spear of Ausonia, wept and addressed him,
“Pitiful boy. Fortune came to me smiling;
why did she envy your life, stop you from seeing
our kingdom, from riding home to your father in triumph?
This was not the promise I gave to your father,
Evander, on leaving. The day he embraced me and gave me
general command he feared and warned me of danger:
fierce and robust men would confront us in battle.
Perhaps right now your father is taken with empty
hope, making vows at altars laden with presents,
just as we follow your dead body—indebted
to none of the Gods now—in rites that seem empty.
Joyless father, to see a son’s heartrending death-march,
not the return he hoped for, none of the triumph
or great promise I made. Still, these wounds are not shameful.
Evander, you’ll see no son run off like a coward
for mere safety. You’ll crave no vile death as a father.
And yet what strength Ausonia’s lost and Iulus is lacking.”

Funeral Procession

When done lamenting he ordered the pitiful body
raised. He sent a thousand picked men from the army
to follow the corpse—a final procession for Pallas—
to share the father’s grief: limited comfort
for so much loss, but owed to a suffering father.
Men skillfully wove the frame of a gentle bier from oak withes and shoots of arbutus. A pile of spread-out leaves covered the pallet. The youthful body then was placed high on the rustic litter, as though a blossom picked by virginal fingers—a drooping hyacinth maybe or delicate lilac, still retaining its own figure and brilliance though Earth, its mother, no longer strengthened or fed it. Now Aeneas brought out two garments of purple, stiffened with gold stitching: Dido of Sidon had made them once by hand, happy to do it, weaving the fine gold herself in the fabric. He spread one robe on the body, a final adornment, and sadly covered the hair, soon to be ashes. He also built a pile of Laurentian war-wealth; he ordered the prizes lead on in the drawn-out procession.

He added weapons taken from enemies, horses; he tied the hands of men behind, to be sent to the lower darkness as victims, their blood to sprinkle the death-fire. He ordered leaders themselves to carry some tree-trunks clapped in armor, with enemies’ names attached to the breast-plates.

Acoetes followed along, joyless, weakened by old age, now smearing his face with a fist or a cheek with a finger, then throwing his whole frame on the ground in prostration. Bloodstained Rutulian chariots were also included. Aethon followed behind, the war-horse of Pallas, shorn of trappings. Large tears wetted his cheekbones.

Two men carried the helmet and spear; but Turnus, who’d killed him, had claimed the rest. A dismal retinue followed: Trojans, Arcadians, all the Tuscans, reversing their weapons.

Farewell to a Good Soldier

After the long line of people had traveled a distance, Aeneas halted. He sighed deeply and told them, “Grisly deaths in the same war call me to others’ grief now. I salute your greatness, Pallas, forever. Good-by forever.” He said no more but directed himself back to the high earth-works and campsite.
Peace for the Living as Well as the Dead

100 Envoys already had come from the town of Latinus, their temples wreathed in olive. They asked for the favor of bodies returned which were wounded and lying afield, permission to cover the dead with an earth-mound: no one fought with beaten, unbreathing men, and Aeneas could help someone he'd once called host and an in-law. Aeneas kindly allowed the truce they requested—he'd hardly refuse—he also questioned, and answered. "What undeserved luck involved you men of Latinus in such a war? Why did you run from the friendship I offered?"

110 You want peace for men deprived of the War-God’s luck, for dead men? I’d gladly concede—for the living. I’d never come here lacking God’s word for a throne-room. I don’t wage war with you people: your king has abandoned my friendship, trusting himself to the army of Turnus: Turnus himself should face death, in all fairness. To end the war by hand, to drive out the Trojans, he should be ready to clash with the arms of Aeneas. A man should live by his own right hand and by heaven. But go now. Cremate your pitiful citizens’ corpses."

An Enemy’s Praise

120 After Aeneas finished the envoys were quiet and stunned. They all glanced at each other in silence. Shortly Drances, an old man who had always reviled and hated the young Turnus, answered Aeneas in turn: "Man of Troy, you’re widely reputed—more widely in war. How shall I praise you and rank you with heaven? Admire your justice more or your war-work? We’ll gladly bring your word to the town of our fathers. If Fortune offers a way in fact we will join you with King Latinus. Turnus can look for another arrangement.

130 We’d even enjoy raising the mass of your destined walls, hoisting Trojan blocks on our shoulders.” All the rest, when he stopped, voiced their agreement.

Time of Mourning

Twelve days were agreed on. Peace was between them. Trojans harmlessly mixed with Latins in forests, wandering ridges where two-edged axes were thudding, felling tall ashtrees and pines that reached to the star-heights.
They worked at cutting scented cedar and chopping oak into wedges. Carts groaned carrying rowan.

_A Father’s Grief_

Rumor already had flown with a story of sorrow that filled Evander’s house and the town of Evander (and Rumor had just now said that Latium’s _victor_ was Pallas). Arcadians rushed to the gates. Following ancient custom they held torches. The long line of a death-march lit up the road, dividing broad fields with its fire-glow. Trojan marchers met them; they merged in a single loud cortege. Soon as mothers could see them close to home, they inflamed the sad city with outcries. Now no force could hold Evander back from the body. He entered the crowd, the bier of Pallas was lowered, he fell forward and clutched him, weeping and sighing. Grief opened a way for his words finally, weakly: “Pallas, this is not what you promised your father. If only you’d trusted the savage War-God with caution! I hardly doubted the novel glory of battle would please you at first and you’d take pride in your weapons; but oh, what first fruits of this too-close war, what a bitter beginning: a cursed young man and none of my prayers or vows heard by Gods. You’re lucky now to be buried, my sacred wife, saved from anguish like this one.

But I’m still living. I beat some Fate; a survivor, the father who’s left. If only I’d followed our Trojan friends, speared by Rutulians, giving my life up: this grim march might have brought the _father_ home and not Pallas. I don’t blame Troy or the pact we agreed on, hands we joined in friendship; misfortune was owed to our old age. And if early death was awaiting my son at least he killed a thousand Volscians beforehand—that helps: he died in Latium leading the Trojans. I cannot give you a worthier funeral, Pallas, than kindly Aeneas will, and those great Phrygian leaders, Tuscan captains, all of Tuscany’s army. They carry superb trophies from men you gave to the Death-God. You too would stand here now, Turnus, a gruesome tree-trunk in armor, if Pallas had matched you in muscle and years. But why keep Trojans from war with my sadness? Go back—and remember to bring a charge to your leader:
my hateful life drags on since Pallas has fallen:
your own right hand owes the killing of Turnus
to son, you see, and to father. The only place for your service
and luck is there. For me I seek no pleasure in living;
it's not right. I'll reach my son deep in the Death-world."

_Around the Pyres_

In time the Dawn-Goddess brought nourishing daylight
back to these wretched people. And brought back struggle and
hardship:
Aeneas, a father, heaped up pyres now on the winding
beach, along with Tarchon. Every family carried
its own dead (their fathers' custom). Fires were ignited.
Smoke obscured the sky’s depths with its darkness.
They circled redhot pyres three times dressed in resplendent
armor. They rode three times on horseback around them,
watching the sad death-fire and loudly lamenting.
Tears sprinkled the ground; they sprinkled the weapons.
Cries of people rose to the sky with a rasping of trumpets.
Soldiers threw spoils on the fire pulled from the bodies
of dead Latins: helmets, elegant sword-blades,
bridles, heat-scarred wheels, familiar tokens,
the men's very own shields and comfortless lances.
Many bodies of bulls fell for the Death-God.
Stiff-haired swine and sheep taken from every
field were bled and burned. Mourners who witnessed
their friends' cremation along the shoreline protected
the charred remains—not turning away till the humid
night transformed sky into glittering star-fire.

_More Days of Sorrow_

No less grief elsewhere afflicted the Latins.
They built countless pyres and buried the bodies
of many men in the ground. Others they carried
to nearby fields, or sent back to their cities.
The rest they burned—a mixed-up, immense heaping of dead men
lacking distinction and number. Everywhere ravaged
plains glowed with clustered fires as though they competed.
A third Dawn parted the cool shadows of heaven
and still they mourned, scraping the deep ashes and jumbled
bones from pyres. They heaped up warm earth for a death-mound.
New Hatred of War

But truly in homes of the rich town of Latinus
the wailing was most drawn out, the mourning extremest.
Mothers and bleak young wives, affectionate sisters,
their hearts drained, boys deprived of their fathers
all damned the appalling war and the engagement of Turnus.
His own sword, they demanded, should settle the conflict:
he'd claimed honor first and Italy's kingdom.

Drances fiercely riled them: "The call is for Turnus
alone: we only want Turnus in combat."
But plenty of people expressed other opinions:
for Turnus the great name of the queen was a safeguard;
he'd earned prizes in war and fame could support him.

The Wrong News

But now, in the midst of all that heat and commotion,
look: sullen envoys brought back word from the city
of great Diomedes that all their work was for nothing.
Gifts of gold, intense pleas, all of that labor
and cost had done no good: the Latins must look for
help elsewhere, or make peace with the Trojan commander.
King Latinus himself slumped. Distress overwhelmed him.

A Major Gathering

Angry Gods had willed and warned that Aeneas
was fated to come. Seeing fresh gravesites before him,
the king summoned a major council. Heads of the people
were called; they came to the high house by his order,
bustling through crowded streets to assemble
in royal halls. Latinus sat in the center,
extremely old; sceptered, but hardly contented.

Ill Tidings Repeated

He told the men just back from the Aetolian city
now to say what they'd heard, insisting on all the responses
in proper sequence. Conversation was silenced.
Venulus started speaking, complying with orders.
"My countrymen, after we conquered or worked through
every danger we saw the camp of that Greek, Diomedes:
we grasped a hand that blasted Ilium's country!
He'd won some land in Apulia now and was building
a town, Argyripa, named for his fatherland's people.
After he gave permission to speak in his presence
we set forth gifts and told him the name of our country,
described our attackers, and why we'd come to his campsite.

**Sufferings of the Conquerors**

"Having quietly heard us out he responded,
'Ah, you happy men of the kingdom of Saturn,
ancient Ausonians! What Luck has troubled your peaceful
realm and provoked you to start a war so uncertain?
Every man whose blade polluted a Trojan
plain, not counting losses in fights near the cliff-steep
walls—the Simois buried those men—all of us suffered
unspeakable pain through the world: we paid for our evil.
Even Priam would pity our band! Consider Minerva's
grim star, avenging Cephrenus, cliffs of Euboea—
after the war we were driven to one shore or another.
Atreus' son Menelaus was exiled far as the pillars
of Proteus. Ulysses faced the Cyclops of Etna.
Why recall dethroned Pyrrhus or routed
House-Gods of Idomeneus, Locrians living on beaches
of Africa? Agamemnon himself, that leader of hardy
Greeks, fell at his own door by the hand of a vicious
woman—adultery ambushed the winner of Asia!
Gods prevent me too from seeing my homeland,
the altar and wife I desire, and Calydon's beauty.
Even now signs and visions alarm and pursue me—
friends lost, climbing for air while they wander
a river as birds on the wing—how horribly punished
are all my people!—they screech on crags as if weeping.
What else can I hope for now, from the moment
I madly swung my sword at the form of a Goddess?
I went for Venus: I wounded her hand with my weapon.
No: never drive me back to such fighting.
I'll wage no war with Trojans after uprooting
Troy. I don't recall the old malice with pleasure.
The gifts you bring me here from the land of your fathers
might go to Aeneas. I faced his dangerous weapons,
I fought him by hand, trust my experience: standing
high by a shield he'll twirl that spear like a whirlwind.
Indeed if Ida's country had borne two more like Aeneas,
Trojan force would have reached Inachus' city,
Fates would have turned around, and Greece would be mourning.
Each time we stalled at a hard wall of the Trojans,
there was the hand of Aeneas or Hector, obstructing

290 Greek triumph. They held us back for a decade.
Both were known for outstanding armor and spirit;
Aeneas, for reverence first. Join in a treaty
if luck provides. Beware of fighting that army.’
Now you’ve heard the king’s answer, my peerless
King, and what he thinks about war on a grand scale.”

Hope for Compromise

A worried and restless murmur ran through the Latin
crowd when the envoy finished: the way that a river,
blocked or slowed by rocks, may turn into grumbling rapids,
the nearby banks a noisy growling of water.

300 Soon as the anxious talk lapsed into silence
the king prayed to Gods on the high throne and responded,
“To settle this urgent matter before had been better,
my fellow Latins. I wish we’d done so—not to be calling
a council now with enemies camped by our city.
My people: this war is outlandish, the nation we fight with
descended from Gods, invincible, never exhausted
in battle—when beaten they can’t let go of their weapons!
You held out hope for aid from Aetolian forces:
drop it. And self-trust? You see how it’s thinned out:

310 the rest of our cause lies piecemeal or wasted
before your eyes; your hands can touch all our resources.
I blame no one. Everything manhood was able
to do was done. The whole kingdom’s body was tested.
Now, though things are doubtful, here’s the judgment I lean to,
briefly explained. Give me all your attention.
I own some old land close to Tuscany’s River,
running far west beyond the Sicanian border.
Rutulians plow those hard hills, and Auruncans
work to plant them. It’s harsh country for grazing.

320 The whole region of high plain and pine-covered mountain
can go in friendship to Troy. We’ll ratify treaties
fair to us both. We’ll call them friends of our kingdom.
They’ll settle and build walls if they greatly desire to.
Or, if they plan to capture the land of another
people, we’ll help them set sail from our country:
we’ll build them twenty ships of Italian oakwood—
more, if they’re able to man them—plenty of timber
lies by the water. They’ll outline the manner and number
of ships; we’ll furnish bronze, workmen and boatyard.
330 To give my word as well and firm up the treaty
   I'm pleased to send a hundred envoys from Latium’s
   finest families, hands extending the branches
   of peace and presenting gifts: gold and ivory talents,
   a throne and white robe, signs of our kingship.
   Think it all through. Help us. Our state is exhausted.”

Turnus Challenged

Drances now stood up. Resentful of Turnus’
   glory—bitter spurs of envy had pricked him—
   the man was wealthy and skilled in speech. Though his war-hand
   had cooled, people valued his leadership highly.

340 Strongly rebellious, taking pride in his mother’s
   noble birth (what he took from his father is unclear),
   he burdened the council with words and built up their anger:
   “You ask advice on a matter that’s puzzling to no one,
   my good king. We need no speech, everyone knows it:
   Luck’s come down on our land, though we say it in whispers.
   That man with the wrong omens and contrary manner
   should let us talk freely and stop his hot- airing.
   (I speak in spite of a sword, his threats to destroy me.)
   Scores of our sun-like leaders we see are collapsing,

350 a whole city sunk in grief; he jabs at the Trojan
   camp, sure of escape, scaring the sky with his weapons!
   My excellent king, you can add one more to the many
   gifts you’ve pledged and ordered sent to the Trojans—
   don’t let one person’s violence rule you—
   your own daughter. As father give her a splendid
   wedding, the man she deserves, and join in a permanent peace-
   pact.
   But now, if deep terror holds our thoughts and emotions,
   let’s call on the man himself: we beg your indulgence!
   Yield, renounce these claims to kingdom and country.

360 Why throw such miserable people so often at open
danger? You’re the cause and crown of Latium’s trouble.
   War won’t save us: peace is everyone’s prayer,
   Turnus, peace, and a single definite promise.
   I’ll be the first—you think I’m hateful, it may be,
   let’s not stall there—I’ll beg humbly: pity your people,
   drop this rage, you’ve lost, leave it. We’ve witnessed
   enough death and bloodshed, enough farmland abandoned.
   If glory concerns you still, if plenty of power
   remains in your arm, if you set your heart on a princess’s dowry,
trust that heart, dare to advance on Aeneas.
What if a royal bride matters to Turnus—
our lives are worthless? A mob of unmourned and unburied
dotting the plain? You, if strength is inside you,
a trace of your fatherland’s War-God, face your provoker and fight
him.”

To Fight On
Drances’ words ignited the fury of Turnus.
He’d moaned and grunted; now he passionately answered,
“Plenty of words, Drances, you’re always orating—
when war demands fists. When elders are summoned
you’re here first; but councils should not be filled with the chatter
you fly on grandly and safely, not while bulwarks are staving
enemies off, while blood’s filling our trenches.
Go on with your usual thundering eloquence, charge me
with fear, Drances—you, a stacker of corpses
yourself among Trojans, gilding the field with your welter
or trophies! Whatever real strength can accomplish
you’re free to try; indeed the enemy’s close by,
don’t look far, he circles the walls in abundance.
Why put it off, charge right in! Is your War-God
forever a windy speech and a pair of escaping heels?
So I’m ‘defeated.’ You dirt, will anyone fairly
prove I’m beaten? Look at the Tiber cresting with Trojan
blood, a whole branch and root of Evander’s
family fallen, Arcadians stripped of their armor.
Hulking Pandarus hardly found me ‘defeated,’
or Bitias, faced and dispatched with a thousand in one day
to Hell’s God—and Trojan earthworks had me surrounded.
‘The war’s not healthy’? Sing that brainless song to a Trojan
ear or your own. You always persist in unsettling
men with your pompous fear. You upgrade the power
of people conquered twice and downgrade arms of the Latins.
Myrmidon chiefs are afraid of war with the Trojans
now, Diomedes and Larisaean Achilles are shuddering,
the Aufidus River turns back from the wavy Adriatic!
Or else a play-acting liar pretends to be frightened
at all my wrath; he spices deceit with his trembling.
Don’t move back! My hand will never deprive you
of life. Live with yourself and your petty emotion.
I turn now to the deep concern of my Father.
If you no longer have much hope in our army,
if we’re so friendless after losing a single
skirmish, drained and wrecked, our luck irreversible,
sue for peace. Extend your hand and be passive.
Still, if only our true courage were present!
I’d hold that man outstanding in spirit, blessed in his labor
before all others, who’d hate to see such a failure,
who’d sooner grovel in dust, bite it and die there.
If we’re still strong, therefore, with healthy resources,

Italian cities and people remaining to help us;
further, if Trojans gained glory through much of
their own bleeding and dying—all of us entered
that war-storm; why be ashamed and recoil on the very
doorstep? Why should we quail right now, when the trumpets
have not yet sounded? The struggle and change of a single
day can improve much. Fortune may toy with a people
then set them on solid ground again when she alters.
So. ‘No help from Diomedes and Arpi.’
Still Messapus will help, and Tolumnius gladly.

Many people have sent their leaders, and ample
renown follows each man picked from Laurentine and Latin
fields. Camilla too commands an excellent cohort,
Volscan columns of bronze-flowering riders.
And what if the Trojans want me alone in a combat?
Do I alone obstruct the common good and your pleasure?
Victory never hated or ran from these fingers:
I won’t stop striving, hoping for this: I will test him,
I’ll charge Aeneas with verve, let him equal Achilles
in size or strap on armor crafted by Vulcan’s

hands! I’ve sworn my life to my Father, Latinus.
I am Turnus, second to none of our leaders
in courage. Aeneas wants me alone? I ask him to call me!
And Drances? He’d rather not appease with his own death
Gods who are angry. If honor and strength are required, he won’t
bear it.”

New Cries of War

So they argued together, raising a number
of doubts. But Aeneas had broken camp and was moving,
a messenger rushed to the royal palace, an uproar
rose that filled the city with great consternation.
Trojans had formed ranks and stood by the Tiber,
Tuscans had come downhill, a battlefield filled up.
Minds were instantly stunned. Hearts of the people
quavered; hard spurs prodded their outrage. 
Men nervously scrambled for swords. "Weapons!" they shouted. 
Fathers muttered and mourned them sadly. A tumult 
everywhere surged through the air, loud disagreements 
resembling flocks of starlings that happen to settle 
in deep groves, or swans on the fish-filled Padusa 
River, gabbling hoarsely and loudly through marshes. 
"Yes, you people"—Turnus wrested the moment—
460 "counsel and plan things, praise a peace-pact and sit here 
while armed men assault your kingdom!" He'd finished 
with talk: he left the high hall in a hurry. 
"You, Volusus: arm your Volscian detachments, 
lead the Rutulians," he said. "Equip your horsemen, Messapus. 
Cover the broad plain, Coras—you and your brother. 
Some of you block the city gates: take to the towers. 
The rest follow my lead and charge when I tell you."

Rushed Defenses

People immediately ran from the whole town to the wall-tops. 
Latinus, the father himself, abandoned the council. 
470 A sorry hour had disturbed the high design he had worked with. 
He often blamed himself for not accepting Aeneas 
before the city, and calling the Trojan son-in-law freely. 
Now trenches were dug near gates. Boulders were hauled up 
with stakes. The hoarse and brazen signal for bloody 
war sounded. Boys mingled with mothers 
ringing the wall—everyone called to the desperate struggle.

The Mothers' Curse

The queen, too, borne by a large body of women 
high uphill to the fortress and temple of Pallas, 
offered gifts, her virgin daughter Lavinia close by 
480 (a cause of the grave crisis), her eyes becomingly downcast. 
Mothers entered the temple, filled it with incense 
smoke, and grim prayer poured through the eminent doorway: 
"Our strength in war, Protectress, Virgin of Triton: 
crack the spear of that Phrygian bandit and sprawl him 
flat on the ground. Splatter his blood on your portals."

An Unconfined Horse

Turnus equipped himself for war in a frenzy: 
already he'd clapped on the auburn breastplate that bristled 
with scales of bronze, and greaves were his leg-guards.
Head still bare, tying a sword at the hipbone,
he rushed from the fortress heights like a gold coruscation,
spirits leaping with hope in advance of his rival,
just like a stallion that snaps a tether and gallops
free of the stall at last, reaches an open
field, heads for a herd of mares in a pasture
or swims a well-known stream, familiar water,
then leaps back out, neck held high in a whinny
of pleasure, hair playing on nape and on withers.

**Exceptional Courage**

Camilla galloped to meet him, the Volscian cohort
around her, right to the very gates, where the war-queen
dismounted. Her whole company followed by jumping
down from their horses. Then she addressed him:
“Turnus, if confidence rightly belongs to the bravest,
I promise to charge Aeneas’ cavalry boldly,
to go and confront alone Tuscany’s horsemen!
Let my hand be first in testing the danger of battle;
you should stand by the wall protecting the city.”

**Battle Assignments**

Turnus stared at the fearsome girl and he answered,
“Virgin pride of Italy! How can I thank you,
what return can I offer? For now, a share in this conflict,
because your spirits outleap everything, truly.
Scouts have returned, reports are firm that Aeneas
has brashly sent some light cavalry forward
to rattle the plain. Mounting a steep and deserted
ridge himself, he’ll march down on the city.
I plan a surprise attack in some canopied forest:
I’ll block both of the path’s escape-routes with soldiers.
You take out the Tuscan horsemen, combining
your flag with tough Messapus, the men of Tiburtus,
and Latin troops. Assume the cares of a leader.”

He stopped, encouraged Messapus to fight in the same way,
rallied friends and leaders, then left for Aeneas.

**Taking the High Ground**

A valley curved sharply: good for an army’s
ambush or ruse from dense cover, the darkened
and narrow trail was flanked and crowded on both sides;
a tight entrance led to a dangerous outlet.
Level ground lay far above on the mountain
ridgeline, less marked but safe for a lookout,
whether battle be joined from the left or the right side,
or heavy stones rolled from a stand on the hilltop.

530 Turnus marched up here by familiar trail-signs.
He halted in treacherous bush and held his position.

A War-queen’s Past and Future

Diana meanwhile spoke from her throne in the heavens
to Opis, an agile girl in her friendly and sacred
company. Sad words came from Latona’s
daughter: “My girl, Camilla enters a cruel
war wearing our armor now, though it’s futile.
She’s dearer than any other. It’s not an impulsive
love of Diana, some novel sweetness that moves me.
When Metabus left the old town of Privernum,

540 expelled for his hated rule and insolent power,
he fled with this child. He dodged fights in the city
and took this friend into exile. He altered Casmilla
slightly, her mother’s name, and called her Camilla.
He carried her close to his own heart while he headed
for lonely woods on a long ridgeline. Everywhere weapons
fiercely pressed them, Volscians hurriedly tried to surround
them,

and look: a river blocked their escape—the Amasenus,
bubbling and spilling over its high banks from a heavy
downpour. Ready to swim, he paused out of anxious

550 love for the child, his dear burden. With everything turning
inside him he made an abrupt and reluctant decision.
By chance he carried a large spear in his forceful
warrior’s hand, of oakwood, knotty and seasoned.
He wrapped his daughter in corktree bark and he lashed her
tight to the weapon, cinching the two at the middle.
His huge hand poised, he prayed to the heavens:
‘Dear virgin Diana, protector of forest,
I give, as the father himself, this child: the weapon she clings to
first and humbly is yours. She runs from the enemy: take her,

560 Goddess, I beg you. She trusts a wind now which is doubtful.’
He finished, cocked his arm and lunged—and the weapon
arched over the roar and swirl of the water:
Casmilla sadly flew on a whistling javelin.
Metabus, now with a large crowd pressing him closely,
threw himself in the river. He crossed it and pulled from
a grassy bank the spear and the girl, his gift for Diana.
No house or walled city now would accept him.
Nor would the wild nature of Metabus want one:
he passed the time in lonely mountains with sheep-men.

Camilla lived in woods near frightening wolf-dens.
He nursed her with milk from the mare of a feral
herd, squeezing the teats for the soft lips of his daughter.
The child no sooner had taken first steps on her tender
feet but he placed a sharp lance in her fingers
and hung from her small shoulder a bow and some arrows.
No gold in her hair, no long robe for her clothing:
hers head and back were draped with the skin of a tiger.
Already her soft hand might hurtle a youngster’s
lance or whirl overhead the lean thong of a slingshot,

downing a white swan or Strymonian egret.
Many mothers in towns of Tuscany vainly
longed for this daughter; she only rejoiced in Diana,
preserving her love of chastity, constantly caring
for weapons. How I wish this conflict had never
come to possess her—to try provoking the Trojans!
She’d now be one of our consort, close to a Goddess.
Hurry, my Nymph. Bitter Fates will oppress her.
Glide from the sky, visit the land of the Latins
where grim fighting is joined under contrary omens.

Here are my weapons. Take an arrow for vengeance:
whoever profanes or wounds her inviolate body
must pay likewise in blood—Italian or Trojan.
Then in a cavelike cloud I’ll carry her wretched
body myself, the armor unstripped, to a tomb in her homeland.”

Battle Lines Joined

Opis flew, when she ended, through light heavenly breezes,
shrouded in dark cloud that sounded like whirlwind.
Trojan forces meanwhile moved on the city.
Tuscan leaders, a whole army of horsemen,
formed numbered sections. All of the flatland

grumbled when horses pranced and jerked at the tight-held
bridles, turning and twisting. The far field was an iron
bristling of spears. The plain flared with a lifting of weapons.
Nonetheless Messapus and fast-riding Latins,
Coras (his brother) and virgin Camilla’s battalion
appeared on the opposite field, moving their right hands
back on long-projecting spears or rattling their arrows.
The sides came closer. Horses whinnied and fretted. They moved down to a spear-throw distance where each side paused. A sudden shout: they kicked at their frantic horses and shot forward, everywhere weapons were flying, thick as the gloom of a snowstorm blocking the sky out. Tyrrenhus and wild Aconteus, charging, collided and speared each other right off, the first to go sprawling and loudly screaming. Their mounts fractured each other, chest rupturing chest, Aconteus hitting the ground like a bolt, or a weight flung from a stone-sling, thrown far and headlong. His life scattered in crosswind.

Pursuers Become the Pursued

Already some Latin ranks were buckling and turning. Chucking shields they galloped back to the city with Trojan squadrons behind them led by Asilas. They all approached the gates; but the Latins, reversing again with a yell, pulled at the soft necks of their horses: now the Trojans fled, letting their reins out. The way surf charges and turns into backwash, one time rushing the beach and leaping on rockpiles, a wash of swirling foam far up the beachsand, then it quickly retreats, it seethes and sucks at the gravel, swishes away from the shore in a sliding of water: Tuscans drove Rutulians twice to the city and twice were routed, glancing back with their shields up.

Fierce Infighting

But after a third charge they all were entangled in close fighting. Man picked out man from each column. Now truly the wounded and dying groaned in a sloshing of blood; weapons and human bodies were jumbled with writhing half-dead horses. Fighting grew fiercer: Orsilochus hurled a spear at Remulus’ stallion (afraid to attack the man), lodging the weapon behind an ear. Mad from the blow, the animal reared up high, chest out, frantically thrashing with forelegs—Remulus struck the ground and rolled there. Catillus cut down Iolla and then Herminius, massive in body and armor, imposing in spirit, with shoulders and blond head bare. Wounds had not scared him: he’d openly faced each weapon. The quivering javelin drove through his broad shoulders: the man knotted in torment.
Dark blood everywhere gushed. Soldiers inflicted death with swords or looked themselves for honorable death-wounds.

_Amazonian War-work_

An Amazon right in the center thrived on the slaughter. Wearing a quiver, baring a breast for combat, in one place Camilla heavily rained her flexible lances; elsewhere she snatched up a strong axe without tiring. She shouldered Diana’s golden bow and her rattling arrows even when forced back and retreating—she turned in flight to aim the bow and its arrow. Hand-picked friends ringed her: the virgin Larina, Tulla, the bronze axe-wielder Tarpeia: Italian girls Camilla had chosen herself like a Goddess, graceful and fine in peacetime, comrades in wartime. They looked like Amazons marching to battle in painted armor in Thrace, drumming the Thermodon River, whether Hippolyta led them or Penthesilea, returning in Mars’ chariot, raising tumultuous welcome with crescent shields, women leaping in columns.

_The Killings of Camilla_

Who was the first and last to fall by your weapons, bitter virgin? How many dead did you litter the ground with? Euneus, Clytius’ son, first confronted your spear-shaft: its length pierced his open chest and he coughed up bloody dribble. He fell in some red-spattered gravel and bit it, the wound fatal: he groveled and died there. Liris next and Pagasus: one of them clinging to reins when a stricken horse pitched him, the other coming to lend an unarmed hand to a struggling friend—they both went headlong. She added Amastrus, Hippotas’ son. She chased, pressed from a distance and speared Harpalycus, Tereus, Demophoön, Chromis. Whenever the girl’s hand hurtled a weapon a man of Phrygia fell. Ornytus, far off and strangely armored, rode an Apulian horse like a hunter. A hide peeled from a bullock covered the soldier’s broad shoulders. The open jaw of a massive wolf rested its white fangs on his forehead. He’d armed himself with a farmer’s pike to go wheeling around in the crowd, by a whole head taller than others.
Camilla caught him (his column had turned, it was easy) and stabbed him. She spoke down to him, angrily taunting: “Tuscan! You thought you were chasing deer in some forest? The hour has come to cancel your bragging—a woman’s weapon has done it! At least you’ll carry a signal name to your father’s grave: you fell by the spear of Camilla.”

Butes died next and Orsilochus—two of the biggest Trojans. She drove a spear from behind into Butes’ neck, by the back-guard and helmet, that glistened with sweat—by the small shield that hung from one shoulder. She raced from Orsilochus, widely tracing a circle, then fooled him by circling within: she pursued her pursuer. She rose up high to double the force of an axe-blow right through the armor, through human bone, while he pleaded and begged. Warm brain spattered his face-wound.
The soldier son of Aunus met her and stopped short, abruptly afraid at the sight. An Appenine dweller, hardly the last (if the Fates allowed) Ligurian liar, seeing no way to escape now from the combat, no chance to turn aside the onrushing war-queen, he planned to trick her. He started a clever deception, saying, “What’s so special? A woman relying for strength on a horse? Trust yourself as my equal: don’t ride off, fight me alone, armed and on foot here. Then we’ll know whose glory is breezy or shallow.”
The speech burned and enraged her. Bitterly smarting, she handed her horse to a friend and fearlessly stood there, shield unmarked, sword bare, a match for her rival. The man figured the trick had worked and he quickly took off by flicking the reins and digging the metal spurs in his mount: he rode away like a coward.
“Ligurian fool! Your spirits are proud and elated for nothing: you’ve tried an oily trick of your country, but lies won’t return you safely to Aunus, that bluffer.”
The girl spoke while she ran, quick-footed, fire-like, crossing the path of his mount and arresting the bridle:

she faced the man and took her toll of enemy bloodshed, the way the Sun-God’s hawk on the wing will easily follow a flapping dove from its high cliff into cloudbank, seize, pin it and tear the flesh with its talons—bloodied and ripped-out feathers drift in the breezes.
**Tarchon Harangues his Men**

The Father of Gods and men however was watching
all this closely, seated high on Olympus.
Jupiter stirred the Tuscan, Tarchon, to battle
fiercely: the hard spurs of the God trebled his fury.
Tarchon drove a horse straight at the carnage:
where lines yielded he called to the wings, he harangued them
each by name and reformed ranks scattered in battle.
"Never ashamed, you Tuscans? Forever inactive?
What fear, what gross laziness comes to your spirits!
Some woman wrecks your lines and gets you to scatter!
Why then carry your swords, your impotent weapons?
You're not so lazy at night grappling with Venus,
dancing with Bacchus when curved flute-songs invite you!
You like looking for sweets, the full goblets and tables
you crave and admire, some willing seer announcing
your rites in a deep grove with fat-dripping victims."

**Eagle and Snake**

He stopped and spurred his horse at the enemy center,
expecting to die there. Charging Venulus madly,
he yanked the man from his mount; he managed to hold him
close to his chest with all his strength as he rode off.
A cry rose to the sky from all of the Latins,
who turned and watched while Tarchon raced like a brushfire,
bearing the armed man through the field. Breaking the metal
spear-tip of Venulus, Tarchon probed for an open
spot for a mortal wound. Venulus fought back,
holding the hand from his throat, muscle to muscle.
Just like a golden eagle clutching a serpent
in high flight, gripping the prey with its talons:
the wounded snake writhes and maneuvers its body,
erecting bristly scales it struggles to hold up
its hissing mouth, but the bird rips it as keenly
with hooked beak, the air lashed by its wingbeats:
that's how Tarchon carried his prize from Tiburtine
lines, exulting. Maeonian sons followed their leader’s
example, trusting the outcome, and charged.

**Watching for a Chance to Kill**

Now it was Arruns

in debt to the Fates. Shrewdly he circled ahead of Camilla,
so quick with her lance. He took no difficult chances. Wherever the woman madly charged at a cluster there was Arruns calmly watching her movements. Wherever she won, leaving some rival behind her, the young man jerked his reins calmly and quickly. Approaching her here, then there, he traveled through every arc of a circle. His dead-sure spear maliciously quivered.

_Fascination with Gold_

By chance a priest once devoted to Cybele, Chloreus, gleamed in outstanding Phrygian arms in the distance.

770 He rode a froth-flecked horse covered in scaly pelts of brass linked with gold and looking like feathers. The man shone in far-fetched purple and dusk-blue; he aimed his Lycian bow with Gortynian arrows. He sported a prophet’s helmet of gold and a golden bow on one shoulder; he’d gathered the shimmering folds of a saffron linen chlamys together using a sun-gold clasp. His tunic and leggings were wildly embroidered. Now whether to fasten Trojan spoils to a temple or capture and wear a priest’s gold on her person, Camilla blindly trailed him, hunting the one man through every skirmish and brawl. It was careless: a girl’s love for prize fashion had fired her.

_A Prayer to the Sun-God_

Arruns at last would seize the moment. In hiding he shook a spear and prayed Gods for their guidance: “Apollo, highest Lord and holy Soracte’s protector, we paid you worship first by heaping our burning pinewood and walking across, upright and trusting, stepping on glowing embers to show our devotion. All-powerful Father, help me to wipe out shame on our army. I don’t crave a trophy of armor, no booty for beating a girl—other achievements will bring me prizes—but till this frightening menace falls wounded, I go to my Father’s town in dishonor.”

_The God Complies Partly_

Phoebus heard the prayer and decided to grant it in part; the rest he dispersed in a hurrying crosswind. He gave his nod to a sudden and violent killing,
Camilla’s death; he gave no nod to Arruns’ returning
to see his high homeland—that prayer turned into Southwind.

_A Frightened, Escaping Wolf_

Then Arruns gave a spear to the wind and it whistled,
turning every Volscian head sharply to look at
the war-queen. Camilla herself was thinking of nothing,
neither the wind nor the weapon’s approach and its whirring—
until the spear struck. It clung to her naked
breast and deeply drank the blood of the virgin.
Friends ran to the queen in a turmoil and caught her
fall. Arruns fled in absolute terror:
elation mixed with fear but he dared not rely on
arms clashing further with arms of the virgin.
The way a stray wolf will escape, disappearing

in high mountains before some hostile weapons pursue him
after he’s killed a large bullock or shepherd:
aware of the rash act he heads for a thicket,
tucking that shivering tail under his belly:
Arruns restlessly hid from sight in the same way,
content to escape by losing himself in the army.

_A Last Word for Turnus_

Camilla was dying. Her hand tugged at the weapon.
The steel tip lay deep, through the bones of her ribcage.
She paled and slumped. Her eyes, caught in a death-chill,
were downcast; her once ruddy color had left her.

She breathlessly spoke to Acca, one of her equals,
the one before all others Camilla was sure of,
sharing concern. “Acca, my sister,” she told her,
“my strength held out till now. The end is a bitter
wound—everything greyed or blackened around me.
Hurry and take a final order to Turnus:
succeed, fight hard—keep Troy from our city!
Good-by—all ready.” While speaking, letting some reins go,
she slipped to the ground, resisting, but gradually colder.
Her whole body slackened; Death was arresting

the limp neck and propped head. She gave up her armor,
sighed, protested. Her life ran out among shadows.

_Intensified Struggle_

Now an enormous cry went up to strike at the golden
stars. Fighting increased with the fall of Camilla.
The entire Trojan force charged, together with Tuscan leaders’ close-ranked groups and Arcadian wings of Evander.

_A Goddess Takes her Revenge_

All this time Opis had sat high on a mountain.
Diana’s observer had watched the fighting unruffled.
After seeing the grim wounding and death of Camilla,
the noise of outraged men in the distance around her,
she sighed and spoke with deep pity and caring:
“You paid too much, young girl—too cruelly punished
for having tried to provoke Trojans in battle.
It did no good to worship Diana in lonely
woods or carry her arrows high on your shoulder.
Still, your queen won’t leave you disgraced in the final
hour of life: your name will last among nations
after your death: they’ll know your pain was avenged here.
Whoever profaned and wounded your body will suffer
the death he deserves.” At the base of a prominent mountain,

shaded by dark oaks, lay a huge earthen construction,
the tomb of Dercennus, an ancient king of Laurentum.
The lovely Opis lightly leaped on the barrow
and paused, eyeing Arrun first from that death-mound.
Seeing him there in high spirits and foolishly gloating
she said, “Why do you wander off? Approach me and die here!
Step up close: take your proper reward for destroying
Camilla. You’ll die in fact by the bow of Diana.”
She spoke like a Thracian girl, pulled from the golden
quiver a feathered arrow and angrily drew back,

stretching the bow so much that its end-points were almost
touching, her hands on a line, her left at the iron
tip, her right on the string close to her nipple.
Arrun instantly heard the whizz of that weapon,
the stirring of air. Metal drove in his body.
A final groan and gasp. Followers left him
there in the ignorant dust of the field—they forgot him.
Opis rose on her wings to the air of Olympus.

_A City Imminently Threatened_

Her light horsemen had run off first at the loss of Camilla.
Rutulians broke and ran; a bitter Atinus

and disjoined leaders fled, deserting their sections,
turning their mounts: they made for the city and safety.
No one could hold back Trojans who pressed them
and brought on death, no one’s weapons could stop them.
Slack-stringed bows hung from lagging Rutulian shoulders.
Hooves of their horses beat on the crumbled ground at a gallop.
A dark dust-cloud swirled and rolled to the city
gates. Mothers beat their breasts when they looked out.
Cries of women rose to the sky and the star-heights.
Men who came back first in a rush for the open
gates got mixed in the crowd and crush of enemy soldiers:
they faced a miserable death right there at the entrance,
close to a wall or secure home of a father,
stabbed and dying. Other people were locking
the gates, not daring to open the town any longer
to take in pleading friends—which led to a horrible slaughter
of soldiers guarding a gate or charging at weapons.
Those outside, their parents watching and weeping,
were driven headlong down into trenches and rolled there.
Others paid out reins of their mounts and insanely
smashed into gates or posts, though all were durably bolted.
Mothers even tried to help from the wall-top,
moved by genuine love of country, recalling Camilla,
their trembling hands hurling weapons of hardwood,
hurriedly making do with planking or tempered
stakes for spears. They wanted to die first for the city.

News of Reversals

What bitter news meanwhile spread through the woodland
where Acca reported extreme reversals to Turnus!
Volscian ranks wiped out, the fall of Camilla,
furious enemy charges, the War-God behind them,
seizing it all: terror bore down on the city.
Turnus fumed. The cruel power of Jupiter forced him
to leave those rugged hills, the ground he’d obstructed.

Aeneas Arrives Before the City

He’d hardly gone from view, making for level
ground, when Aeneas, our Father, arrived in the open
pass, mounted the ridge and emerged from shadowy forest.
Both were therefore moving fast on the city
with all their power, neither far from the other.
Aeneas glimpsed a smoking, dusty plain in the distance.
He saw Laurentine troops at the same moment that Turnus
recognized the furious arms of Aeneas—he almost
heard the approaching hooves and snorting of horses.
Book XI

A Day’s and a Battle’s End

They might have tried at once to skirmish or battle
had not the Sun-God reddened, his tired chariot touching
Iberian water. Day had lapsed; Night was returning.
Both sides camped by the city and fortified earth-works.