VII

WAR BEGINS IN LATIUM

A Loving Remembrance

You also brought fame to our coastline, Caieta, nurse of Aeneas, a lasting name when you died here: your honor still preserves the place, and your good name marks your bones in great Hesperia—something of glory. Aeneas lovingly rendered the proper and final rites. He raised a death-mound. After the high seas calmed he set a course and sailed from the harbor.

Sailing and Noise at Night

Winds held until nightfall. Radiant Moonlight approved the journey: the sea glowed with tremulous brilliance. He scraped a shore—that close to the island of Circe, the Sun's wealthy daughter. She filled inaccessible forest with constant song and her opulent ceilings glowed at night from scented cedar and firelight. She wove on a fine loom, the shuttle went whistling. Angry lions audibly groaned as they fiercely fought their chains, growling and snarling through midnight. Bristling swine and bears thrashed in their cages. Huge wolves howled for the loss of their manhood. A cruel Goddess, Circe had changed their appearance with strong herbs, giving them animals' bodies.

To keep the God-revering Trojans from suffering outrage by nearing that frightful shore or making the harbor, the Sea-God filled their sails with following breezes and helped them accelerate past that turbulent water.
A View of the Tiber

Soon, when rays reddened the sea, and Aurora
glowed in the deep sky, her chariot rosy then yellow,
all the wind’s breath subsided abruptly.
Oars worked through a flat surface of water.
From out at sea now Aeneas could make out
spreading woodland, now the Tiber pleasantly flowing,
yellow, laden with silt, quick-running eddies,
breaking in surf. Around and above it were shorebirds
in fair number, familiar with banks and bends of the river:
they charmed the sky with song or glided past tree-tops.
Aeneas told his men to alter course for this landfall.
They gladly swung their bows and approached the shadowy river.

Prayer to the Goddess

Tell me now, Erato, what were those times like?
Who ruled in ancient Latium’s country when Trojan
forces first landed a fleet on Ausonian beachsand?

Let me record their wars right from the outset:
you’re my Goddess: help your seer tell of the fearful
shock of battle, ranks driving, the killing of princes,
Tuscan hordes, all of Hesperia mustered
for war. A great world order was born here:
mine is a major task.

Bees in a Swarm

King Latinus was aging
now: he’d ruled peaceful town and field for a long time.
Born (we hear) of a Nymph of Laurentum, Marica,
and Faunus, whose father was Picus, who claimed that his father
was you, Saturn—the ultimate source of this bloodline.

Latinus had no male heir. The Fates had decided:
a first-born son had been lost when young, in his boyhood.
Only a daughter sustained the august family bloodline.
Now fully mature she was ready for marriage.
Many had sought her hand from all of Ausonia,
from great Latium. But first and foremost was Turnus,
handsome, with strong father and grandfathers, favored
and deeply loved by the queen, as a son by a mother.
But various Gods’ omens alarmed and opposed her.
A laurel tree in the high central court of the palace,
its hair held in awe, sacred for many
years, found by the father himself when Latinus
built his first fort, they say, honored the Sun-God.
People took their name from the tree—the Laurentians.
One day bees swarmed (it’s amazing to tell this):
riding a humid breeze and humming intensely
they’d settled high on its crown, their feet interlocking:
the swarm hung from a bough abruptly, like leaflets.
Quickly a prophet announced: “I see a stranger arriving,
force that comes from the same source as the bees have:
men ruling the same place high on our fortress.”

Fire in Lavinia’s Hair

And more. While tending an altar with purified pinewood,
standing close to her father, the virgin Lavinia
seemed (it shocked them) seized by a fire that enveloped
her long hair: flames crackled through all of the headdress,
burning her regal hair and burning the jeweled
and famous crown. Wrapped in a luminous golden
smoke she scattered that Fire-God through all of the building.
Terrified people talked of the marvellous portent.
Prophets predicted the girl herself would be famous,
Fate-full; but monstrous war would confront the community.

Faunus Answers at Night

The king, moved by the signs, went to consider
the holy word of Faunus, his oracle-father,
high in a grove of the wide Albunean forest,
where sacred springs echoed and musk was exhaled from the
shadows.
Here Italians and all the Oenotrian people
had come for answers when doubtful. Bringing his presents
here a priest might lie through the still night on some outstretched
skins of slaughtered sheep. He’d beg for a vision,
watch the crowded flight of astonishing figures,
hear a mélange of voices, relish the discourse
of Gods and speak to the Acheron’s depths, to Avernus.
Here the father, Latinus himself, prayed for an answer.
He’d killed a hundred full-grown sheep according to custom;
spread on the outstretched hides, he lay on the victims’
flleece; a voice came from the deep forest abruptly:
“Don’t try making your daughter the bride of a Latin,
my son: put no faith in the wedding you planned on.
Sons-in-law will come from abroad who will carry
our name and bloodline to heaven. Their grandsons will witness
the whole world at their feet. They'll guide it and govern,
sea to sea, where the Sun looks down as it circles.”
So Faunus, his father, warned him there in the stillly
dark. Latinus himself could hardly keep quiet—
Rumor already had circled, flown to the farthest
Auszonian town, when the sons of Laomedon’s people
moored their fleet on the green banks of the Tiber.

A Prophecy Fulfilled

Aeneas, with ranking chiefs and a handsome Iulus,
settled himself under high boughs of a willow.
Ready to eat, they’d set some food on their wheat-mats
along the grass, even as Jupiter prompted:
they’d piled some rough fruit on this matting of Ceres.
By chance when all was eaten they turned to the paltry
breads of the Goddess. Hunger and poverty drove them:
they seized and chewed, rashly and wrongly, the rounded
crusts, the last wide squares—Fates had prepared them—
and Iulus joked, “Look, we’re eating our tables.”
That’s all he said. But the first end of their hardship
was heard in that voice. First Aeneas picked up on
his words, covered Iulus’ mouth, and stunned by the Powers
quickly proclaimed: “I greet you, land that is owed me
by Fates! And you, faith-ful House-Gods of Trojans:
here is your home, our country. My Father Anchises
told me the Fates’ secret and now I’ll repeat it:
‘My son,’ he said, ‘when hunger drives you to unknown
land and food runs low, when you chew on your tables,
have hope: although you’re exhausted, you’re home. And
remember—
built earth-works and houses first with your own hand.’
Here was that hunger, the last pang that was waiting,
putting an end to our grief.

Come on, be glad, then! Look to the light of the sunrise,
to learn of the place and find people who live here,
who’ve raised walls: we’ll search far from the harbor.
For now lift your cups to the Gods in libation,
call on my Father Anchises and pour wine on the tables.”

Surrounded by Gods

After speaking he circled his temples with leafy
shoots and prayed to Earth, first among Godheads;
to local spirits, to Nymphs and rivers remaining
unknown, to Night and the rising Night’s constellations.
He duly invoked Jupiter, Ida’s Lord, and the Mother,
Cybele; Anchises in Erebus, Venus in heaven.
Three times clearly the all-powerful Father
thundered—his personal sign—high in the sky’s revelation
of airy cloud trembling and burning with golden
light. And the word was spreading through Trojan gatherings
quickly:
the day had arrived: they had found the walls that were
promised!
Enthused by each great sign they began celebrations
again: they placed and crowned wine in their wine-bowls.

**Exploring, Visiting, Building**

When rising Dawn lighted the land and another
day with her lamp, they left the campsite to seek out
towns and people, markers and coasts. The Numicus River’s
pools were here, there the Tiber. Some daring
Latinus must live nearby: the son of Anchises commanded
a hundred envoys picked from each order to visit
the king’s august walls: crowned with leaflets of Pallas
they’d bring gifts to the man: they’d sue for peace for the Trojans.
The men moved off at a quick-paced trot to comply with
their orders. Aeneas himself established a trench-line
and built up walls of earth—his first home on that shore-line—
shaped like a fort, circled with stakes and embankments.

**Trojans and Latins Meet**

Already the young delegation had covered the distance:
they saw the towers and sheer walls of the Latins.
Boys and fine young men in front of the city
worked in the dust, training chariot horses.
They bent stiff bows or tensed shoulders to hurtle
rugged spears; they competed in racing or boxing.
A messenger mounted a horse to announce to the aging
king that tall men had arrived in unusual
dress. Latinus ordered these men to be summoned
into the palace. He sat on the central throne of his fathers.

His home was immense, with a hundred high and majestic
pillars. The home of Laurentian Picus, it stood on the city’s
heights where trees and their fathers’ faith had inspired them.
Here each king had duly welcomed the scepter
first and lifted the fasces. Here, in a senate-and-temple, 
were seats for holy feasting, where rams had been slaughtered, 
and elders resided at long continuous tables. 
Indeed figures of old grandfathers stood here, 
a series in antique cedar: Italus, lordly Sabinus, 
the vineyard master whose form guarded a billhook;

180 elderly Saturn, both faces of Janus: 
all in the vestibule. Others were kings from a distant 
past who’d suffered war-wounds defending their country. 
Many weapons too hung from the sacred 
door-frames: rounded war-axes, helmets with feathers, 
captured chariot parts, massive bars from a city 
gate, shields and spears, prows broken from warships. 
Picus himself presided with Romulus’ crooked 
staff, robed tucked up, a shield in his left hand—
Picus, that breaker of horses. His wife Circe had struck him 
down with a golden rod: gripped by Jut she had changed him 
with drugs to a bird: she’d sprinkled his feathers with color.

A Kingly Welcome

Sitting inside that God-filled home on his fathers’ 
throne, Latinus told the Trojans to enter the building. 
He spoke up first in a friendly tone when they entered: 
“Tell me, you sons of Dardanus—yes, we remember 
your city and people, we know what course you steered on the 
water—
what do you want here? What cause or need could compel you 
to sail all that blue-green sea to Ausonian beaches? 
Did storms drive you? Mistakes you made in your travels? 
Deep-sea sailors often encounter such problems.
Now that you rest in our port, on the banks of our river, 
accept our welcome. We Latins, remember, are Saturn’s 
people—not by force of law or some bindings 
but freely. We keep to our ancient God and tradition. 
In fact I recall, though years have darkened the story, 
the old Auruncans told of Dardanus growing 
here on a farm, then leaving for Phrygian cities, 
Samos in Thrace, which men called Samothrace lately. 
He came from nearby Corythus, a Tuscan location;

200 now a gold palace and throne have received him in star-set 
skies, increasing his number of God-worshipping altars.”
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* Asking for Help*

He stopped speaking. Ilioneus responded.
“Majesty, eminent son of Faunus, no darkling storm at sea forced us to come to your country. Our course was not confused by the stars or the shoreline. We’re all borne to your city deliberately, freely, though forced from another kingdom, once the supremest viewed by the sun, coming from far-off Olympus. Jupiter founded our nation: Dardanus’ children are glad to call Jupiter Grandfather: kingly Aeneas of Troy, who brought us here, is of high Jupiter’s bloodline. How fierce was that storm from mad Mycenae that poured on the plains of Mount Ida! Europe and Asia were driven by Fates—a world was forced to collide with a world there. Even at Earth’s extremes they’ve heard of the conflict, where Ocean is turned back and the immoderate Sun-God centers and cuts off a long tract from four others. After the storm, conveyed on desolate sea-ways, we searched for a plain home for the Gods of our country, some harmless coast with water and air open to all men. We won’t disgrace your kingdom. And word of your kindness will carry weight: such acts won’t die or be thankless. It won’t bring shame to have taken Troy to Ausonia’s breast—I swear by the hand and Fate of our forceful Aeneas, tested in friendship and armed confrontation. Throngs of people from many nations have wanted to join us themselves. So don’t feel scorn if we offer a hand first, if we come with wreaths and proposals. God’s word—a rule of its own—has impelled us to look for this ground. Dardanus sprang from your country, and loud commands of Apollo urged us, recalled us to Tuscany, back to the Tiber, the sacred Numicus fountains. We’ve also brought some modest signs of our former stature, relics taken from Troy when it burned down. Anchises gave fatherly thanks with this gold at an altar. Priam carried this mace when he summoned the people and set down laws rightly. This ritual turban and robes are the work of Trojan women.”

* The Joy of Latinus*

As Ilioneus finished, Latinus was keeping his looks lowered, eyes on the floor and unmoving.
Now he became restless and tense: much as that purple embroidery touched him—the mace of Priam was touching—he wondered about the marriage bed of his daughter. He deeply pondered old Faunus’ prediction: had Fates impelled or removed Aeneas from foreign rule to be called his son, his equal in power? Signs had suggested the prime strength of that future household—the whole world could be seized by their army. At last the king was happy: “May Gods bless this beginning, foretold by themselves! All that you ask, Trojan, is granted. I won’t scorn your gifts. As long as the king is Latinus Troy won’t lack for a breast of rich field and abundance. And surely Aeneas himself should come if he really longs to be called our friend, he should join in your welcome soon, and not be afraid—our faces are friendly! Part of my plan for peace is to grasp the hand of your leader. So now take my word back to Aeneas. I have a daughter; words from the shrine of my Father with many signs from heaven, forbid her to marry a local man. Sons-in-law will arrive from a foreign land, we’re told, a bloodline to carry the Latin name to the stars. The man the Fates demand is Aeneas, I think. If truth lies in foreboding I’ll want him.”

Regal Horses

Finished, the father selected a number of horses (his tall stables had three hundred that stood there and glistened): he ordered a horse led out at once for each of the Trojans. They marched in a quick-footed line, decked out in purple. Gold halters hung from their chests, and their covers had gold stitching; the bits they chewed on were golden.

For absent Aeneas: a paired chariot horse-team bred by a Sky-God—fire blew from their nostrils—Circe had smartly engendered these hybrids in secret by mating her mare with a stud of her father Apollo. With all that praise and wealth from Latinus, Aeneas’ men returned high on their mounts to tell of the peace-plan.

Juno Returns

But look—coming from Argos, Inachus’ country, the cruel wife of Jupiter, riding an air-wave, spotted the Trojan ships from far in the heavens. From Sicily’s Mount Pachynus she knew Aeneas was happy:
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290 she saw him raising roofbeams, trusting this country already, ignoring the fleet. She paused. Agony seized her. She shook her head and angrily blurted the words out: “You hateful weeds of Troy, with your Fates’ opposition to our Fates—couldn’t you die on some plain of Sigea, be caught and enslaved, or couldn’t you suffer cremation when Troy burned? You found an escape through the center of every fire and force. I presume my power is worn down finally, I rest or doze, my hatred depleted. How I dared to pursue them—forced them from homeland,

300 grimly blocked their escape on each of the sea-lanes—
I used up the strength of sea and sky against Trojans!
But how have the Syrtes helped me, monster Charybdis or Scylla? Trojans live where they want, by the Tiber, saved from the sea and from me. The War-God could ravage a giant people, the Lapiths, and even the Father of Sky-Gods yielded ancient Calydon once to a wrathful Diana.
What Lapith or Calydon crime deserved such a judgment?
While I, the mighty wife of Jupiter, sadly able to dare anything, any maneuver,

310 I lose to Aeneas. Well, then. If none of my power is strong enough I’ll surely ask for help—from wherever.
I can’t keep Troy from the Latin throne? Let it happen—the Fates are fixed, Lavinia’s the wife of Aeneas—
ah, but to stall some things, add to the action, that I may do. And smash both kingdoms and people!
Let father and son-in-law unite: it will cost them their own blood, Rutulian and Trojan. Your dowry, Lavinia: War waits as your bridesmaid. If Hecuba carried

320 a torch in her womb and gave birth to a wildfire,
Venus now has also delivered a Paris,
a funeral torch once more for this Troy’s restoration.”

Daughter of Night

No sooner done she made for the land like a hoarfrost and summoned that grief-builder, Allecto, from Under, her dreaded Fury’s throne in darkness, with mournful war in her heart, rage, deceit and criminal plotting.
Even her father Pluto despised her, her sisters in Tartarus hated the fiend—she changed her face and her savage form that often—black snakes could spring from her forehead.

330 Juno addressed her with words that whetted her malice.
"Virgin daughter of Night! Do some work that you owe me—
a task to prevent my honor and name in a region
from fading or cracking. Stop the sons of Aeneas
from crowding Italy’s land, surrounding Latinus with weddings.
You’re able to arm single-spirited brothers to duel;
you twist homes with hatred; you carry a killing
fire into buildings and lash them—a thousand destructive
skills and names are yours. Look in your fertile
heart. Plant war-seeds and frustrate this peace-pact.
Let men crave and demand weapons rashly and seize them."

Maddening Snakes

So now Allecto, stained with Gorgonian venom,
made for Latium first, the Laurentian ruler’s
high buildings. She calmly sat by the door of Amata,
the queen, who fumed over the Trojans’ arrival.
She fretted and feared for the loss of Turnus in marriage.
The Goddess flung one of her blue-black and hair-like
snakes: she prodded it close, close to the heartbeat,
tempting the queen to upset all of her household.
Gliding under her clothes, curling a gentle
breast (and hardly felt there), the viper unnerved her
and breathed out maddening poison. Sometimes resembling
a long choke of twined gold, sometimes a chaplet’s
long ribbon, it linked with her hair or strayed on a shoulder.
Although at first the malaise, like a damp and venomous seeping,
stunned her senses and wound her bones in a fever,
hers mind and heart were not yet fully ignited.
She spoke to the king softly, much like a mother.
She often wept for her daughter’s wedding a Trojan.
“Must Lavinia now go to a Trojan in exile?
You’re her father: don’t you pity yourself or your daughter?
He won’t pity a mother—he’ll trick and desert us
and head out to sea with the first Northwind, a virgin his booty—
the way that Phrygian shepherd slipped into Sparta
and took to Troy Helen, the daughter of Leda.
What of your sacred trust, the ancient concern for your household?
How often you gave your hand to Turnus, your kinsman!
If Latins must look for sons-in-law from a foreign
land and that’s final, if Faunus’ command must oppress you,
any country I think is certainly ‘foreign’
that’s free of our rule. And that’s what the Gods were revealing:
If Turnus’ house were traced to the very beginning
you'd find Acrisius, Inachus, men from central Mycenae.'"
No use. She tried talking things out with Latinus
but saw him standing against her. The serpent's infection
reached her innards, frenzy wandered throughout her
now and made her wretched. Seized by exorbitant terror
quickly she ran through the large town in a panic:
the way a top will often twirl from a whipping
string when boys wrapped in a game get it spinning
in wide arcs through an empty courtyard—they drive it and lash it
around in the yard while younger boys are astonished,
puzzling about, amazed at the whirr of the boxwood,
taking life from a string-pull. Driven as quickly
the woman ran through the center of town, stirring up people.

Bacchic Frenzy
She even assumed the Wine-God's will in a forest,
adding worse mischief, starting a greater derangement.
She fled into wooded hills, hiding her daughter,
hoping to stall nuptial fire or slip from the Trojans.
"Bacchus," she called, "only your Godhead can merit
this virgin! Look," she yelled, "she's raising your supple
vine-rod and growing sacred hair, circling and dancing!"
The story spread. Mothers' breasts burned with resentment.
The same fire drove them all to look for new dwellings:
they left home, surrendering hair and neck to the breezes.
Some went filling the sky with tremulous dolor,
they wore pelts or toted vine-circled spear-shafts.
The frenzied queen lofted a blazing torch in their center,
chanted the wedding song of her daughter and Turnus,
and rolled her bloody eyes. Abruptly she shouted
wildly, "You mothers from all over Latium, listen:
if thanks remain in your good hearts for a wretched
Amata—if care for mothers and justice can gnaw you—
loosen your hair-bands now and join me in ritual."
So there in the bush, with beasts' lairs all around them,
Allecto goaded the queen like Bacchus in every direction.

Turnus and Calybe
After she'd whetted that fury enough to begin with,
jumbling the plans of the whole house of Latinus,
the dour Goddess ascended swiftly on coal-black
wings to the daring Rutulians' bulwarks, a city
founded by Danae (they say) with Acrisian settlers,
driven there by a headlong Southwind. Elders had called it
Ardea once; the great name of Ardea lasted;
its luck did not. Here Turnus already
had slept through half the dark night in the palace.
Allecto doffed her harsh mien and her Fury’s
form and changed herself to an elderly woman.
Wrinkles cut through the dirt on her forehead, and white hair
grew intertwined with fillets and leaflets of olive.
Becoming Calybe, an old seer in the temple of Juno,
she came up close to speak. Turnus was watching.
“Turnus, you’ve gone through so much work—and for nothing?
Your own scepter passed to a Trojan outsider?
You sought a dowry and bride with your blood, but Latinus
denies you: he wants a foreign heir for the kingdom.
You went and faced danger, thankless and laughed at
for trying to sprawl Tuscan ranks and pacify Latins.
A strong daughter of Saturn, Juno, commanded
my speaking openly now in the still night as you lie here.
Move, then: arm your men: get ready for battle.

March through the gate gladly: set fire to the painted
ships of Phrygian leaders camped by our beautiful river.
Great and powerful Gods insist. Even Latinus,
unless he gives you a bride and stands by his promise,
may soon test and feel the weapons of Turnus.”

*Allecto Revealed*

The man responded in turn by mocking the seer.
“I’ve heard of some ships,” he said, “borne on the Tiber’s
water. It’s not as you guess. Things haven’t escaped me.
Don’t paint such stark terrors. Imperial Juno
has not forgotten our cause.

But you—muddled in dust—age has drained you of vision.
You work up empty concern, mother. When royal
armies move, you play the vain and terrified prophet.
Worry about God’s face: watch in your temple.
Let men make war or peace—and war when they have to.”
At every word Allecto’s anger grew hotter.
A sudden tremor shook the man’s body while speaking:
his eyes fixed on the Fury’s dozens of hissing
snakes: revealing her form, rolling her flamelike
eyes, she pushed him back when he stammered and struggled
to speak again. She pulled two snakes from her hairline
and cracked a whip, her mouth raving with warning:
"Yes, I'm muddled in dust, age drains me of vision!
When kings make war I play with fantasized terror!
Look again: I'm here from the house of fear-filling sisters:
I carry war and death in my hands."

_A Maddened Turnus_

She stopped and threw fire at Turnus. She fastened
a darkly smoking brand—it glowed at his breastbone.
Monstrous fear broke his calm, sweat had completely
covered the man, every bone-joint and member,

he shouted madly, scrambled for arms in the bedroom and
building,
he seethed with lust for a sword and the mad evil of battle
but most with rage: the way the roar of a stick-fed
fire builds at the brass ribs of a cauldron
when water boils, leaping inside and then outside—
spray spits up high and mixes with steam-cloud,
the top overflows and dark smoke flies into heaven.
Turnus damned peace. He commanded a march on
King Latinus. He told the best young men to get ready
to fight, to guard Italy and drive troops from the border:

they'd find themselves a match for both Latins and Trojans.
After the speech he vowed to the Gods and invoked them.
Rutulians rallied, goading each other for battle,
some moved by the grace and outstanding beauty of Turnus,
some by his ancestor-kings or his own brilliant achievements.

_Hunting Dogs_

While Turnus filled Rutulians with spirit and courage
Allecto hurried on Stygian wings to the Trojans.
She eyed the place. She'd trick them otherwise: handsome
Iulus was driving game into traps on the shoreline:
the Underworld virgin suddenly scattered disorder

by tingling the dogs' snouts with an odor they knew of—
away they ran for a stag. Here was a primal
cause of trouble that fired farmers' instinct for fighting.
The stag was a splendid beast with magnificent antlers,
taken by Tyrhhus' boys from the teats of its mother
to nurse on their own. (Their father Tyrhhus had guarded
broad lands of the king whose livestock obeyed him.)
The stag got used to the care and command of a sister,
Silvia. Soft wreaths embellished the antlers.
She washed his wild coat in a clear fountain and brushed it.
490 He let her touch him; he took to the mistress’s table.
He roamed the woods and returned himself to the building,
a home he knew at night, whatever the hour.

_Ascanius Wounds the Stag_

The fierce hunting dogs of Iulus had flustered
the stag when it roamed afield. By chance it had floated
down a stream and lay on a green riverbank, cooling.
Ascanius, hot with desire now for a notable honor,
arched a bow himself and aimed on the arrow.
Some God steadied his hand. The weapon went whistling
hard at the deer’s flank, striking the belly.

_Silvia’s Call_

500 The wounded animal fled to familiar surroundings,
entered a stall bleeding, moaning and filling
the whole place like a man dolefully begging.
First the sister, Silvia, palms beating her forearms,
called for help. She shouted to vigorous fieldhands
who gathered quickly (a virulent sickness, Allecto,
hid in their quiet woods): armed with a tempered
stake or heavily knotted club—whatever they spotted
they picked up—anger made it a weapon. And Tyrurus,
breathless with rage, called out crews—by chance he’d been using

510 a large axe and wedge to chop oak into quarters.
Ah, and the cruel Goddess found time for more trouble.
She made for the steep roof of a stable and sounded
the rural alarm from its peak. She strained her Tartarean
chords through a curved horn: suddenly every
grove shuddered and deep forest re-echoed.
Even the distant pond of Diana responded,
the pale and sulfurous Nar River, the springs of Velinus.

_Fighting Breaks Out_

Mothers trembled and pressed sons to their bosoms.
Farmers, truly enraged now, ran to the summons

520 the feared horn had given: they gathered from all sides,
grabbing weapons. Young Trojans had also
rushed from the open camp to the aid of Iulus.
Lines were drawn. No longer a quarrel of rustics
wielding bumpy staffs or fire-blackened stake-points:
steel would decide it. A darkly broad harvest of two-edged
weapons bristled. Bronze, provoked by the sunlight,
gleamed and threw flashes back at a cloud-trail:
a wave begins that way, with a white-capping sea-wind,
rising gradually higher at sea to an upright
crest that mounts from the trough’s base to the sky-heights.
Abruptly a man in the front row toppled. An arrow
had whistled and struck the eldest descendant of Tyrrenhus,
Almo. The wound clogged his voicebox and bloodied
the throat and tongue: his thin windpipe was glutted.
Men fell around him now: the aging Galæusus,
who’d offered to make peace, one of the fairest
persons, once the richest Ausonian farmer,
with five herds of sheep, five of cattle returning
to barns, and a hundred plows working the pasture.

While men faced off and fought through that meadow
the strong Fury, who’d kept her promise and spattered
the first fighters with blood, sending some to their death-rites,
turned from Hesperia now. She whirled through the heavens
to find Juno and proudly tell of her triumph:
“There—for you a dispute’s matured into anguish and battle.
Tell them to make friends or join in a treaty
now that I’ve splashed Trojans with blood of Ausonians!
I’ll add more strife if you really desire it.
I’ll bring neighboring towns in the war with some rumors:
I’ll fire their hearts with love for the maddening War-God.
They’ll come to help from everywhere. Fields will sprout with my
weapons.”

*Juno’s Caution*

But Juno answered, “Enough lying and terror.
War can stand on this pretext; the close combat is bitter.
The first blades provided by chance have been covered
with fresh blood. Now there is a marriage—a solemn
rite for King Latinus and Venus’ excellent household!
But you—the Father and Ruler of highest Olympus
would hardly want you roaming freely through heaven.
Leave the place. If luck should change in the struggle

I’ll manage myself.” Saturn’s daughter had spoken:
Alecto rose on wings hissing like serpents
and left the steep sky for her home by the River Cocytus.
A place near high mountains in Italy’s heartland,
renowned and recalled in many realms, is a valley
called the Ampsanctus. Dark flanks of a forest
enclose each side with dense brush, and a river
roars through rocks in the center, rushing and twisting. There’s also a fearsome cave with manifest air-holes for grim Dis, and a monstrous chasm that opens

570 a sickly mouth where the Acheron bursts out. The Fury’s power and hate hid here. Earth and sky were disburdened.

Crowds Pressure Latinus

Saturn’s regal daughter meanwhile was adding a further touch to the conflict. A large number of shepherds had rushed from the field into town, carrying dead men—young Almo, the grimed face of Galaesus—they called on Gods and begged Latinus to witness. Turnus, ringed by torches and protests of killing, doubled their fear: he claimed if the Trojans were called to the kingdom, their Phrygian stock would be poison: they’d drive himself from the palace.

580 And men whose mothers were leaping in faraway woodland, struck by Bacchus to dance there (Amata’s name was no light one), now gathered from every side to belabor the War-God. The whole crowd called at once for a blasphemous conflict, counter to Gods, counter to warning and omen. They stood grumbling around the house of Latinus. The king however remained like a sea-cliff, immobile: just as a sea-cliff, when built-up rollers are breaking, retains its mass against surf which is mounting and snarling around it in vain: while foam and surrounding rocks make noise it repels the seaweed flung at its body.

Still he lacked strength to dismantle their sightless plan. Things went on as cruel Juno had wished them. The father repeatedly called on Gods, on the answerless air-flow: “We’re broken by Fates,” he said, “some storm-wind transports us.

You wretched people will pay plenty for sinful bloodshed. And Turnus, a tragic punishment’s waiting for all your crime. You’ll vow too late to the Powers you worship. For me, rest has begun. A whole harbor is waiting. I’m only robbed of a happy death.” He stopped and sequestered himself in the palace, abandoning matters of statecraft.

Juno and the Gates of War

Hesperian Latium started a custom which Alban towns kept sacred, which now Rome as the greatest
power maintains when first preparing for battle,
whether they haul by hand the grief-spreading War-God
to Thrace or head for Arabia, Hyrcania, India,
following Dawn eastward, seizing Parthian standards:
the twin gates of War (as people have called them),
revered in faith and fear of the truculent War-God,
locked by a hundred bronze bars in a durable iron
610 grip, Janus always guarding the entrance:
when elders preside and judge fighting is certain,
the Consul himself, wearing the robe of Quirinus
in Gabine style, opens the clangorous portals
and calls out War. Young men echo the summons
and brass horns exhale in a raucous consensus.
Latinus now was urged to follow the custom,
to open the dismal gates and declare war on the Trojans.
The father refused to touch them. He turned from the duty,
shocked and revolted. He hid himself in the darkness.
620 Ah, but the Queen of the Gods, gliding from heaven,
pushed at the gates herself: the daughter of Saturn
twisted the hinges and snapped the iron frames of the War-God!

Ploughshares into Swords

A formerly calm and placid Ausonia flared up,
some men ready to march through fields, others to harry
tall horses through dust—all clamored for weapons.
One man polished a light shield or a gleaming
spear-point with oil; another whetted an axe-edge.
They reveled in hoisting a flag or blaring a trumpet.
Even some large cities organized forges
630 to make new weapons: stony Atina, confident Tibur,
Ardea, Crustumarium, towered Antemnae.
They scooped out safe helmets, fashioned the willow
frames of shields, softened metal for breastplates
of bronze, shaped and polished silver for leg-guards.
All their love of plowing, their pride in a sickle,
yielded to smelting swords of fathers in forges.
Already a bugle called—the watchword for battle was moving.
One man left home nervously clutching a helmet.
Another prodded a testy horse-team, or sported
640 triply gold-meshed armor, a sword and shield that he trusted.
The Aeneid of Virgil
Translated by Edward McCrorie, With a foreword by Vincent Cleary
http://www.press.umich.edu/titleDetailDesc.do?id=10501
The University of Michigan Press, 1996

The Poet Prays for Help

Open Helicon now, you Muses, enlighten my singing:
what kings were provoked to war, what armies behind them
filled the field? Even in those days Italy prospered
in rich land and men, and glittering weapons.
Truly you can recall them, Goddesses: tell me,
for hardly an air or wisp of their glory has reached us.

Mezentius and Lausus

First to enter the war was a God-scorner, Mezentius.
A rugged man from Tuscany's coast, he'd armed some contingents
and rode next to a son, Lausus. No one was finer
appearing except Turnus, the man from Laurentum,
than Lausus. Hunter of wild beasts, breaker of stallions,
he led (though in vain) a thousand men from Agylla's
town walls. He deserved a happier homeland
and rule. He hardly deserved a sire like Mezentius.

A Son of Hercules and Rhea

Next Aventinus, handsome son of a handsome
Hercules, showed off horses and chariot honored
with prize palms on the grass. A design of his father
stood on the shield: a hundred vipers girding the Hydra.
The priestess Rhea had borne him in secret and brought him
to shores of light on a wooded Aventine hillside:
God and woman had joined after Geryon's killing
when conquering Hercules reached a field in Laurentum
and washed bulls from Spain in Tuscany's river.
The army carried cruel pikes and staffs into battle
or wielded the slender sword and spear of the Sabine.
Aventinus marched with a huge hide of a lion
around him, white fangs and a scraggly, fearsome
mane his headdress. He'd often entered the palace
coarsely dressed, shouldering Hercules' clothing.

Catillus and Coras

Twin brothers who'd left the city of Tibur
(their city and people named for a third brother, Tiburtus),
Catillus and Coras were Greek young men and aggressive.
They rode in the front rank with dense weapons around them
the way a pair of Centaurs, born of some stormcloud, 
gallop down from the high ridge of a mountain 
like Óthrys or snowy Homole—stretches of forest 
give them room and the brush yields where they crash through.

*Caeculus and his Farmhands*

The man who built the town of Praeneste was present, 
born to Vulcan among cattle at pasture

and found by a hearth (every age has believed it):
Caeculus. A spread-out legion of farmhands had joined him, 
men from Praeneste’s heights and fields of Gabinian
Juno, living where cold Anio water 
splashes Hernican stone and bank. Anagnia’s bounty 
had fed them with fatherly streams like yours, Amasenus.
Not all had a shield and sword or a clattering horse-team: 
most had grey shots of lead for slinging, or carried 
a pair of spears in each hand. Sand-colored wolfskin 
covered their heads like caps. They walked with the left foot 
bare, the right foot strapped crudely in rawhide.

*The Untried Troops of Messapus*

Messapus arrived, a horse-tamer and son of the Sea-God.
His motto: “No one’s fire and sword will defeat me.”
Not used to war, his people had rested a long time;
he’d briskly told them to form ranks and rehandle their weapons.
Some were Fescennine columns, Aequans, Faliscans;
some held Soracte’s heights or Flavimnian farmland,
Ciminus Mountain and Lake, or the groves of Capena. 
They marched in paired rows and sang of their leader, 
like white swans that often appear in a hazy
sky returning from feeding—pleasantly singing, 
their necks long, their rhythmic beat on the Cayster 
River and all its marsh.
No one would think that bronze-clad legion of marchers 
formed a grand army, but rather a stormcloud 
of raucous sea-birds driven from deep water to beach-dunes.

*Clausus and the Sabines*

Look at the old and high blood of the Sabines—
Clausus driving a column, the image himself of an army! 
His family later will spread through Latium, the Claudian 
household, 
after Rome will share power with Sabines.
710 A huge number had joined him: Amiterneans, people from old Cures, Mutusca—olivetree country—a swelling crowd from Eretum, Nomentum’s walls, the land near Velinus, Rosea, men from the rugged Tetricus’ hillside and Mount Severus, Casperians, Forulians, people who drink from the Tiber, Himella and Fabaris Rivers, men dispatched from chilly Nursia, Latins and Ortines, and those cut off by the bad-luck Allia River. Their numbers matched the rolling Libyan sea-swells when wild Orion falls on the water in winter,

720 or ears of corn warmed by the sunlight in early summer in golden Hermian or Lycian pasture. Shields clashed and the ground shook from the thud of their marching.

A Hater of Troy

Halaesus next: Agamemnon’s son and a hater of Troy’s name, he’d teamed chariot horses for Turnus and hauled out a thousand churlish clans who were turners (with hoes) of Massican soil blessed by the Wine-God. Fathers had sent them from high hills in Aurunca or nearby Sidicine flatland. Some were from Cales, or homes by the shallow Voltturnus River. An Oscan

730 group and also a band of Saticulans carried slender spears fitted with tough cords for retrieval. Guarded by light shields, they had curved swords for infighting.

Oebalus and his People

And you, Oebalus: don’t be unmentioned and absent now from my song! They say a Nymph named Sebethis gave you in birth to Telon who ruled Teleboan Capri in old age. Not content with his father’s land, the son had already conquered the widespread Sarrastrian people, the plain soaked by the Sarnus, men who’d settled in Rufrae, Batulum, fields of Celemna,

740 and those below Abella’s walls in appletree country, accustomed like Teutons to flinging objects in battle. They’d covered their heads with bark torn from their oak-trees. Their bronze shields and bronze projectiles were gleaming.
Book VII

Ufens

The hills of Nursia sent you into battle,
Ufens—widely renowned and lucky in warfare.
Your men were unusually rough Aequicolans, used to
hard ground and hunting often in woodland.
They worked the land armed, always collecting
new booty and glad to live off their stealing.

A Doomed Priest

750 A priest, too, came from Marruvian people,
helmet plaited with leaves of blossoming olive:
Umbro, the bravest man sent by a ruler, Archippus.
He often cast sleep on venomous adders
or foul-breathed watersnakes just by humming and stroking—
he stilled their anger and skillfully countered the poison.
But Umbro would cure no blow from a Trojan
spear: he’d find no help for that wound in a sleepy
song or in herbs culled on a Marsian mountain.
Angitia’s groves would mourn his loss, and the glasslike
water of Lake Fucinus.

Remembering Hippolytus and Phaedra

A splendid son of Hippolytus entered the conflict—
well-known Virbius, sent by his mother Aricia.
She’d raised him around Egeria’s woodland and marshy
banks, where fat-dripping altars placate Diana.
Hippolytus died, the story goes, from the plotting of Phaedra
(his blood they say fulfilled a curse of his father),
when bolting horses tore him apart. But returning
to sky and stars he reached the air of the Sky-Gods,
revived by Apollo’s herbs and the love of Diana.

770 Then all-powerful Jupiter, galled that a human
should rise to life and light from Underworld shadow,
thrust with his own lightning that son of Apollo,
the skilled inventor and healer, down into Stygian water.
Diana, however, cared for Hippolytus, hiding
the man in a secret home with help from the Wood-Nymph
Egeria:
alone in Italian woods he’d live out a lifetime
unknown, changing his name to Virbius later.
That’s why hard-hoofed horses are kept from the sacred
grove and shrine of Diana: horses had scattered
780 the man’s parts on that shore when sea-beasts alarmed them.  
Hardly deterred now, the son labored a sweating  
chariot team on the plain, in a hurry for battle.  

A Leader of Leaders  
Outstanding among those chiefs was the figure of Turnus.  
Holding a sword as he rode, by a whole head he was tallest,  
the high helmet triply crested: Chimaera’s  
form sat there, jaws afire, spewing like Etna’s,  
appearing to rage and rumble more like a death-fire  
when more blood flowed and fighting intensified.  
Io was carved on the smooth shield, with her rising  
790 horns in gold, at the time she bristled and turned to a heifer.  
The strong design had the girl’s guardian, Argus,  
and, poured from a chased urn, the Inachus River, her father.  
A stormcloud of infantry followed Turnus, their shielded  
columns filling a whole field: young ones from Argos,  
groups from Aurunca, Rutulia, historic Sicanus,  
Labicans’ painted shields and Sacranian forces,  
men who’d worked the Tiber valley with plows, or the sacred  
banks of the Numicus River, Rutulian hillsides,  
a ridge on Circe’s island, the farmland protected  
800 by Tuscan Jupiter, green glades enjoyed by Feronia,  
where Satura’s dark swamp lies, and the chilly  
Ufens River winds through lowland to hide in the sea-bed.  

A Rustic War-queen  
A Volscian woman came behind them: Camilla  
drove her cavalry, bronze-flowering squadron  
led by a war-queen. The woman had never accustomed  
her hand to a wool-staff or wicker basket: she’d suffered  
in hard battle. She outran the wind when she sprinted,  
whether she flew by the tallest unplucked stalks of a cornfield,  
hardly bruising the delicate ears when she raced by,  
810 or dashed through the middle of mounting surf as if hung there,  
hardly wetting her nimble feet in the water.  
Every youngster emerged from house and field to admire her,  
joined by a crowd of mothers who gazed at her movements,  
openly struck by her spirit. Monarchial purple  
covered her smooth shoulders. Her hair had been gathered  
in gold by a clasp. She carried her Lycian quiver  
herself and a rustic myrtle shaft with its spear-point.