

ut mare sollicitum stridit refluentibus undis,  
 aestuat ut clausis rapidus fornacibus ignis.  
 hic iam galbaneos suadebo incendere odores  
 mellaque harundineis inferre canalibus, ultro  
 hortantem et fessas ad pabula nota vocantem.  
 proderit et tunsum gallae admiscere saporem  
 arentisque rosas, aut igni pinguia multo  
 defruta vel psithia passos de vite racemos,  
 270 Cecropiumque thymum et grave olentia centaurea.  
 est etiam flos in pratis, cui nomen amello  
 fecere agricolae, facilis quaerentibus herba;  
 namque uno ingentem tollit de caespite silvam,  
 aureus ipse, sed in foliis, quae plurima circum  
 funduntur, violae subluceat purpura nigrae;  
 saepe deum nexis ornatae torquibus arae;  
 asper in ore sapor; tonsis in vallibus illum  
 pastores et curva legunt prope flumina Mellae.  
 huius odorato radices incoque Baccho  
 280 pabulaque in foribus plenis appone canistris.

Sed si quem proles subito defecerit omnis,  
 nec genus unde novae stirpis revocetur habebit,  
 tempus et Arcadii memoranda inventa magistri  
 pandere, quoque modo caesis iam saepe iuvenis  
 insincerus apes tulerit cruor. altius omnem  
 expediam prima repetens ab origine famam.  
 nam qua Pellaei gens fortunata Canopi  
 accolit effuso stagnantem flumine Nilum  
 et circum pictis vehitur sua rura phaselis,  
 290 quaque pharetratae vicinia Persidis urget,  
 et diversa ruens septem discurrit in ora  
 usque coloratis amnis devexus ab Indis  
 et viridem Aegyptum nigra fecundat harena,  
 omnis in hac certam regio iacit arte salutem.  
 exiguus primum atque ipsos contractus in usus  
 eligitur locus: hunc angustique imbrice tecti

as the sea hisses roiling in its outflowing swell,  
 as seethes in shut furnaces the furious blaze.  
 Now I suggest you burn fragrant galbanum  
 and run in honey through straws of reed  
 heartening them, calling the weary to familiar food.  
 It will help, too, to mix the flavour of pounded gall-nuts  
 with dried roses, or must made concentrate  
 over a good fire, or raisin-wine from the Psithian vine,  
 and Athenian thyme with heady-smelling centaury. 270  
 There also is a flower in the meadows, to which the name  
*amellus*  
 farmers gave, an easy plant to ferret out,  
 for from one clump it lifts a massy spray –  
 itself golden, but in its petals which splay thickly around  
 crimson sheens beneath dark violet;  
 often the gods' altars are garlanded with its woven  
 wreaths,  
 bitter on the tongue its taste, in grazed vales  
 shepherds gather it, and near the winding waters of Mella.  
 Boil its roots in fragrant wine  
 and set it at their doors for food in heaping baskets. 280

But if a man's whole hive suddenly has failed  
 and he knows not whence to revive the breed in a new line,  
 time to unfold the famed discovery of the Arcadian master  
 and by what means the spoiled blood from slain bullocks  
 has often engendered bees. I'll unspool  
 the whole account, retracing from its earliest source.  
 For where the blessed race of Pellaeian Canopus  
 dwell near the Nile pooling in its sprawling stream  
 and ride their acres in painted skiffs,  
 where quivered Persia's territory hedges, and the river 290  
 onrushing, spilled unbroken down from the swart Indians,  
 branches into seven separate mouths  
 and with its black silt fertilizes Egypt green,  
 the whole region rests its sure well-being on this art.  
 First a spot – narrow and secluded for this very purpose –  
 is chosen: this with a narrow tile roof

parietibusque premunt artis, et quattuor addunt,  
 quattuor a ventis obliqua luce fenestras.  
 tum vitulus bima curvans iam cornua fronte  
 300 quaeritur; huic geminae nares et spiritus oris  
 multa reluctanti obstruitur, plagisque perempto  
 tunsa per integram solvuntur viscera pellem.  
 sic positum in clauso linquunt, et ramea costis  
 subiciunt fragmenta, thymum casiasque recentis.  
 hoc geritur Zephyris primum impellentibus undas,  
 ante novis rubeant quam prata coloribus, ante  
 garrula quam tignis nidum suspendat hirundo.  
 interea teneris tepefactus in ossibus umor  
 aestuat, et visenda modis animalia miris,  
 310 trunca pedum primo, mox et stridentia pinnis,  
 miscentur, tenuemque magis magis aëra carpunt,  
 donec ut aestivis effusus nubibus imber  
 erupere, aut ut nervo pulsante sagittae,  
 prima leves ineunt si quando proelia Parthi.

Quis deus hanc, Musae, quis nobis extudit artem?  
 unde nova ingressus hominum experientia cepit?  
 pastor Aristaeus fugiens Peneia Tempe,  
 amissis, ut fama, apibus morboque fameque,  
 tristis ad extremi sacrum caput astitit amnis,  
 320 multa querens, atque hac adfatus voce parentem:  
 'mater, Cyrene mater, quae gurgitis huius  
 ima tenes, quid me praeclara stirpe deorum  
 (si modo, quem perhibes, pater est Thymbraeus Apollo)  
 invisum fatis genuisti? aut quo tibi nostri

and cramped walls they enclose, and add four windows  
 with slant light to front the four winds.  
 Then a calf with horns just arched upon his two-year brow  
 is fetched, with both his nostrils and the breath of his  
 300 mouth,  
 despite great struggling, stopped up. After he's beaten to  
 death  
 his carcass is pulped up, pounded through the unbroken  
 hide.  
 They leave him lying thus in his pen, and stuff beneath his  
 flanks  
 broken twigs, thyme and fresh cassia.  
 This is accomplished when first the Zephyrs drive the  
 waves,  
 before the meadows blush so in new colour, before  
 chattering the swallow hangs her nest among the rafters.  
 Meanwhile, fluid warmed in the softening bones  
 stews, and creatures with ways wondrous to behold,  
 devoid of foot at first but soon buzzing at the wing,  
 310 brew up, and more and more take to the narrow air  
 until, like a shower poured from summer clouds  
 they burst forth, or like arrows from the plucked string  
 when light-armed Parthians engage the opening volley.

What god, O Muses, forged for us this art?  
 Whence did man's strange practice take its start?  
 The shepherd Aristaeus, flying Tempe on the Peneus  
 when his bees were lost (the story goes) to sickness and  
 starvation,  
 lamenting stopped by the sacred spring at the stream's  
 headwaters  
 much complaining, and prayed aloud his mother thus: 320  
 'Mother, O mother Cyrene, who commands these waters'  
 depths,  
 why me? – why from the glorious line of gods  
 (if truly, as you claim, my father is Thymbraean Apollo)  
 did you bear me, hated by the Fates? Or where is your love  
 of me

pulsus amor? quid me caelum sperare iubebas?  
 en etiam hunc ipsum vitae mortalis honorem,  
 quem mihi vix frugum et pecudum custodia sollers  
 omnia temptanti extuderat, te matre relinquo.  
 330 quin age et ipsa manu felicitis erue silvas,  
 fer stabulis inimicum ignem atque interfice messis,  
 ure sata et validam in vitis molire bipennem,  
 tanta meae si te ceperunt taedia laudis.'

At mater sonitum thalamo sub fluminis alti  
 sensit. eam circum Milesia vellera Nymphae  
 carpebant hyali saturo fucata colore,  
 Drymoque Xanthoque Ligeaque Phyllodoceque,  
 caesariem effusae nitidam per candida colla,  
 [ ]  
 340 Cydippeque et flava Lycorias, altera virgo,  
 altera tum primos Lucinae experta labores,  
 Clioque et Beroe soror, Oceanitides ambae,  
 ambae auro, pictis incinctae pellibus ambae,  
 atque Ephyre atque Opis et Asia Deiopea  
 et tandem positis velox Arethusa sagittis.  
 inter quas curam Clymene narrabat inanem  
 Volcani Martisque dolos et dulcia furta,  
 aque Chao densos divum numerabat amores.  
 carmine quo captae dum fuis mollia pensa  
 devolvunt, iterum maternas impulit auris  
 350 luctus Aristaei, vitreisque sedilibus omnes  
 obstipuere; sed ante alias Arethusa sorores  
 prospiciens summa flavum caput extulit unda,  
 et procul: 'o gemitu non frustra exterrita tanto,  
 Cyrene soror, ipse tibi, tua maxima cura,  
 tristis Aristaeus Penei genitoris ad undam  
 stat lacrimans, et te crudelem nomine dicit.'

banished? Why did you enjoin me hope for heaven?  
 Look: even this very trophy of mortal life  
 which the skilful care of crops and herds had hardly  
 hammered out  
 for me, for all my efforts, though you're my mother, I  
 resign.  
 Nay – go and with your own hand uproot my fruitful  
 orchards,  
 put hostile fire to my stables, destroy my harvest, 330  
 burn my crops and heft the stout axe against my vines,  
 if such spite for my glory has seized you!

But his mother in her bedchamber beneath the river's  
 depths  
 felt his clamour. Around her, nymphs spun Milesian fleeces  
 dyed with the deep colour of glass –  
 Drymo and Xantho and Ligea and Phyllodoce,  
 their hair poured shimmering upon their radiant necks,  
 Cydippe and golden Lycorias, one a maid, 340  
 the other having just suffered her first birth-pangs,  
 Clio and Beroe her sister, Ocean's daughters both,  
 both in gold, both in rainbowed hides arrayed,  
 and Ephyre and Opis and Asian Deiopea,  
 and last swift Arethusa with her arrows laid aside.  
 Among these Clymene gossiped of the frustrate vigilance  
 of Vulcan, of Mars' wiles and stolen pleasures,  
 and from Chaos on recounted the myriad loves of the gods.  
 While by this ballad captivated from the spindle they  
 twisted  
 their soft work, again the grief of Aristaeus struck  
 his mother's ears, and upon their glassy chairs all 350  
 startled. But before the other sisters Arethusa  
 far surveying raised her golden head above the surface  
 stream  
 and from afar: 'Your fright at so loud howling's not amiss,  
 O sister Cyrene! Himself, your dearest care,  
 Aristaeus heartsick by the waters of Father Peneus  
 stands weeping, and you he calls by name of *Cruelty*.'

huic percussa nova mentem formidine mater  
 'duc, age, duc ad nos; fas illi limina divum  
 tangere' ait. simul alta iubet discedere late  
 360 flumina, qua iuvenis gressus inferret. at illum  
 curvata in montis faciem circumstetit unda,  
 accepitque sinu vasto misitque sub amnem.  
 iamque domum mirans genetricis et umida regna  
 speluncisque lacus clausos lucosque sonantis  
 ibat, et ingenti motu stupefactus aquarum  
 omnia sub magna labentia flumina terra  
 spectabat diversa locis, Phasimque Lycumque  
 et caput, unde altus primum se erumpit Enipeus  
 unde pater Tiberinus et unde Aniena fluenta  
 370 saxosusque sonans Hypanis Mysusque Caicus,  
 et gemina auratus taurino cornua voltu  
 Eridanus, quo non alius per pingua culta  
 in mare purpureum violentior effluit amnis.  
 postquam est in thalami pendentia pumice tecta  
 perventum et nati fletus cognovit inanis  
 Cyrene, manibus liquidos dant ordine fontis  
 germanae, tonsisque ferunt mantelia villis;  
 pars epulis onerant mensas et plena reponunt  
 pocula, Panchaeis adolescentum ignibus arae.  
 380 et mater 'cape Maeonii carchesia Bacchi:  
 Oceano libemus' ait. simul ipsa precatur  
 Oceanumque patrem rerum Nymphasque sorores,  
 centum quae silvas, centum quae flumina servant.  
 ter liquido ardentem perfundit nectare Vestam,  
 ter flamma ad summum tecti subiecta reluxit.  
 omine quo firmans animum sic incipit ipsa:

'Est in Carpathio Neptuni gurgite vates,  
 caeruleus Proteus, magnum qui piscibus aequor  
 et iuncto bipedum curru metitur equorum.

To whom his mother, struck to the quick with sudden  
 dread, cries:  
 'Go! Lead him! Lead him to us! He may tread this porch  
 divine.'

And so she commanded the deep river to yawn  
 apart, that the youth might enter on foot. Hunched up 360  
 into mountain-shape the waters stood around him,  
 and welcomed him into a vast chasm, inviting him beneath  
 the current.

Now wondering at his mother's home, a watery realm,  
 at lakes closed in caves and echoing groves,  
 he went on, astonished by the mighty rush of waters –  
 every river gliding beneath the wide earth  
 he descried, distinct in their courses: Phasis and Lycus,  
 the spring from which deep Enipeus first jets forth,  
 from which Father Tiber, from which the Anian stream  
 and rocky raucous Hypanis, and Mysian Caicus, 370  
 and Eridanus, both horns on his bullish front gilt,  
 than which no other stream more violent flows  
 out over fertile farmland into the purple sea.  
 When he's come into her chamber, its ceiling hung with  
 pumice,

and Cyrene understands her son's vain tears,  
 her sisters timely minister to his hands  
 with clear spring water, and bring close-shorn napkins.  
 Some lade the table with a banquet and set down brimming  
 cups. The altars burn with Panchaean flame.  
 His mother declared: 'Lift your goblets of Maeonian wine: 380  
 we offer to Ocean.' With that she prayed  
 to Ocean, father of all, and the sister nymphs  
 who a hundred woods, a hundred rivers guard.  
 Thrice with liquid nectar she sprinkled the blazing hearth,  
 thrice the flame flared up anew, shooting to the rooftop.  
 With this omen bolstering his spirits, she thus began:

'There is in Neptune's Carpathian depths a seer,  
 aquamarine Proteus, who paces out the wide ocean  
 on a chariot yoked with fish and hippocampi.

390 hic nunc Emathiae portus patriamque revisit  
 Pallenen; hunc et Nymphae veneramur et ipse  
 grandaevus Nereus; novit namque omnia vates,  
 quae sint, quae fuerint, quae mox ventura trahantur;  
 quippe ita Neptuno visum est, immania cuius  
 armenta et turpis pascit sub gurgite phocas.  
 hic tibi, nate, prius vinclis capiendus, ut omnem  
 expediat morbi causam eventusque secundet.  
 nam sine vi non ulla dabit praecepta, neque illum  
 orando flectes; vim duram et vincula capto  
 400 tende; doli circum haec demum frangentur inanes.  
 ipsa ego te, medios cum sol accenderit aestus,  
 cum sitiunt herbae et pecori iam gratior umbra est,  
 in secreta senis ducam, quo fessus ab undis  
 se recipit, facile ut somno adgrediare iacentem.  
 verum ubi correptum manibus vinclisque tenebis,  
 tum variae eludent species atque ora ferarum.  
 fiet enim subito sus horridus atraque tigris  
 squamosusque draco et fulva cervice leaena,  
 aut acrem flammae sonitum dabit atque ita vinclis  
 410 excidet, aut in aquas tenues dilapsus abibit.  
 sed quanto ille magis formas se vertet in omnis,  
 tam tu, nate, magis contende tenacia vincla,  
 donec talis erit mutato corpore, qualem  
 videris, incepto tegeter cum lumina somno.’

Haec ait et liquidum ambrosiae defundit odorem,  
 quo totum nati corpus perduxit; at illi  
 dulcis compositis spiravit crinibus aura  
 atque habilis membris venit vigor. est specus ingens  
 exesi latere in montis, quo plurima vento

Just now the ports of Thessaly and his native Pallene 390  
 he revisits; him the nymphs venerate and ancient  
 Nereus himself, for the seer has seen all –  
 what is, what has been, what’s spun out soon to come,  
 for such seemed good to Neptune, whose herds immense  
 of squalid seals he pastures beneath the swell.  
 Him, son, you first must clap in shackles, so that the whole  
 cause of malaise he may unriddle and rally your fortunes.  
 Without duress no counsel will he give, nor will you bend  
 him  
 by imploring; turn stern force and chains upon your  
 captive:  
 only against these his wiles will crash themselves to froth. 400  
 I myself, when the sun stokes up its midday heat,  
 when plants thirst and shade is more delightful to the flock,  
 will guide you to the old man’s retreat, where weary from  
 the waves  
 he withdraws, that you may come at him sprawled in easy  
 sleep.  
 But when you hold him fast gripped in hands and shackles  
 then his multiform shapes will bamboozle you, and his  
 wild-beast looks.  
 For suddenly he’ll be a bristled boar, a deadly tigress,  
 a scaly dragon, a tawny-necked lioness,  
 or blast out the piercing hiss of flame and thus slip out  
 from his bonds, or melt into mere water and spill away. 410  
 But the more he turns himself into all shapes  
 the more, O son, hold firm his chains  
 until after his body’s changing he is such  
 as you saw him when he lidded his eyes at the start of  
 sleep.’

She spoke, and radiated ambrosia’s pure perfume,  
 in which her son’s whole body she enwrapped;  
 from his sleeked locks a sweet scent breathed,  
 and vigour came upon his nimble limbs. There is a spacious  
 cavern  
 worn in a mountain’s side, where by the wind many a wave

420 cogitur inque sinus scindit sese unda reductos,  
 deprensus olim statio tutissima nautis;  
 intus se vasti Proteus tegit obice saxi.  
 hic iuvenem in latebris aversum a lumine Nympha  
 collocat; ipsa procul nebulis obscura resistit.  
 iam rapidus torrens sitientes Sirius Indos  
 ardebat caelo, et medium sol igneus orbem  
 hauserat; arebant herbae et cava flumina siccis  
 faucibus ad limum radii tepefacta coquebant,  
 cum Proteus consueta petens e fluctibus antra  
 430 ibat; eum vasti circum gens umida ponti  
 exsultans rorem late dispergit amarum.  
 sternunt se somno diversae in litore phocae;  
 ipse, velut stabuli custos in montibus olim,  
 Vesper ubi e pastu vitulos ad tecta reducit  
 auditisque lupos acuunt balatibus agni,  
 considit scopulo medius, numerumque recenset.  
 cuius Aristaeo quoniam est oblata facultas,  
 vix defessa senem passus componere membra  
 cum clamore ruit magno, manicisque iacentem  
 440 occupat. ille suae contra non immemor artis  
 omnia transformat sese in miracula rerum,  
 ignemque horribilemque feram fluviumque liquentem.  
 verum ubi nulla fugam reperit fallacia, victus  
 in sese redit atque hominis tandem ore locutus  
 'nam quis te, iuvenum confidentissime, nostras  
 iussit adire domos? quidve hinc petis?' inquit. at ille:  
 'scis, Proteu, scis ipse; neque est te fallere quicquam:  
 sed tu desine velle. deum praecepta secuti  
 venimus hinc lassus quaesitum oracula rebus.'

is driven and splits itself into secluded lagoons,  
 at times a safest anchorage for swamped mariners. 420  
 Inside, Proteus screens himself in the covert of a massive  
 boulder.  
 Here the nymph stations the youth in ambush  
 away from the light; she herself waits far off, veiled in mist.  
 Soon the ravaging Dog Star which scorches the thirsty  
 Indians  
 blazed in the firmament, and the fiery sun had devoured  
 half  
 his wheel: the grasses parched, and sunken streams  
 baked in their dry throats, boiled down to slime by its rays,  
 when Proteus, seeking his usual cove came down  
 from the waves. Around him the race of the vast sea 430  
 revelled, sprayed briny droplets far and wide.  
 The seals stretched themselves out for sleep scattered along  
 the shore.  
 He himself – just as at times the caretaker of cotes upon a  
 hill  
 when the evening star leads home the calves from pasture  
 and with their bleating din the lambs whet the wolves –  
 sat on a rock in their midst and counted their number.  
 Now that Aristaeus gets his chance,  
 scarce he lets the old man settle his tired limbs  
 when with a mighty yell he rushes him, and claps him in  
 shackles  
 where he lies. Proteus for his part not forgetful of his art 440  
 transforms himself into all wondrous things of the earth:  
 a flame, a horrible beast, a stream flowing.  
 But when no design wins deliverance, defeated  
 he returns to himself, and speaking at last with the mouth  
 of a man  
 he asked, 'Now, sauciest youth, who charged you  
 to invade our home? What seek you here?' But Aristaeus:  
 'You know, Proteus – you above all know, nor can  
 anything deceive you,  
 so you give up deceiving! Following the gods' behest  
 we come here, seeking an oracle for my flagging fortunes.'

450 tantum effatus. ad haec vates vi denique multa  
ardentes oculos intorsit lumine glauco,  
et graviter frendens sic fatis ora resolvit:

*Orpheus*  
Non te nullius exercent numinis irae;  
magna luis commissa: tibi has miserabilis Orpheus  
haudquaquam ob meritum poenas, ni fata resistant,  
suscitat et rapta graviter pro coniuge saevit.  
illa quidem, dum te fugeret per flumina praeceps,  
immanem ante pedes hydrum moritura puella  
servantem ripas alta non vidit in herba.

460 at chorus aequalis Dryadum clamore supremos  
implerunt montis; flerunt Rhodopeiae arces  
altaque Pangaea et Rhesi Mavortia tellus  
atque Getae atque Hebrus et Actias Orithyia.  
ipse cava solans aegrum testudine amorem  
te, dulcis coniunx, te solo in litore secum,  
te veniente die, te decedente canebat.  
Taenarias etiam fauces, alta ostia Ditis,  
et caligantem nigra formidine lucum  
ingressus, Manisque adiit regemque tremendum  
470 nesciaque humanis precibus mansuescere corda.  
at cantu commotae Erebi de sedibus imis  
umbrae ibant tenues simulacraque luce carentum,  
quam multa in foliis avium se milia condunt,  
Vesper ubi aut hibernus agit de montibus imber,  
matres atque viri defunctaque corpora vita  
magnanimum heroum, pueri innuptaeque puellae,  
impositique rogis iuvenes ante ora parentum;  
quos circum limus niger et deformis harundo

So he intoned. At this the seer finally under sturdy force 450  
rolled his eyes blazing with grey-green light  
and savagely gnashing teeth thus unsealed his mouth with  
the fates:

'The wrath of no mean deity hounds you.  
You do penance for a sore offence. Heartbroken Orpheus  
stirs up  
these punishments against you (did not Fate intervene) –  
far less than your deserving! – and rages tormented for his  
wife reft away.

Just so: headlong along the river that she might escape you,  
doomed girl, she didn't see the monstrous snake  
before her feet hugging the banks in tall grass.  
The chorus of her companion dryads with wailing rimmed 460  
the mountain's peaks, the crags of Rhodope mourned,  
and alpen Pangaea, the martial land of Rhesus and the  
Getae,  
the Hebrus mourned, and Orithyia the northwind's Attic  
bride.

But *he*, consoling love's agony with his hollow-shell lyre,  
sang you, sweet wife, you to himself on the lonely shore,  
you with the rising day, you at the day's decline.  
Even the jaws of Taenarus, the steep gates of Dis,  
the grove shrouded in black dread  
he entered, and approached the dead, and their terrible  
king,  
and the hearts unversed in gentling to human prayers. 470  
But by his monody shaken from the deepest pits of Erebus  
came wispy shades, and ghosts of those deprived of light,  
as many as the birds that by the thousand hide themselves  
in leaves  
when evening's star or winter sleet drives them from the  
mountains . . .

mothers and men and, emptied of life, the bodies  
of bold-hearted heroes, boys and unwed maidens  
and youths lain on the pyres before their parents' stares.  
Around them the black mire and grotesque cattails

Cocyti tardaue palus inamabilis unda  
 480 alligat et noviens Styx interfusa coercet.  
 quin ipsae stupuere domus atque intima Leti  
 Tartara caeruleosque implexae crinibus anguis  
 Eumenides, tenuitque inhians tria Cerberus ora,  
 atque Ixionii vento rota constitit orbis.  
 iamque pedem referens casus evaserat omnis,  
 redditaque Eurydice superas veniebat ad auras,  
 pone sequens (namque hanc dederat Proserpina legem),  
 cum subita incautum dementia cepit amantem,  
 ignoscenda quidem, scirent si ignoscere Manes:  
 490 restitit, Eurydicenque suam iam luce sub ipsa  
 immemor heu! victusque animi respexit. ibi omnis  
 effusus labor atque immitis rupta tyranni  
 foedera, terque fragor stagnis auditus Avernis.  
 illa 'quis et me,' inquit, 'miseram et te perdidit, Orpheu,  
 quis tantus furor? en iterum crudelia retro  
 fata vocant, conditque natantia lumina somnus.  
 iamque vale: feror ingenti circumdata nocte  
 invalidasque tibi tendens, heu! non tua, palmas.'  
 dixit et ex oculis subito, ceu fumus in auras  
 500 commixtus tenuis, fugit diversa, neque illum,  
 prensantem nequiquam umbras et multa volentem  
 dicere praeterea vidit; nec portitor Orci  
 amplius obiectam passus transire paludem.  
 quid faceret? quo se rapta bis coniuge ferret?  
 quo fletu Manis, quae numina voce moveret?  
 illa quidem Stygia nabat iam frigida cumba.  
 septem illum totos perhibent ex ordine mensis  
 rupe sub aëria deserti ad Strymonis undam

of Cocytus, revolting swamp that binds them with sluggish  
 water  
 and Styx winding nine times around imprisons them. 480  
 Why, the very halls were astonished, and Death's inmost  
 Tartarus, and the Furies with livid snakes braided  
 in their hair, and Cerberus held agape his three mouths,  
 and the spin of Ixion's wheel halted with the wind.  
 And soon his steps retracing he had dodged every pitfall  
 and Eurydice restored was coming to the upper air  
 following behind (for that stipulation had Proserpina  
 made)  
 when a sudden madness seized him, reckless loving –  
 truly forgivable, if Hell knew to forgive:  
 he stopped, and upon his own Eurydice, already at the very  
 edge of light, 490  
 forgetful, alas! and his judgement overthrown . . . he  
 looked back. Instantly  
 all his labour fell apart, broken the pitiless tyrant's pact,  
 and thrice thunder sounded over the pools of Avernus.  
 She cried, "O Orpheus, what has ruined wretched me and  
 you,  
 what utter madness? Behold – again the cruel Fates  
 call me back, and darkness shrouds my swimming eyes!  
 And now, farewell – I am carried off cloaked in endless  
 night,  
 stretching toward you helpless hands, O! yours no more!"  
 She cried, and sudden from his sight, like smoke mingling  
 into thin air, vanished away, and – as he clutched vainly 500  
 at shadows, longing to say so much . . . she never  
 saw him more, nor did the ferryman of Orcus  
 let him cross that swampy obstacle again.  
 What could he do? Where take himself, his wife twice  
 snatched away?  
 With what sobs could he move Hades, with what word its  
 powers?  
 Even now she was floating cold as death in the Stygian raft.  
 For seven whole months, month on month, they say,  
 beneath a skyscraping cliff by desolate Strymon's wave



flevisse, et gelidis haec evolvisse sub astris  
 510 mulcentem tigris et agentem carmine quercus;  
 qualis populea maerens philomela sub umbra  
 amissos queritur fetus, quos durus arator  
 observans nido implumis detraxit; at illa  
 flet noctem, ramoque sedens miserabile carmen  
 integrat, et maestis late loca questibus implet.  
 nulla Venus, non ulli animum flexere hymenaei.  
 solus Hyperboreas glacies Tanaimque nivalem  
 arvaque Rhipaeis numquam viduata pruinis  
 520 lustrabat, raptam Eurydicen atque irrita Ditis  
 dona querens; spretae Ciconum quo munere matres  
 inter sacra deum nocturnique orgia Bacchi  
 discerptum latos iuvenem sparsere per agros.  
 tum quoque marmorea caput a cervice revulsum  
 gurgite cum medio portans Oeagrius Hebrus  
 volveret, Eurydicen vox ipsa et frigida lingua,  
 a miseram Eurydicen! anima fugiente vocabat:  
 Eurydicen toto referebant flumine ripae.<sup>3</sup>

Haec Proteus, et se iactu dedit aequor in altum,  
 quaque dedit, spumantem undam sub vertice torsit.  
 530 at non Cyrene; namque ultro adfata timentem:  
 'nate, licet tristes animo deponere curas.  
 haec omnis morbi causa, hinc miserabile Nymphae,  
 cum quibus illa choros lucis agitabat in altis,  
 exitium misere apibus. tu munera supplex  
 tende petens pacem, et facilis venerare Napaeas;  
 namque dabunt veniam votis, irasque remittent.  
 sed modus orandi qui sit prius ordine dicam:

he wept, and under the frozen stars spun out this song,  
 soothing tigers and enticing oaks with his dirge, 510  
 as mourning beneath the poplar shade the nightingale  
 laments her lost brood, which a rude ploughman  
 spying ripped unfledged from their nest, she sobs  
 nightlong, and on a branch perched her doleful song  
 renews, and fills full the sphere with dreary plaints.  
 No love, nor any wedding-song could bend his soul.  
 Lonely he would wander the Hyperborean ice, the snow-  
 crusted Tanais,  
 the steppes ever widowed by Rhipaeian frosts,  
 wailing Eurydice wrested away and the gift of Dis  
 annulled – by which devotion spurned, the Thracian dames 520  
 amid their consecrated rites and midnight bacchant orgies  
 tore the youth apart and scattered him across the field's  
 expanse.  
 Even then, while down the middle of its rapids  
 the Hebrus, river of his father's realm, swept and rolled  
 his head ripped from its marble neck,  
*Eurydice* his mere voice and cold tongue were calling,  
*O poor Eurydice* as his spirit fled,  
*Eurydice* the banks replied the whole river long.<sup>3</sup>

So said Proteus, and threw himself into the deep sea,  
 and where he dived the water whirled to foam beneath his  
 vortex.  
 But Cyrene stayed. Unsought she addressed him, shaken: 530  
 'Son, you may lay down your soul's heavy care.  
 Here the whole cause of sickness, for this the nymphs  
 with whose troupe she used to trip through ancient groves  
 woeful brought this woeful blight upon your bees.  
 Suppliant, you must extend  
 an offering, praying peace, and do homage to the lenient  
 wood nymphs,  
 for they will grant pardon for your orisons, and ease their  
 anger.  
 But first I will explain how you should supplicate in  
 sequence:

quattuor eximios praestanti corpore tauros,  
 qui tibi nunc viridis depascunt summa Lycae,  
 540 delige et intacta totidem cervice iuencas.  
 quattuor his aras alta ad delubra dearum  
 constitue, et sacrum iugulis demitte cruorem,  
 corporaque ipsa boum frondoso desere luco.  
 post, ubi nona suos Aurora ostenderit ortus,  
 inferias Orphei Lethaea papavera mittes  
 et nigram mactabis ovem, lucumque revises:  
 placatam Eurydicen vitula venerabere caesa.  
 haud mora: continuo matris praecepta facessit:  
 ad delubra venit, monstratas excitat aras,  
 550 quattuor eximios praestanti corpore tauros  
 ducit et intacta totidem cervice iuencas.  
 post, ubi nona suos Aurora induxerat ortus,  
 inferias Orphei mittit, lucumque revisit.  
 hic vero subitum ac dictu mirabile monstrum  
 aspiciunt, liquefacta boum per viscera toto  
 stridere apes utero et ruptis effervere costis,  
 immensasque trahi nubes, iamque arbore summa  
 confluere et lentis uvam demittere ramis.

Haec super arborum cultu pecorumque canebam  
 560 et super arboribus, Caesar dum magnus ad altum  
 fulminat Euphraten bello victorque volentis  
 per populos dat iura viamque adfectat Olympo.  
 illo Vergilium me tempore dulcis alebat  
 Parthenope studiis florentem ignobilis oti,  
 carmina qui lusi pastorum audaxque iuventa,  
 Tityre, te patulae cecini sub tegmine fagi.

select four choice bulls, outstanding in form,  
 who now with your herd graze the green ridge of Lycaeus,  
 and as many heifers with necks unworked. 540  
 For these erect four altars at the goddesses' high shrines,  
 and from their throats cascade the hallowed blood,  
 and leave their oxen carcasses in a leafy grove.  
 Later, when the ninth dawn flaunts her rising,  
 you will send Lethean poppies to Orpheus as a funeral  
 offering  
 and sacrifice a black ewe, and return to the grove.  
 There honour Eurydice, now appeased, with a slaughtered  
 calf.  
 No delay – like a shot he performs his mother's  
 instructions:  
 to the shrines he comes, rears the altars assigned,  
 leads in four choice bulls, outstanding in form 550  
 and as many heifers with necks unworked.  
 Later, when the ninth dawn had paraded her rising,  
 he sends a funeral offering to Orpheus and returns to the  
 grove.  
 Here – . . . They spot a wonder, sudden and marvellous  
 to tell: in the oxens' liquified guts and through the whole  
 belly, bees buzz and swarm through the split flanks  
 and trail in unending clouds, and now surge  
 to a treetop and dangle in clusters from the limber boughs.

This I sang, about the care of fields and flocks  
 and about trees, while Caesar the great thundered in war 560  
 beside the deep Euphrates, and conqueror dealt out  
 laws to ready nations and pursued his course to heaven.  
 I, Virgil, at that time by sweet Parthenope  
 nurtured, flourishing in the study of inglorious leisure,  
 I who toyed with shepherd songs, and bold with youth,  
 sang you, Tityrus, beneath a vault of spreading beech.