

Virgil: Aeneid: Book 4

- But the queen for a long time now, smitten by dire torment, nourishes the wound in her veins, and is seized by hidden passion. The great [*lit.* much] courage of the man and the high [*lit.* much] esteem of his family kept recurring [*lit.* hastened back] in her mind. His face and his words stick
- 5 fixed in her heart, and her anxiety does not give peaceful rest to her limbs. The next dawn was lighting up the lands with the torch of Apollo, and it had separated the damp shadows from the heavens, when she distraught thus addressed her soulmate sister:
- “Sister Anna, what dreams torment me, hung up (with anxiety)!
- 10 What new guest has ascended here to our abode, what a countenance he bears [*lit.* carrying what a himself with respect to his face], how strong are his chest and shoulders [*lit.* how (he is) with strong chest and shoulders.] I truly believe, and it is not an empty belief, that he is of the family of the gods. Fear reveals unworthy minds. Alas by what fates has he been thrown! Of what wars endured he sings!
- 15 If it were not established for me, fixed and immovable in my mind, (so) that I did not want to join myself to any matrimonial bond, after my first love deceived (me), cheated by (his) death. If I were not tired of marriage and matrimony, I would, perhaps be able to succumb to this one weakness.
- 20 Anna, for I will confess, for after the death [*lit.* fates] of my wretched husband Sychaeus, and (after) the household gods had been scattered by fraternal slaughter, this [man] alone has swayed my feelings and has excited [*lit.* pushed] my wavering mind. I recognise traces of an old flame. But may either the depths of the earth gape open for me, I wish,
- 25 or may the omnipotent father drive me away with a thunderbolt to the shadows, the pale shadows in Hell and the deep night, before, shame, I violate you or I set free your laws. He has taken away my love, who first joined me to himself; May he have it with him and keep it in his tomb.”
- 30 Having spoken thus she filled her bosom with risen tears. Anna replies: “O (thou) more beloved than light to your sister, will you waste away alone mourning in your continuing youth, and not know either sweet children or the rewards of Venus? Do you believe that ash or buried ghosts care for that?
- 35 Let it be: no suitors ever swayed you being sick, not from Libya, nor beforehand from Tyre; Iarbas was shunned, and other leaders, which the African earth, rich in triumphs, nourishes: will you even fight a pleasing love, and does it not come into mind in whose fields you settled?
- 40 Here the cities of Gaetula, a tribe unconquerable in war, and the unbridled Numidians, and the inhospitable Syrtis surround (you.) There a region deserted by thirst and the Barcali raging far and wide. What should I say about the rising wars in Tyre and the threats of our brother?
- 45 I truly think, that the Trojan ships have held this course on the wind with the gods as their protectors and with Juno favourable, sister, what a city you will see, what kingdoms will rise from such a marriage; to what great heights will Carthaginian glory raise itself with the arms of the Trojans!
- 50 You now, demand pardon from the gods, and with the sacred auspices having been faithfully gained, be kind to your guest and craft reasons for a delay, while winter and rainy Orion rage on the sea, and the ships are tossed [*lit.* have been tossed], and the sky is not manageable.” With these words having been spoken she (Anna) enflamed her (Dido’s) mind burning with love,
- 55 and she gave hope to her fluctuating mind and she freed her conscience. Firstly, they came to the shrines and asked for peace through the altars; they sacrificed two-year-

- old sheep chosen by custom to law bearing Ceres and to Phoebus [Apollo] and father Bacchus, and to Juno before all, to whom marriage bonds are of concern.
- 60 The most beautiful Dido herself, holding the sacred dish in her right hand pours wine between the middle of the horns of a brilliantly white cow or before the faces of the gods she walks to the fat-laden altars, and she renews the day with gifts, and pouring over the chests of the beasts having been thrown open she consults the throbbing entrails.
- 65 Alas, the ignorant minds of soothsayers! What prayers, what shrines can help a raging (mind)? Meanwhile a flame eats her soft insides, and a silent wound lives beneath her breast. Ill fated Dido is burned and she wanders in a rage through all the city like a deer with a hurled arrow which a hunting shepherd has pierced,
- 70 incautious, far off amongst Cretan groves, with his weapons and unknowingly has left his flying arrow and she wanders through the woods and Cretan forest in flight, the fatal shaft fixed in her side. Now she leads Aeneas with her through the middle of the walls...
- 75 and she shows (him) Sidonian wealth and the city prepared, and she begins to speak out and she stops in mid-voice; now she looks for the same banquet with the day slipping away and out of her mind, (again) she demands to hear the Trojan toils again, and she again hangs from the mouth of him telling the story.
- 80 When they separated, afterwards, the dark moon diminishes the light in turn and the falling stars urge on sleep, she mourns in her empty house alone and she lies on bed covers left behind; She, absent, hears and sees him in his absence, or captured by the image of his father she holds Ascanius in her lap
- 85 to see if she could deceive her unspeakable love. Towers, having been started, do not rise up, the youth do not use their tools or they do not prepare the harbours or ramparts safe for war; the works hang interrupted, as do the huge threats of walls and the contraption equal to the sky.
- 90 As soon as Saturn's daughter, the dear wife of Jupiter, perceived that Dido was held by such fatal passion and no care for her good name resisted her passion, she approached Venus with such words:
"Truly noble is the honour and grand the booty brought back and you and your boy, great and memorable is your name,
- 95 if one woman is brought to defeat by the deceit of two gods. Nor can you deceive me, having feared our walls you have viewed with suspicions the homes of high Carthage. But what will be your limit? Where are we going now with such fighting? Why don't we rather work out an eternal peace and wedding contracts.
- 100 You have, the whole thing which your mind sought? Dido is ablaze with love, and has spread the passion through her bones. Therefore let us rule this people together, with equal authority. May she be allowed to be subject to her Phrygian husband, and commit the Tyrians to your right hand as a dowry.
- 105 But she [Venus] sensed that she [Juno] had spoken with a pretending point, so that she might divert the kingdom of Italy to Libyan shores, in this way approached Venus and replied, "Who would be so mad to refuse such things, or prefer to contend with you in war, provided that success will follow the deed, which you speak of.
- 110 But I am tossed in doubt because of the fates, uncertain if Jupiter would want one city for the Tyrians and those having set forth from Troy, or approves the peoples to be mingled or treaties to be made. You are his wife; it is lawful for you that by praying, the mind incites privilege— so go on! I will follow."
Then in this way queen Juno answered:
- 115 That task will be with me. Now I will teach briefly, (pay attention), by which method, we can complete that which presses on, quickly, attending. Aeneas and the very miserable Dido, prepare to go hunting in a grove together, when tomorrow's rich dawn brings forth the rising sun, and with the rays uncover the earth.

- 120 On them I will pour down from above a black cloud with hail mixed in, while the alatores are hurrying about, and are surrounding the glades with a cordon, and I will stir up the whole sky with thunder. Their comrades will scatter, and they will be concealed in impenetrable darkness as in night, and Dido and Troy's leader will take shelter in the same cave.
- 125 I will be there, and if your wishes are certain to me, I will join them in secure marriage and I will pronounce her his own. This shall be their wedding. Having offered no objection to the proposal, the Cytherean nodded assent and she smiled at the treacheries having been found.
Meanwhile Aurora surging left the ocean.
- 130 With the suns rays having risen, the chosen youth went (out) from the gates. (There were) wide-meshed nets (and) nets carried, with the broad hunting spears in iron, the horsemen belonging to the Massyli hurry along and the keen-scented power of dogs. The most noble of the Carthaginians wait on the queen, lingering in the bed chamber, at the doorway,
- 135 and her steed stands conspicuously in purple and gold, and in high spirits (*lit.* fiercely) bites the foaming bridle. At last she walks forth with a great throng attending (her), wearing, flung about her, a Sidonian cloak with an embroidered border; Her quiver was made of gold, (and) her hair was fastened with a golden clasp, the golden brooch tied beneath the purple garment.
- 140 Moreover both the Phrygian comrades and the happy Iulus are advancing. Aeneas, himself the most beautiful of them all, comes forward as her companion and joins his troops with hers. (It is) just as when Apollo abandons Lycia his winter home and the streams of Xanthus, and Apollo visits his birthplace Delus,
- 145 and starts the dance anew; and around his altar the Cretans, Dryopians and the tattooed Agarthyrsans, mixed together, make a din. He himself walks on the ridges in Cynthus, and he presses his flowing hair with soft foliage, and he fastens it with gold; his arrows sound from his shoulder. Aeneas went in no less graceful a manner than that man;
- 150 a great grace shone forth from his noble face. After they had come in the high hills and to an impassable lair, see, racing down from the hills come the wild mountain-goats, having been driven downwards from a rocky pinnacle, (and) in another part, a herd of stags go skimming across the plain lying open and mass together in dusty flight and leave the mountains behind.
- 156 But the boy Ascanius, in the middle of the valley, rejoices in his keen horse— now he passes these ones on this course, and now he passes those. He wishes with his prayers that a foaming boar be among the lifeless herds, or a yellow lion to descend from the mountains.
- 160 Meanwhile the sky begins to be agitated with a great noise; a cloud mixed with hail follows on. Both the Tyrian comrades and the Trojan youth and the Dardanian grandson of Venus scattering in all directions over the fields sought shelters in fear. The rivers rush down the mountains.
- 165 Dido and the Trojan leader reach the same cave. First both Earth and Juno the bride-escorter give the signal. The fires gleamed and the upper air was a witness to the marriage, and the nymphs raised their howls to the highest crest. That day in the beginning was the cause of death, that day in the beginning was the cause of suffering.
- 170 For Dido is neither moved by appearance or rumour, nor now is Dido planning secret love. She calls it a "lawful marriage". She has veiled her guilt with its name.
Forthwith Rumour went through the great cities of Libya. Rumour, than which no other evil goes faster;
- 175 She flourishes with quick movement and she acquires strength as it goes. At first (she is) with small fear; soon it lifts into the air, and she walks along the ground, and she

- hides her head among the clouds. Mother Earth gave birth to her, having been vexed in anger against the gods; last born, as they say, sister to Coeus and Enclades.
- 180 She is swift in foot and her wings are (also) swift. She is an horrendous monster, huge, who has as many feathers on their body, as many as watchful eyes underneath, amazing to tell as many tongues, just as many mouths sound out, so many ears prick up. By night she flies roaming through the shadow in the mid space of heaven and earth,
- 185 and does not droop her eyes in pleasant slumber. By day, she sits as guardian either on the top of the highest roof-top or on the towers, and she constantly scares the large cities; the messenger is as tenacious of falsehood and wrong as she is tenacious of truth. Then she, rejoicing, began to fill the peoples with her varied words,
- 190 and she began to tell of alike facts and fictions [*lit.* things made and fictions]; that Aeneas had come, sprung from the blood of Troy, the man to whom beautiful Dido was deemed worthy to join herself; now (how) they cherished the winter between themselves in luxury all the winter long [as long as it is], regardless of the kingdoms, captivated in shameful lust.
- 195 The foul goddess scatters these words in all directions into the mouths of men. Forthwith she turned away her course to king Iarbas, and with her words set his mind alight, and piled on anger. This man, sprung from Ammon, with a Garamantian nymph having been ravished,
- 200 he placed 100 vast temples to Jupiter in his far-raging kingdoms; he placed 100 altars, and he had watchful fires consecrated (in them), everlasting sentinels of the gods, and soil (was) rich with the blood of cattle, and the doorways (were) blossoming with varied garlands. And he is often distraught in his mind, and ablaze with bitter rumour, he is said before the altars, that among the middle divinity of the gods, as a suppliant,
- 205 to have begged from Jupiter many things, with hands turned upwards: "Omnipotent Jupiter, to whom now the Moorish nation, having feasted on coloured couches offers Laenaus' honour, do you see these things? Or you, father, when you twist your thunderbolts, do we shudder in vain, and do blind fires in the clouds terrify minds, and stir empty mutterings?"
- 211 A woman, who, wandering into our territory, has placed a puny city for a price, to whom (we gave) a (piece of) shore requiring to be ploughed, and to whom we gave conditions of holding, she has thrust away our marriage, and she has received Aeneas as her master into the kingdom.
- 215 And now that Paris, with his womanish train, tied beneath with a Lydian turban is his chin and his essence-dripping hair, ravishes that which he has possession of; we bring presents to temples doubtlessly yours, and cherish a name that is useless!
The omnipotent one heard him, saying such words and touching the altar,
- 220 and he turned his eyes to royal walls, and those lovers forgetful of their better reputation. Then in this way he addresses Mercury, and commands such things: "Come now, son of mine, call the west-winds, and glide on your wings, and speak to the Dardanian leader, who now lingers in Tyrian Carthage,
- 225 and does not pay attention to cities having been given by the fates, and carry down my words through the swift breezes. His most beautiful mother promised not such a man as that; that is why she rescued him twice from Graecian arms; but it would be destined that he would be the man who would rule Italy, heavy in command and raging in war,
- 230 a man who would carry forward a race from the blood of Teucer, and a man who might send the whole earth under its law. If in no way does the glory of such great things fire him, nor he himself strive at his task for the sake of his own praise, does Ascanius' father grudge his own son the citadels of Rome?"

- 235 What is he striving for? Or with what expectation does he delay in a hostile family, and does he not pay attention to the Ausonian stock and the Lavinian fields? Let him set sail; this is my command in brief; let this be our message.”
He had spoken. He prepared to obey the command of his great father: and first he bound golden winged sandals to his feet,
- 240 which soaring carry him either above oceans or the land, equally poised with the whirling wind. Then he took his staff: with which he calls the pale souls from the Underworld, sends others down to the gloomy Infernal Regions, gives sleep(s) and takes it away, and seals up eyes at death.
- 245 Relying on its power he drives the winds before him and he floats through the stormy clouds. And now flying he sees the crest and the steep flanks of enduring Atlas, who balances the sky with his head. Atlas, to whom the pine-clad head is constantly surrounded with black clouds, and beaten by wind and rain,
- 250 a mantle of snow conceals his shoulders, then rivers flow headlong down the chin of the old man, and his rough beard is frozen with ice. Here, Cyllenian Mercury first stopped, resting upon balanced wings; from here he sent himself headlong down to the waves with his whole body, like a bird, which flies around the shores,
- 255 low around the fishy rocks close to the ocean. Not otherwise he flew between the lands and the sky to the sandy shore of Libya, and the Cyllenian offspring coming from his maternal ancestor, cut through the winds. As soon as he reached the huts with his winged feet,
- 260 he caught sight of Aeneas founding citadels and making new shelters. And he had a sword, starred with tawny-yellow jasper, and hanging from his shoulders was blazing a cloak, of Tyrian purple dye, which wealthy Dido had made (him) as a gift, and had picked out the web with fine gold.
- 265 Forthwith he went for him: “You, now placing foundations for high Carthage and under the sway of a woman building a beautiful city, alas forgetful of your kingdom and your own responsibilities? He, the ruler of the gods himself who sways the earth and sky with his divine will, has himself sent me, down from Mt. Olympus;
- 270 He himself orders (me) to carry these messages through the swift breezes. What do you mean to do? Or with what hope do you spend idle hours in Libyan lands? If no glory of such great things moves you, [nor does that man strive for work to allow any praise from you], look (back) upon Ascanius, growing, and look upon the hopes of Iulus as heir,
- 275 to whom the kingdom of Italy and the Roman earth is due.” Cyllenian Mercury, with such words having been spoken, and in the middle of speaking he left from mortal vision and vanished far off from their sight into thin air.
But indeed Aeneas was struck dumb by the vision, out of his mind,
- 280 his hair bristled with fear, and his voice stuck in his throat. He has a burning desire to go away in flight, and leave the sweet lands, astonished by such a warning, and command of the gods. Alas, what could he do? With what approach would he dare to conciliate the raging queen? What first beginning might he take on?
- 285 And he divides his quick-changing mind now here, and now there, and he seizes his mind into different directions, and he revolves his mind through all of them. These opinions seemed preferable to any alternative. He calls Mnestheus and Sergestus, and the brave Serestus, and tells them that they should fit out the fleet in silence, and they should compel the comrades to the shore.
- 290 They should prepare arms, and they should conceal that which is the cause of things requiring to be changed, since wonderful Dido did not know, and she did not expect such great love to be broken, he would try and approach [*lit.* try out] what time, would be the softest for speaking, what manner would be favourable for these matters.

- 295 All swiftly obey his command happily, and fulfil the orders. But the queen sensed deceit in advance (who is able to deceive a lover if he tried?) and firstly learned of movements about to happen, fearing even when there was no danger. The same (who visited Iarbas), unholy Rumour, reported to her raging that the fleet was being armed and a journey was being prepared.
- 300 She rages powerless of mind and ablaze she rushes wildly through the whole city, aroused just as a Maenad aroused with the sacred emblem having been brandished, where every third year the orgies, with the cry of Bacchus having been heard, spur her on and at night Mount Cithaeron calls (her) with its shouts. At last she addressed Aeneas with these words without waiting for him:
- 305 “Did you even expect that you could conceal such a sin, traitor, and depart quickly from my land? Does neither our love, nor your right hand once given, nor Dido about to die a cruel death hold you? Furthermore, are you even toiling to prepare your fleet in the wintry sky,
- 310 to go through the deep seas, hastening in the middle of the north winds, you cruel thing? Why, if you were not seeking foreign lands and unfamiliar homes, and (if) ancient Troy were still standing, would Troy be sought with your fleet, over the billowing ocean? Is it me you are fleeing from? I, through these tears, and your right hand, by you,
- 315 (since I myself have left nothing else now to me in my wretchedness), through our union, through the marriage we started, if I have deserved anything well from you, or there was to you sweet love, have mercy on my falling home, I beg you, if there was any place still for prayers (in your heart), change that mind of yours.
- 320 Because of you the Libyan tribes and the tyrants of the Numidians hate (me), and the Tyrians are hostile; Because of you likewise my sense of shame has been extinguished, and my former reputation, by which I was going away alone to the starts. For what to you desert me, destined to die— guest (this name alone remains from husband)?
- 325 Why do I delay? Or is it until my brother Pygmalion may destroy my walls, or until Gaetulian Iarbas may carry me away captured? At least, if there had been any offspring for me having been conceived from you before your flight, if there was some tiny Aeneas to play in my palace, who might bring you back, if only by his face,
- 330 not indeed so completely entrapped and deserted might I seem.” She had spoken. He held his eyes motionless at the commands of Jupiter and having struggled pressed his love under his heart. At last he replied, with few words: “I, queen, will never deny that you have very many rendered services, which you can count up in words.
- 335 Nor shall I be unwilling to remember Elissa, while I am mindful of myself, while breath rules these limbs. Let me say a few words on the matter. Neither did I hope to conceal this flight with strength— do not imagine that. Nor have I ever held out a torch of marriage, or have I come into these alliances.
- 340 If fate lay open to allow me to lead my life with my own authority, and to settle my concerns freely, I should have tended to the city of Troy as my first care, and the gentle relics of my own (people); and if the tall palaces of Priam would still remain, I should have renewed the citadel of Troy for the defeated by hand.
- 345 But now Apollo at Gryneum, the oracles at Lycia, have ordered that I make for great Italy. This is my love and my fatherland. If the citadel of Carthage and the sight of a Libyan city hold you, Phoenician as you are, what, tell me, is the grudge that the Trojans settle on Ausonian land?
- 350 And it is by divine will that we search for a kingdom in a foreign country. As often as the night shrouds the land in moist shadows, as often as the fiery stars arise, that disturbing image of my father Anchises warns me in my sleep and frightens me. The boy Ascanius, and the wrong I do to this dear head,
- 355 whom I deprive of with the Western Land, and I cheat of with the fields, his by destiny. Now even a messenger of the gods, having been sent by Jupiter himself (I

- swear by both our heads), has brought down his commands through the swift breezes. I with my own eyes [myself] saw unmistakably the god entering the walls in the light, and with these ears drank his word(s).
- 360 Cease to agitate me, and yourself, with your complaints. I pursue Italy, not of free will. Saying such things she looked at him for some time, now turned away, her eyes flying here and there, and she surveys his whole (body) with eyes silent, and in this way she speaks forth in anger [*lit.* ablaze]:
- 365 “Neither was a goddess your parent, nor was Dardanus the creator of your race, traitor! But horrid Caucasus bore you, on its hard rocks, and the tigers of Hyrcanas reared you. For why do I conceal, or for what better things do I hold myself back? Surely he did not sigh for our weeping? Surely he did not more his eyes?
- 370 Surely having been conquered he did not give tears or he did not pity the lover. What things to I set before these? Right now neither supreme Juno or the father, Saturn’s son, sees this with equal eyes. Nowhere is my loyalty safe, I received him, having been thrown out from his shore, in need, and out of my mind, I placed him in a part of my kingdom;
- 375 I brought back his lost fleet, I brought back his comrades from death. Alas, I am held burning by the furies! Now the prophet Apollo, now the oracles at Lycia, and now the messenger of the gods, sent by Jupiter himself, brings the horrid orders in the air. Doubtlessly this is the work of the gods above! That is the concern that worries them in their rest.
- 380 Neither am I holding you, nor do I dispute your words. Go, seek Italy before the winds; seek the kingdom through the waves. I truly hope, if the dutiful gods have any power, (you) will drink to the cup of punishment in the middle of the rocks, and will often call “Dido” by name. I shall pursue, being absent, with black fires;
- 385 And when chilly death has parted my body from its spirit, in all places my ghost will be there. You will pay the penalty, wicked one. I shall hear, and this rumour will come to me under the deep shades.” She broke off in the middle of her speech with these words, and love-sick, fled the air(s), and she turned her eyes away from him and swept away,
- 390 leaving him hesitating much in fear and preparing to say many words. The maids take her up, and they carry her collapsed limbs to her marble bedroom and lay them on the bed covers. But dutiful Aeneas, although he wanted to soothe her grieving by comforting her and avert her cares with his words,
- 395 groaning greatly and having been shaken with respect to his mind by a great love, follows however the orders of the gods and returns to his fleet. Then indeed the Trojans set to work and bring out lofty ships along the whole shore. The oiled keel floats, they carry oars of foliage, and unfabricated timbers,
- 400 in their zeal for flight. She could perceive (them) departing and rushing from every part of the city. Just like ants they plunder huge mounds, mindful of the winter, and place them up in the roof; a black column goes in the plains, and they carry booty
- 405 in a narrow path through the grass(es); some push forward the weighty grains, having strained with their shoulders; some muster the herds and censure the delays; and the path glows with work. What emotion (there was) for you then, Dido, perceiving such things, or what sigh you were giving, when from your high citadel you saw that the shores were ablaze far and wide,
- 410 and before your own eyes you saw the whole ocean disturbed with such noises? Relentless love, to what do you not force the mortal heart! Again she is compelled to burst again into tears [*lit.* go to tears], to test him again by praying, and humbly to yield her proud spirit to love,
- 415 lest she leave anything untried, about to die in vain. “Anna, you see the hurrying on the whole shore. They have gathered around from all sides; now the canvas calls the

- winds, and also the happy sailors have placed garlands on the sterns. If I was able to anticipate such grief,
- 420 I will also be able to endure it, sister. However, carry out this one thing for wretched me, Anna; For that traitor would attend to you alone; even to entrust to you his secret feelings; Alone, you know the soft approaches and the times of the man. Go, sister, and speak as a suppliant to the proud enemy.
- 425 I have not conspired with the Greeks at Aulis to exterminate the Trojan race, nor did I send a fleet to Pergamum: Nor did I tear up the ashes or shades of his father Anchises, so why does deny to let any words sink into his obstinate ears? To where is he rushing? Let him give this final gift to the wretched woman loving (him):
- 430 let him wait for an easy flight and carrying winds. I do not ask for the ancient marriage which he betrayed, nor that he be deprived of glorious Latium and foresake his kingdom. I seek empty time, and peace and space for my fury, until my fortune reduces me, conquered, to grieve.
- 435 I beg this last pardon— have mercy on your sister— which when he has given it to me, I shall repay it accumulated with death.” She was begging with such things, and the very wretched sister relates and relates again such tears. But he is not moved by any weepings, nor does he, yielding, hear any voices.
- 440 Fates withstand; and the god obstructs the receptive [*lit.* gentle] ears of the man. And just as the North-winds of the Alps strive amongst themselves to uproot the oak, strong with aged strength [*lit.* timber], with breezes on this side and on that side; there is a groan [*lit.* a creak goes], and high leaves bestrew the ground, with the trunk having been shaken violently.
- 445 The tree itself stays fixed in the rocks, and, to the extent that it reaches to the upper airs with its peak, so does it reach into the Infernal Regions with its root. By no means otherwise the hero was beaten here and there with unceasing words, and he felt deeply the cares in his great heart. His mind remains unmoved; [empty] tears rolled down uselessly.
- 450 Then indeed unlucky Dido prays for death, having been terrified by the fates. It tires her to look at the vaults of heaven. In order to more complete her purpose, and in order to leave the light, she saw, when she was placing gifts on the altars— horrible in the telling— the holy waters [*lit.* liquids] blackened,
- 455 and the poured wine turned itself into gruesome blood. She told this sight to no one, not (even) her sister. There was furthermore in her palaces a marble temple [*lit.* a temple from marble] for her former husband, which she used to tend with wonderful honour, having been bound with snowy fleeces and festive leaves;
- 460 From here voices and words of her husband seemed to be heard, when dark night held the world(s). And often on rooftops a lone owl would complain with a song of death, and draw out its long hooting into a wail. Moreover many prophecies of former seers shocked her with dreadful warning(s).
- 465 Savage Aeneas himself would chase her in madness in her dreams; and always it seems to her that she is left alone ; always companionless for going on a long journey, and to search for Tyrians in a deserted land. Just as Pentheus, deranged, sees the bands of Furies,
- 470-and a twin sun, and two-fold Thebes shows itself; or of hunted Orestus son of Agamemnon, when he escaped his armed mother with torches and black serpents, and the avenging Furies sit in the doorway. Therefore when she conceived the furies, having been overcome by grief,
- 475 and she resolved to die, she worked out with herself the time and the method, and she covers her plan, having addressed her sorrowful sister with words, and she shows the calm of hope upon her brow: “I have found, sister, a way— wish joy on your sister— in order to restore him to me, or to loose me, loving, from him.

- 480 There is the place of the Ethiopians, close to the boundary of the ocean and the setting of the sun, on the edge of the world, where mightiest Atlas turns on his shoulders the pole (of the heavens), studded with blazing stars. From here, a priestess of the Massylian race was pointed out to me, guardian of the temple of the Hesperides,
- 485 and she who used to give feasts for the dragon, and who used to guard the sacred boughs in the tree, scattering wet honey and the sleep-inducing poppy (seed). This woman promises that she loosens the minds with incantations, whichever she wishes, but (she promises) to inflict harsh cares on others; To still the water in rivers, and to turn back the movement of stars;
- 490 she rouses the nocturnal shades; you will see the earth tremble under your feet, and the ash trees descend from the mountains. I call to witness, dear sister, the gods, and you, and your sweet life [*lit.* head], that unwillingly I take up magic arts. You, erect a pyre, secretly in the interior of the house under the winds,
- 495 and may you lay on it the arms of the man, which were left set up undutifully in the bed-chamber, and all the garments, and the couch of wedlock, on which I have been ruined: it helps to destroy all things that remind me of the abominable man, and the priestess has made this known.” Having spoken these things, she falls silent; at the same paleness fills her cheeks.
- 500 However Anna did not believe that her sister feigned her death with the new sacred rites, nor did she conceive such madness in her mind, nor did she fear things more grave than (those) at the death of Sychaeus. Therefore she prepares the commands. But the queen, with the pyre erected in the innermost heart of her home under the winds,
- 505 and piled huge with pieces of pinewood and cut holm-oak, hangs the place with garlands and crowns it with deathly foliage; on top of it she places on the bed garments and his sword, having been left, and an effigy, not at all ignorant of things to come. Around it stand altars, and a priestess with hair loosened,
- 510 thunders out with her mouth three hundred times to the gods, and Erebus, and Chaos, and the triple Hecate, the three faces of the virgin Diana. She had also sprinkled waters imitative of the fountains of Avernus. And herbs, cut with bronze sickles, are sought by moonlight, juicy with the black milk of venom.
- 515 And also a love-charm is sought, ripped from the brow of a horse being born, torn prior to the mother (tearing it). And she [Dido] herself, by the altars, with the holy meal and with pious hands, with one foot uncovered with bands of the sandal [*lit.* unclothed in respect to one foot by the bands of the sandal], ungirt in her garment, she, about to die, calls the gods to witness and the stars, knowing fate.
- 520 Then, if any divinity, both just and minful has anything of a care for those loving in an unequal alliance, she prays to it. It was night, and through the lands the tired bodies were enjoying restful sleep, and the woods and the wild seas had grown quiet, when the stars are turned in mid flight,
- 525 when every field is quiet, beats and patterned birds, both those who inhabit the limpid lakes far and wide, and those who hold the fields rough with thorns, placed in sleep under the silence of night they were soothing their cares, and hearts forgetful of labours. But the unhappy in mind Phoenician queen,
- 530 neither ever is loosened into sleep, nor does she accept night with her eyes or breast. Her cares double, and again, love, surging again, rages, and swells in a great tide of passions. Thus she persists, and thus she communes with herself in her heart. “See, what am I doing? Again will I make trial of prior suitors, to be scorned by them (having been scorned by them),
- 535 or shall I seek marriages of Numidians humbly, whom I have so often now disdained as husbands? Therefore, should I follow the Trojan fleets and the uttermost commands

- of the Trojans? Because it pleases those having been alleviated before by help, and their gratitude for my past deed stands well among those mindful of past deeds?
- 540 But— supposed I wished it— who would permit it, who would invite me, having been hated, on his proud ships? Alas, you do not know, ruined one, and you do not yet understand the falsehood of the race of Laomedon. What then? Shall I accompany the rejoicing sailors alone in flight? Or shall I, having been surrounded by the Tyrians and my entire band ,
- 545 hasten to join them, and shall I again lead to the sea, those whom I scarcely tore away from the Sidonian city, and shall I order to give the sails to the winds? No, rather die, as you have deserved, and avert grief by the sword. You, having been overcome by my fears, you first aggravated (me) raging by these evils, dear sister, and cast (me) on my enemy.
- 550 It was not permitted that (I), having no part in the bed-chamber, lived past life without crime, in the custom of a wild animal, nor to touch such cares! And the loyalty, promised to the ashes of Sychaeus, is not kept!” Aeneas was enjoying sleep, in the high stern, already resolved on going,
- 555 with his things already having been duly prepared. To him a figure of the god presented itself in dreams, returning with the same appearance, and again it seemed to warn him thus, similar in every way to Mercury, both voice and colour and golden hair and beautiful limbs with the youthfulness:
- 560 “Son of the goddess [*lit.* Goddess born], are you able to draw out sleep under this disaster? Neither do you perceive the dangers which stand around you hereafter, fool, nor do you hear the favourable West winds breathe? She revolves in her breast deceits and a dreadful crime, certain to die, and she rouses a changing tide of anger.
- 565 Will you not flee away with haste from here, while there is the power to hasten? Now you will see the sea disturbed with ships, and savage torches shining brilliantly, now the shore ablaze with flames, if dawn finds you delaying in these lands. Hey, come, be done with delays. A woman is always a varying and changeable thing.”
- 570 Having spoken thus he mingled into the black night. Then indeed Aeneas, having been suddenly terrified by the sudden apparitions, tore his body from sleep, and harassed his comrades: “Wake quickly, men, and sit side by side on the rowing-benches; Loosen the sails quickly. The god, having been sent from high heaven, behold, again urges us to hurry in flight
- 575 and to cut the twisted cables. We follow you, hallowed one of the gods, whoever you are, and again we obey your command rejoicing. O may you be here O gentle one and may you kindly help us, and bear favourable stars in heaven.” He spoke, and he ripped his flashing sword from the sheath,
- 580 and he struck the cables with the unsheathed sword.. The same ardour seized them all at the same time. They both hurry and they rush. They have deserted the shore; the water lay hidden underneath the fleet; Having exerted, they churn the foam(s), and they seep the blue sea. And now first Aurora [dawn], leaving the saffron bed of Tithonus,
- 585 was scattering the lands with new light. The queen, from her watch-towers, when she saw first light gleam white, and the fleet advancing with levelled line of sail, and perceived the shores and harbours empty, without an oarsman, and having struck her beautiful breast with her hand three times and a fourth,
- 590 and having torn her golden hairs, said: “By Jupiter! And will this man go, and shall the stranger have mocked our kingdom? Will some not procure arms, and pursue them out of the whole city, and others tear ships hastily out of the dockyards? Go, carry flames quickly, give weapons, drive the oars on
- 595 What am I saying? Or where am I? Which insanity is changing my mind? Unlucky Dido! Now do your impious deeds touch you? Then it was fitting, when you gave over your sceptre. See, behold the right hand, the pledge of honour! They say that he carries

- with him the household gods of his forefathers, whom they say he supported on his shoulders his father worn out with age!
- 600 Could I not have seized his body, torn it asunder, and scattered it on the waves? Or could I not have murdered his comrades, murdered Ascanius himself with the sword, and placed him as a feast at the table of his father? Truly the fortune of battle had been doubtful— let it have been so. Whom did I fear, about to die? I should have brought torches into his camp
- 605 and should have filled the decks with flames, and extinguished the son and the father along with their race, and thrown myself upon that (pyre)! O sun, you who light up with your beams [*lit.* flames] all the works of the earth, and you, mediator of these cares and knowing, Juno; and Hecate, having been wailed through the cities at the nocturnal crossroads,
- 610 and the avenging Furies, and the gods of dying Elissa, accept this, and turn your power, which is deserved for these evils, and hear our prayers. If it is necessary for that accursed being to touch the harbour and float to land(s) and thus the fates of Jupiter demand, this outcome is fixed:
- 615 But having been vexed by war and arms of a bold people, exiled from the borders, having been torn away from the embrace of Iulus, let him implore help, and let him see the unworthy deaths of his own people. Nor when he has handed himself over under laws of an unjust peace, may he enjoy his kingdom or the desired light,
- 620 but may he perish before his time, and unburied in the middle of the sand. I pray this; I pour this final voice with my life-blood. Then you, O Tyrians, trouble with hatred on his line and all his race to come, and send these gifts to our ashes. Let there be no love or treaty for those peoples.
- 625 Rise up, some avenger, from my bones, to chase the Dardanian settlers with torch and sword, now, hereafter, and whenever in time strength offers itself (to do those things). Shores at feud with shores, water with waves, such is my prayer, arms with arms; both may they fight and their sons also.”
- 630 She spoke these things, and began to turn her mind into all parts [every direction] seeking how first to destroy the hated light. Then briefly she addressed Barce, the nurse of Sychaeus, for the black cinder held her own in her ancient fatherland. “Dear nurse, bring my sister Anna here to me.
- 635 Say— let her hasten to sprinkle her body with river water, and let her lead the beasts with her and the appointed sacrifices. Thus let her come, and you yourself cover the temples with the sacred band. There is a mind (for me) [it is my intention] to complete the rites of Stygian Jupiter, which, duly having been begun, I have prepared, and to impose an end on my cares,
- 640 and to commit the funeral pyre of the Dardanian wretch [*lit.* head] to the flames.” Thus she spoke. And she [the nurse] began to hasten her step with the zeal of an old woman. But Dido, agitated and savage, with horrible undertaking, revolving her bloodshot eye(s), and pale in her coming death,
- 645 bursts into the inner thresholds of the house and climbs the high pyre [steps] raging, and unsheathes the Trojan sword, a gift not sought for these uses. Hereupon, after she caught sight of the Trojan garments and the familiar [known] bed, having delayed for a short time by tearful thought [*lit.* by tears and thought]
- 650 she both reclined on the couch, and said her last [*lit.* newest] words.
“Sweet garments, while fates and god were [*lit.* was] allowing it, accept this mind and release me from these cares. I have lived and what course fortune has given I have accomplished, and now my great shade [*lit.* ghost] will go beneath the lands.
- 655 I have founded a renowned city, I have seen my walls, having avenged my husband I have exacted a penalty from my inimical brother, happy, alas much too happy, if only the Dardanian keels had never touched our shores.” She spoke, and having pressed her face onto the couch said, “Let me die unavenged,

660 but let me die. Thus, thus it helps to go beneath the shadows. Let the Trojan drink in
this fire with his cruel eyes from the deep, and let him bear with him omens of our
death.” She had spoken. And in the middle of such things, her comrades catch sight of
her, collapsed on the sword,
665 and the sword foaming with blood, and her spattered hands. A shout goes up to the
high roof. Rumour rushed wildly through the shaken city. With lamentation and
groaning and women having wailed, the palace roars. Heaven rings out with great
mourning. Not otherwise, than if some enemy having been let loose on (it), all
Carthage and ancient Tyre were falling,
670 and wild flames were rolling both through the houses of men and of gods. And her
sister heard, faint and terrified on an anxious course, disfiguring her face with her nails
and her chest with beatings, rushes through the midst, and she calls the dying one by
name:
675 “Was this what it was, sister? Were you seeking me with deception? This is what your
pyre was prepared for, was it, and the fire and the altars [*lit.* That pyre, these fires, and
altars were preparing this for me, were they]? For what should I lament first, having
been deserted? Did you, dying, spurn your sister as a comrade? You should have called
me to the same fates: The same pain and the same hour should have borne us both by
the sword.
680 Did I even build (the pyre) with these hands, and did I cry out with my voice to the
ancestral gods, in order that with you thus positioned, I might be absent? You
destroyed both yourself, sister, and me, and the people, and the Sidonian nobility [*lit.*
fathers], and your city. Grant that I might wash your wounds with water, and if any
last breath flickers above,
685 grant that I might catch it with my lips.” Speaking thus she had surmounted the high
steps, and having embraced her half-dead sister to her breast, she was clinging to her
with a groan, and stemming the dark blood with her dress. She, having tried to lift her
heavy eyes, failed again: The deep wound gurgles beneath her breast.
690 Raising herself three times and having leant upon her elbow she lifts herself: three
times she rolled back onto the couch, and with roaming eyes she searched for the light
in high heaven, and with (it) having been discovered, she groaned. Then omnipotent
Juno, having taken pity on her long anguish and difficult departure, sent down Iris
from Olympus,
695 who might loosen her wrestling spirit and the limbs which held it down [*lit.* the
restraining limbs]. For, since she was perishing neither by fate nor by a deserved death,
but wretchedly before her day, and having been inflamed by sudden passion,
Proserpine had not yet taken a golden lock from her crown, and had not condemned
her life to Stygian Orcus.
700 Therefore, Iris, bedewed with saffron wings, trailing a thousand varying colours with
the sun facing her, flew down through the heavens, and stood above her head:
“Having been ordered, I bear this sacred thing to Pluto, and I release you from that
body.” She spoke thus, and with her right hand she cut her hair. Together with it,
705 all the heat slipped away, and her life passed into the winds.

The Descent. Dante's Protest and Virgil's Appeal. The Intercession of the Three Ladies Benedight.

Day was departing, and the embrowned air
 Released the animals that are on earth
 From their fatigues; and I the only one
 Made myself ready to sustain the war,
 Both of the way and likewise of the woe,
 Which memory that errs not shall retrace.
 O Muses, O high genius, now assist me!
 O memory, that didst write down what I saw,
 Here thy nobility shall be manifest!
 And I began: "Poet, who guidest me,
 Regard my manhood, if it be sufficient,
 Ere to the arduous pass thou dost confide me.
 Thou sayest, that of Silvius the parent,
 While yet corruptible, unto the world
 Immortal went, and was there bodily.
 But if the adversary of all evil
 Was courteous, thinking of the high effect
 That issue would from him, and who, and what,
 To men of intellect unmeet it seems not;
 For he was of great Rome, and of her empire
 In the empyreal heaven as father chosen;
 The which and what, wishing to speak the truth,
 Were established as the holy place, wherein
 Sits the successor of the greatest Peter.
 Upon this journey, whence thou givest him vaunt,
 Things did he hear, which the occasion were
 Both of his victory and the papal mantle.
 Thither went afterwards the Chosen Vessel,
 To bring back comfort thence unto that Faith,

8

Which of salvation's way is the beginning.
 But I, why thither come, or who concedes it?
 I not Aeneas am, I am not Paul,
 Nor I, nor others, think me worthy of it.
 Therefore, if I resign myself to come,
 I fear the coming may be ill-advised;
 Thou'rt wise, and knowest better than I speak."
 And as he is, who unwilld what he willed,
 And by new thoughts doth his intention change,
 So that from his design he quite withdraws,
 Such I became, upon that dark hillside,
 Because, in thinking, I consumed the emprise,
 Which was so very prompt in the beginning.
 "If I have well thy language understood,"
 Replied that shade of the Magnanimous,
 "Thy soul attainted is with cowardice,
 Which many times a man encumbers so,
 It turns him back from honoured enterprise,
 As false sight doth a beast, when he is shy.
 That thou mayst free thee from this apprehension,
 I'll tell thee why I came, and what I heard
 At the first moment when I grieved for thee.
 Among those was I who are in suspense,
 And a fair, saintly Lady called to me
 In such wise, I besought her to command me.
 Her eyes were shining brighter than the Star;
 And she began to say, gentle and low,
 With voice angelical, in her own language:
 'O spirit courteous of Mantua,
 Of whom the fame still in the world endures,
 And shall endure, long-lasting as the world;
 A friend of mine, and not the friend of fortune,
 Upon the desert slope is so impeded
 Upon his way, that he has turned through terror,
 And may, I fear, already be so lost,
 That I too late have risen to his succour,
 From that which I have heard of him in Heaven.
 Bestir thee now, and with thy speech ornate,
 And with what needful is for his release,
 Assist him so, that I may be consoled.

9

Beatrice am I, who do bid thee go;
 I come from there, where I would fain return;
 Love moved me, which compelleth me to speak.
 When I shall be in presence of my Lord,
 Full often will I praise thee unto him.'
 Then paused she, and thereafter I began:
 'O Lady of virtue, thou alone through whom
 The human race exceedeth all contained
 Within the heaven that has the lesser circles,
 So grateful unto me is thy commandment,
 To obey, if 'twere already done, were late;
 No farther need'st thou ope to me thy wish.
 But the cause tell me why thou dost not shun
 The here descending down into this centre,
 From the vast place thou burnest to return to.'
 'Since thou wouldst fain so inwardly discern,
 Briefly will I relate,' she answered me,
 'Why I am not afraid to enter here.
 Of those things only should one be afraid
 Which have the power of doing others harm;
 Of the rest, no; because they are not fearful.
 God in his mercy such created me
 That misery of yours attains me not,
 Nor any flame assails me of this burning.
 A gentle Lady is in Heaven, who grieves
 At this impediment, to which I send thee,
 So that stern judgment there above is broken.
 In her entreaty she besought Lucia,
 And said, "Thy faithful one now stands in need
 Of thee, and unto thee I recommend him."
 Lucia, foe of all that cruel is,
 Hastened away, and came unto the place
 Where I was sitting with the ancient Rachel.
 "Beatrice" said she, "the true praise of God,
 Why succourest thou not him, who loved thee so,
 For thee he issued from the vulgar herd?
 Dost thou not hear the pity of his plaint?
 Dost thou not see the death that combats him
 Beside that flood, where ocean has no vaunt?"
 Never were persons in the world so swift

10

To work their weal and to escape their woe,
 As I, after such words as these were uttered,
 Came hither downward from my blessed seat,
 Confiding in thy dignified discourse,
 Which honours thee, and those who've listened to it.'
 After she thus had spoken unto me,
 Weeping, her shining eyes she turned away;
 Whereby she made me swifter in my coming;
 And unto thee I came, as she desired;
 I have delivered thee from that wild beast,
 Which barred the beautiful mountain's short ascent.
 What is it, then? Why, why dost thou delay?
 Why is such baseness bedded in thy heart?
 Daring and hardihood why hast thou not,
 Seeing that three such Ladies benedight
 Are caring for thee in the court of Heaven,
 And so much good my speech doth promise thee?"
 Even as the flowerets, by nocturnal chill,
 Bowed down and closed, when the sun whitens them,
 Uplift themselves all open on their stems;
 Such I became with my exhausted strength,
 And such good courage to my heart coursed,
 That I began, like an intrepid person:
 "O she compassionate, who succoured me,
 And courteous thou, who hast obeyed so soon
 The words of truth which she addressed to thee!
 Thou hast my heart so with desire disposed
 To the adventure, with these words of thine,
 That to my first intent I have returned.
 Now go, for one sole will is in us both,
 Thou Leader, and thou Lord, and Master thou."
 Thus said I to him; and when he had moved,
 I entered on the deep and savage way.

Chapter 4

The First Circle, Limbo: Virtuous Pagans and the Unbaptized. The Four Poets, Homer, Horace, Ovid, and Lucan. The Noble Castle of Philosophy.

Broke the deep lethargy within my head
 A heavy thunder, so that I upstarted,
 Like to a person who by force is wakened;
 And round about I moved my rested eyes,
 Uprisen erect, and steadfastly I gazed,
 To recognise the place wherein I was.
 True is it, that upon the verge I found me
 Of the abysmal valley dolorous,
 That gathers thunder of infinite ululations.
 Obscure, profound it was, and nebulous,
 So that by fixing on its depths my sight
 Nothing whatever I discerned therein.
 "Let us descend now into the blind world,"
 Began the Poet, pallid utterly:
 "I will be first, and thou shalt second be."
 And I, who of his colour was aware,
 Said: "How shall I come, if thou art afraid,
 Who'rt wont to be a comfort to my fears?"
 And he to me: "The anguish of the people
 Who are below here in my face depicts
 That pity which for terror thou hast taken.
 Let us go on, for the long way impels us."
 Thus he went in, and thus he made me enter
 The foremost circle that surrounds the abyss.
 There, as it seemed to me from listening,
 Were lamentations none, but only sighs,
 That tremble made the everlasting air.
 And this arose from sorrow without torment,

16

Which the crowds had, that many were and great,
 Of infants and of women and of men.
 To me the Master good: "Thou dost not ask
 What spirits these, which thou beholdest, are?
 Now will I have thee know, ere thou go farther,
 That they sinned not; and if they merit had,
 'Tis not enough, because they had not baptism
 Which is the portal of the Faith thou holdest;
 And if they were before Christianity,
 In the right manner they adored not God;
 And among such as these am I myself.
 For such defects, and not for other guilt,
 Lost are we and are only so far punished,
 That without hope we live on in desire."
 Great grief seized on my heart when this I heard,
 Because some people of much worthiness
 I knew, who in that Limbo were suspended.
 "Tell me, my Master, tell me, thou my Lord,"
 Began I, with desire of being certain
 Of that Faith which o'ercometh every error,
 "Came any one by his own merit hence,
 Or by another's, who was blessed thereafter?"
 And he, who understood my covert speech,
 Replied: "I was a novice in this state,
 When I saw hither come a Mighty One,
 With sign of victory incoronate.
 Hence he drew forth the shade of the First Parent,
 And that of his son Abel, and of Noah,
 Of Moses the lawgiver, and the obedient
 Abraham, patriarch, and David, king,
 Israel with his father and his children,
 And Rachel, for whose sake he did so much,
 And others many, and he made them blessed;
 And thou must know, that earlier than these
 Never were any human spirits saved."
 We ceased not to advance because he spake,
 But still were passing onward through the forest,
 The forest, say I, of thick-crowded ghosts.
 Not very far as yet our way had gone
 This side the summit, when I saw a fire

17

That overcame a hemisphere of darkness.
 We were a little distant from it still,
 But not so far that I in part discerned not
 That honourable people held that place.
 "O thou who honourest every art and science,
 Who may these be, which such great honour have,
 That from the fashion of the rest it parts them?"
 And he to me: "The honourable name,
 That sounds of them above there in thy life,
 Wins grace in Heaven, that so advances them."
 In the mean time a voice was heard by me:
 "All honour be to the pre-eminent Poet;
 His shade returns again, that was departed."
 After the voice had ceased and quiet was,
 Four mighty shades I saw approaching us;
 Semblance had they nor sorrowful nor glad.
 To say to me began my gracious Master:
 "Him with that falchion in his hand behold,
 Who comes before the three, even as their lord.
 That one is Homer, Poet sovereign;
 He who comes next is Horace, the satirist;
 The third is Ovid, and the last is Lucan.
 Because to each of these with me applies
 The name that solitary voice proclaimed,
 They do me honour, and in that do well."
 Thus I beheld assemble the fair school
 Of that lord of the song pre-eminent,
 Who o'er the others like an eagle soars.
 When they together had discoursed somewhat,
 They turned to me with signs of salutation,
 And on beholding this, my Master smiled;
 And more of honour still, much more, they did me,
 In that they made me one of their own band;
 So that the sixth was I, 'mid so much wit.
 Thus we went on as far as to the light,
 Things saying 'tis becoming to keep silent,
 As was the saying of them where I was.
 We came unto a noble castle's foot,
 Seven times encompassed with lofty walls,
 Defended round by a fair rivulet;

18

This we passed over even as firm ground;
 Through portals seven I entered with these Sages;
 We came into a meadow of fresh verdure.
 People were there with solemn eyes and slow,
 Of great authority in their countenance;
 They spake but seldom, and with gentle voices.
 Thus we withdrew ourselves upon one side
 Into an opening luminous and lofty,
 So that they all of them were visible.
 There opposite, upon the green enamel,
 Were pointed out to me the mighty spirits,
 Whom to have seen I feel myself exalted.
 I saw Electra with companions many,
 'Mongst whom I knew both Hector and Aeneas,
 Caesar in armour with gerfalcon eyes;
 I saw Camilla and Penthesilea
 On the other side, and saw the King Latinus,
 Who with Lavinia his daughter sat;
 I saw that Brutus who drove Tarquin forth,
 Lucretia, Julia, Marcia, and Cornelia,
 And saw alone, apart, the Saladin.
 When I had lifted up my brows a little,
 The Master I beheld of those who know,
 Sit with his philosophic family.
 All gaze upon him, and all do him honour.
 There I beheld both Socrates and Plato,
 Who nearer him before the others stand;
 Democritus, who puts the world on chance,
 Diogenes, Anaxagoras, and Thales,
 Zeno, Empedocles, and Heraclitus;
 Of qualities I saw the good collector,
 Hight Dioscorides; and Orpheus saw I,
 Tully and Livy, and moral Seneca,
 Euclid, geometrician, and Ptolemy,
 Galen, Hippocrates, and Avicenna,
 Averroes, who the great Comment made.
 I cannot all of them pourtray in full,
 Because so drives me onward the long theme,
 That many times the word comes short of fact.
 The sixfold company in two divides;

The Dark Forest. The Hill of Difficulty. The Panther, the Lion, and the Wolf. Virgil.

Midway upon the journey of our life
 I found myself within a forest dark,
 For the straight-forward pathway had been lost.
 Ah me! how hard a thing it is to say
 What was this forest savage, rough, and stern,
 Which in the very thought renews the fear.
 So bitter is it, death is little more;
 But of the good to treat, which there I found,
 Speak will I of the other things I saw there.
 I cannot well repeat how there I entered,
 So full was I of slumber at the moment
 In which I had abandoned the true way.
 But after I had reached a mountain's foot,
 At that point where the valley terminated,
 Which had with consternation pierced my heart,
 Upward I looked, and I beheld its shoulders,
 Vested already with that planet's rays
 Which leadeth others right by every road.
 Then was the fear a little quieted
 That in my heart's lake had endured throughout
 The night, which I had passed so piteously.
 And even as he, who, with distressful breath,
 Forth issued from the sea upon the shore,
 Turns to the water perilous and gazes;
 So did my soul, that still was fleeing onward,
 Turn itself back to re-behold the pass
 Which never yet a living person left.
 After my weary body I had rested,
 The way resumed I on the desert slope,

4

So that the firm foot ever was the lower.
 And lo! almost where the ascent began,
 A panther light and swift exceedingly,
 Which with a spotted skin was covered o'er!
 And never moved she from before my face,
 Nay, rather did impede so much my way,
 That many times I to return had turned.
 The time was the beginning of the morning,
 And up the sun was mounting with those stars
 That with him were, what time the Love Divine
 At first in motion set those beauteous things;
 So were to me occasion of good hope,
 The variegated skin of that wild beast,
 The hour of time, and the delicious season;
 But not so much, that did not give me fear
 A lion's aspect which appeared to me.
 He seemed as if against me he were coming
 With head uplifted, and with ravenous hunger,
 So that it seemed the air was afraid of him;
 And a she-wolf, that with all hungerings
 Seemed to be laden in her meagreness,
 And many folk has caused to live forlorn!
 She brought upon me so much heaviness,
 With the affright that from her aspect came,
 That I the hope relinquished of the height.
 And as he is who willingly acquires,
 And the time comes that causes him to lose,
 Who weeps in all his thoughts and is despondent,
 E'en such made me that beast withouten peace,
 Which, coming on against me by degrees
 Thrust me back thither where the sun is silent.
 While I was rushing downward to the lowland,
 Before mine eyes did one present himself,
 Who seemed from long-continued silence hoarse.
 When I beheld him in the desert vast,
 "Have pity on me," unto him I cried,
 "Whiche'er thou art, or shade or real man!"
 He answered me: "Not man; man once I was,
 And both my parents were of Lombardy,
 And Mantuans by country both of them.

5

'Sub Julio' was I born, though it was late,
 And lived at Rome under the good Augustus,
 During the time of false and lying gods.
 A poet was I, and I sang that just
 Son of Anchises, who came forth from Troy,
 After that Ilion the superb was burned.
 But thou, why goest thou back to such annoyance?
 Why climb'st thou not the Mount Delectable,
 Which is the source and cause of every joy?"
 "Now, art thou that Virgilius and that fountain
 Which spreads abroad so wide a river of speech?"
 I made response to him with bashful forehead.
 "O, of the other poets honour and light,
 Avail me the long study and great love
 That have impelled me to explore thy volume!
 Thou art my master, and my author thou,
 Thou art alone the one from whom I took
 The beautiful style that has done honour to me.
 Behold the beast, for which I have turned back;
 Do thou protect me from her, famous Sage,
 For she doth make my veins and pulses tremble."
 "Thee it behoves to take another road,"
 Responded he, when he beheld me weeping,
 "If from this savage place thou wouldst escape;
 Because this beast, at which thou criest out,
 Suffers not any one to pass her way,
 But so doth harass him, that she destroys him;
 And has a nature so malign and ruthless,
 That never doth she glut her greedy will,
 And after food is hungrier than before.
 Many the animals with whom she weds,
 And more they shall be still, until the Greyhound
 Comes, who shall make her perish in her pain.
 He shall not feed on either earth or pelf,
 But upon wisdom, and on love and virtue;
 Twixt Feltro and Feltro shall his nation be;
 Of that low Italy felt he be the saviour,
 On whose account the maid Camilla died,
 Euryalus, Turnus, Nisus, of their wounds;
 Through every city shall he hunt her down,

6

Until he shall have driven her back to Hell,
 There from whence envy first did let her loose.
 Therefore I think and judge it for thy best
 Thou follow me, and I will be thy guide,
 And lead thee hence through the eternal place,
 Where thou shalt hear the desperate lamentations,
 Shalt see the ancient spirits disconsolate,
 Who cry out each one for the second death;
 And thou shalt see those who contented are
 Within the fire, because they hoped to come,
 Whene'er it may be, to the blessed people;
 To whom, then, if thou wishest to ascend,
 A soul shall be for that than I more worthy;
 With her at my departure I will leave thee;
 Because that Emperor, who reigns above,
 In that I was rebellious to his law,
 Wills that through me none come into his city.
 He governs everywhere, and there he reigns;
 There is his city and his lofty throne;
 O happy he whom thereto he elects!"
 And I to him: "Poet, I thee entreat,
 By that same God whom thou didst never know,
 So that I may escape this woe and worse,
 Thou wouldst conduct me there where thou hast said,
 That I may see the portal of Saint Peter,
 And those thou makest so disconsolate."
 Then he moved on, and I behind him followed.

The Gate of Hell. The Inefficient or Indifferent. Pope Celestine V. The Shores of Acheron. Charon. The Earthquake and the Swoon.

"Through me the way is to the city doleful;
Through me the way is to eternal dole;
Through me the way among the people lost.
Justice incited my sublime Creator;
Created me divine Omnipotence,
The highest Wisdom and the primal Love.
Before me there were no created things,
Only eterne, and I eternal last.
All hope abandon, ye who enter in!"
These words in sombre colour I beheld
Written upon the summit of a gate;
Whence I: "Their sense is, Master, hard to me!"
And he to me, as one experienced:
"Here all suspicion needs must be abandoned,
All cowardice must needs be here extinct.
We to the place have come, where I have told thee
Thou shalt behold the people dolorous
Who have foregone the good of intellect."
And after he had laid his hand on mine
With joyful mien, whence I was comforted,
He led me in among the secret things.
There sighs, complaints, and ululations loud
Resounded through the air without a star,
Whence I, at the beginning, wept thereat.
Languages diverse, horrible dialects,
Accents of anger, words of agony,
And voices high and hoarse, with sound of hands,
Made up a tumult that goes whirling on

12

For ever in that air for ever black,
Even as the sand doth, when the whirlwind breathes.
And I, who had my head with horror bound,
Said: "Master, what is this which now I hear?
What folk is this, which seems by pain so vanquished?"
And he to me: "This miserable mode
Maintain the melancholy souls of those
Who lived withouten infamy or praise.
Commingled are they with that caitiff choir
Of Angels, who have not rebellious been,
Nor faithful were to God, but were for self.
The heavens expelled them, not to be less fair;
Nor them the nethermore abyss receives,
For glory none the damned would have from them."
And I: "O Master, what so grievous is
To these, that maketh them lament so sore?"
He answered: "I will tell thee very briefly.
These have no longer any hope of death;
And this blind life of theirs is so debased,
They envious are of every other fate.
No fame of them the world permits to be;
Misericord and Justice both disdain them.
Let us not speak of them, but look, and pass."
And I, who looked again, beheld a banner,
Which, whirling round, ran on so rapidly,
That of all pause it seemed to me indignant;
And after it there came so long a train
Of people, that I ne'er would have believed
That ever Death so many had undone.
When some among them I had recognised,
I looked, and I beheld the shade of him
Who made through cowardice the great refusal.
Forthwith I comprehended, and was certain,
That this the sect was of the caitiff wretches
Hateful to God and to his enemies.
These miscreants, who never were alive,
Were naked, and were stung exceedingly
By gadflies and by hornets that were there.
These did their faces irrigate with blood,
Which, with their tears commingled, at their feet

13

By the disgusting worms was gathered up.
And when to gazing farther I betook me,
People I saw on a great river's bank;
Whence said I: "Master, now vouchsafe to me,
That I may know who these are, and what law
Makes them appear so ready to pass over,
As I discern athwart the dusky light."
And he to me: "These things shall all be known
To thee, as soon as we our footsteps stay
Upon the dismal shore of Acheron."
Then with mine eyes ashamed and downward cast,
Fearing my words might irksome be to him,
From speech refrained I till we reached the river.
And lo! towards us coming in a boat
An old man, hoary with the hair of eld,
Crying: "Woe unto you, ye souls depraved!
Hope nevermore to look upon the heavens;
I come to lead you to the other shore,
To the eternal shades in heat and frost.
And thou, that yonder standest, living soul,
Withdraw thee from these people, who are dead!"
But when he saw that I did not withdraw,
He said: "By other ways, by other ports
Thou to the shore shalt come, not here, for passage;
A lighter vessel needs must carry thee."
And unto him the Guide: "Vex thee not, Charon;
It is so willed there where is power to do
That which is willed; and farther question not."
Thereat were quieted the fleecy cheeks
Of him the ferryman of the livid fen,
Who round about his eyes had wheels of flame.
But all those souls who weary were and naked
Their colour changed and gnashed their teeth together,
As soon as they had heard those cruel words.
God they blasphemed and their progenitors,
The human race, the place, the time, the seed
Of their engendering and of their birth!
Thereafter all together they drew back,
Bitterly weeping, to the accursed shore,
Which waiteth every man who fears not God.

14

Charon the demon, with the eyes of glade,
Beckoning to them, collects them all together,
Beats with his oar whoever lags behind.
As in the autumn-time the leaves fall off,
First one and then another, till the branch
Unto the earth surrenders all its spoils;
In similar wise the evil seed of Adam
Throw themselves from that margin one by one,
At signals, as a bird unto its lure.
So they depart across the dusky wave,
And ere upon the other side they land,
Again on this side a new troop assembles.
"My son," the courteous Master said to me,
"All those who perish in the wrath of God
Here meet together out of every land;
And ready are they to pass o'er the river,
Because celestial Justice spurs them on,
So that their fear is turned into desire.
This way there never passes a good soul;
And hence if Charon doth complain of thee,
Well mayst thou know now what his speech imports."
This being finished, all the dusk champaign
Trembled so violently, that of that terror
The recollection bathes me still with sweat.
The land of tears gave forth a blast of wind,
And fulminated a vermilion light,
Which overmastered in me every sense,
And as a man whom sleep hath seized I fell.