

1-20 They all fell silent and held their gazes fixedly. Then father Aeneas began thus from his lofty couch;

"Unspeakable, O Queen, is the grief you command me to renew: - how the Greeks destroyed the wealth of Troy and its pitiable Kingdom, a most sorrowful business which I myself saw and in which I played a large part. Who in telling such a tale, whether he be a soldier of the Myrmidons, or of the Dolopes or of harsh Ulysses, could refrain from tears? The dank night is already falling in the sky and the setting stars advise us to sleep. But if so great is your desire to learn of our misfortunes and to hear briefly of the final ordeal of Troy - although my mind shudders to recall it and shrinks back from the grief - I shall begin.

Broken by war and repulsed by the Fates, and with so many years now slipping by, the leaders of the Greeks build with the aid of Pallas Athena's divine skill, a horse the size of a mountain. They weave the ribs out of planks cut to size. They make out that it is a votive offering for their return and that is the story spread around. Secretly they enclose in its dark side a body of men chosen by lot and deep until they fill the huge hollow of its womb with armed soldiers.

21-39 In sight of Troy lies Tenedos, an island very well known by reputation. For as long as the kingdom of Priam lasted it was rich in resources but now it is merely a bay and a treacherous landfall for ships. Having sailed to this spot the Greeks conceal themselves on the deserted shore. We thought that they had gone and sailed for Mycenae. And so all Troy freed itself from its long grief: gates are opened wide, it is a pleasure to go into the Greek camp and see the deserted places and abandoned shore. This is where the Dolopes had been, and this is where fierce Achilles had his tent. Here is where the fleet had been anchored and there is where they used to struggle in pitched battle. Some gaze in amazement at the fatal gift to the maiden goddess Minerva and wonder at the massive horse. Thymoetes is the first to urge that it should be brought within the walls and positioned on the citadel - whether out of treason or the fate of Troy was already moving in this direction. But Capys, and those of wiser judgement, advise that the Greeks' trap and suspect gift should either be thrown into the sea or be set on fire and burnt, or they should pierce and explore the hollow recesses of its belly. The rest are uncertain and split into supporting one proposal or the other.

40-45 But then, in front of all, Laocoon runs furiously down from the citadel with a large company in attendance and, while still far off cries, "My poor compatriots, what great madness is this? Do you believe the enemy has sailed away? Do you think that any gifts of the Greeks are lacking in trickery? Is this what you know of Ulysses? Either Greeks have been shut up and concealed in this wooden structure or this device has been built to overcome our walls, to pry into our homes and come down on Troy from above - or some deception or other lies hidden in it. Do not put your trust in this horse, Trojans. Whatever it is, I fear the Greeks even when they are bringing gifts." Speaking thus, he hurled with great power a huge spear at the horse's side, into the belly with its rounded timbers. There it stood quivering and as the womb was struck the hollow recesses resounded and groaned. And if the fates of the gods and their intentions had not been against us, he would have driven us to violate the hiding places of the Greeks with our swords, and Troy would now be standing and lofty citadel of Priam, you would have been standing yet.

Virgil Aeneid II

Lines 57-75

Behold, Trojan shepherds were dragging to the king a young man with his hands tied behind his back amid a great uproar. He has given himself up to them, unprompted, as they came along so that he might achieve just this and so that he might open up Troy to the Greeks. He trusted in his own courage and was prepared for either eventuality - either to weave his web of his or to meet certain death. The youth of Troy, in their eagerness to see him rush to surround him and compete with each other in their insults to the captive. Now listen to the treachery of the Greeks, and from one act of crime comprehend it all.

For when he stood confused and defenceless in full view of all and gazed at the Trojan ranks he said, "Alas, what land, what sea can now receive me? What now remains for wretched me for whom there is no place anywhere amongst the Greeks and whose blood, in addition, the Trojans themselves demand as a punishment?" At his words of anguish our feelings changed and all menacing gestures ceased. We bid him say of what family he was born, what information he is bringing and what he relies on as a captive.

Lines 195-317

195-208 Through such lies and trickery of deceitful Simon, the story was believed and we, whom neither Diomedes nor Larisaeian Achilles nor ten years (of fighting) nor 1000 ships subdued, we were defeated by trickery and forced tears.

Then another thing happened to shake the unhappy Trojans, much more significant and much more terrifying, confusing our blind wits. Laocoon, chosen by lot to be the priest of Neptune, was sacrificing a huge bull at the sacred altars. Behold twin serpents with huge coils (I shudder to relate) come over the calm sea from the direction of Tenedos; they breast the sea and together make for the shore. Their breasts rise up amidst the waves and their bloody crests rear up above the surf. The rest (of their bodies) skims the sea behind them and the back arches its enormous length in coils.

Lines 209 - 249

There is a sound of splashing sea; and already they were reaching the land and their blazing eyes flecked with blood and fire, they were licking their hissing mouths with flickering tongues. We go pale at the sight and scatter in all directions. They make for Laocoon in an unswerving line; and first they both grab and enfold the small bodies of his two sons and with a bite feed on their wretched bodies. Next they grab Laocoon himself as he came to help, bearing his weapons and they entwine him in their huge coils. Having twice embraced him around his waist, and twice encircling his neck with their scaly backs they tower above his head with their lofty necks. Laocoon now tries to tear away the knots with his hands, his garlands soaked in blood and black venom, now raises fearful cries to the stars. Like the bellowing when a wounded bull has escaped from the altar and has shaken off the ill-aimed axe from its neck. But the twin snakes glide off to the top of the shrine and make for the citadel of fierce Pallas and hide themselves at the feet of the goddess under the circle of the round shield.

Then indeed a new panic steals into our trembling hearts and they say that Laocoon deserved to pay for his crime because he damaged the holy wood with his spear-point by hurling his wicked spear into the horse's back. They shout that the image should be taken to the temple and the divine power of the goddess be prayed to.

We breach the walls and open up the ramparts of the city. All prepare themselves for the task and put rollers under the feet and stretch ropes of hemp to its neck. The fateful device climbs the walls full of arms. Boys and unwed girls sing sacred songs and delight to touch the rope with their hand. The machine approaches and glides threateningly into the middle of the city. O, Fatherland, O, Ilium, home of the gods and war-famed walls of Dardan's sons! Four times it came to a stop on the very threshold of the gate and four times the armed womb echoed. We, however, press on unmidful and blind with frenzy and we set up the unlucky monster on the sacred citadel. Even then, Cassandra opens her lips to predict the fates though, by order of the god she was never to be believed by the Trojans. We miserable ones whose last day that was wreathed the shrines with festive garlands throughout the city.

Lines 250-259

Meanwhile the heavens revolve and night rushes up from the ocean enfolding the land and sky and the trickery of the Myrmidons in a great shadow. The Trojans, stretched out throughout the city fall silent, sleep embraces their tired limbs. And already the Greek army and the fleet which had been drawn up was advancing from Tenedos through the friendly silence of the peaceful moon, making for the familiar shores when the royal ship had hoisted the fire signal and, protected by the sinister fates of the gods, Sinon furtively release the bolts of pinewood and frees the Greeks shut up in the womb.

Lines 259 - 308

The horse opens and releases them into the open air. Joyfully they pour out of the hollow wood, slipping down the lowered rope : the two chieftains Thessandrus and Sthenelus, then harsh Ulysses. Next comes Acama, then Thoas, Neoptolemus of Peleus' line, and Machon in the lead; Menelaus too, and Epeus the very craftsman who had made the device. They march into a city buried in sleep and wine. The guards are cut down and, with the gates wide open, they receive all their comrades and join forces.

It was the time when first rest begins for poor mortals when by the grace of the gods, most welcome sleep creeps over them. In my sleep, look, a very sorrowful Hector seemed to appear before my eyes, weeping copious tears.

X Just as when he had been tied to the chriot, he was filthy with blood and dust and his feet were swollen where they had been pierced by the thongs. And, oh, what a sight he was! How changed from the Hector who came back dressed in the spoils was from Achilles or the Hector who flung Trojan firebrands onto the Greek ships! Now his beard was ragged and his hair was matted with blood and he bore the many wounds which he had received around the walls of his homeland. I dreamed that I myself, weeping, addressed him first and forced out these wretched words :

"O light of Troy, most sure hope of the Trojans, what has kept you from us for so long? From what shore do you come, O long awaited Hector? How gladly our tired eyes upon you after the many deaths of your folk and the various toils of our people and our city. What cruel cause has spoilt your serene features? Why do I see these wounds?

He made no reply nor took any notice of my vain questions but, drawing a heavy groan from the depths of his heart, he said

"Alas! Flee, son of goddess, and snatch yourself out of those flames. The enemy controls the walls. Troy is crashing down from its highest rooftop. You have given enough for your fatherland and Priam. If Troy could have been defended by a right hand, it would have been defended by mine. Troy entrusts to you its sacred objects and its Household gods. Take them to share in your fate. Seek for them the great city walls which you shall finally establish after many wanderings over the ocean. These were his words and with his own hands he carries (an image of) powerful Vesta wearing a headband and her everlasting fire from the inmost shrine.

Meanwhile the walls are confused with various sounds of grief; although the house of my father Anchises was secluded and lay back behind a screen of trees, the sounds get louder and the horror war marches on. I am shaken out of my sleep and climb up to the gable on top of the roof. There I stand with my ears pricked up. It was like when fire, fanned by the south wind, catches a cornfield, or when a swift mountain torrent flattens the fields, flattens bounteous crops - the toil of cattle and drags woods headlong; the shepherd stands in helpless wonder as he hears the noise from his lofty rock.

Lines 309-317

Then indeed was the truth clear, the trickery of the Greeks revealed. Now the great house of Deiphobus crashed in ruins as Vulcan, the fire god overcame it. Already the house of Ucalegon nearby is on fire, the wide strait of Sigeum is aglow. The shouting of men and the blaring of trumpets arise. Out of my mind, I take up arms; not that there is any point in taking up weapons but my heart burns to gather together a band of men for fighting and to rush together with my companions to the Citadel. Rage and anger drive me on and it is in my mind that it is glorious to die in battle.

Lines 624-633

Then indeed all Ilium seemed to sink into flames before me and Neptune's Troy upturned from its foundations. And it was as when an old mountain ash high up in the mountains, after it has been hacked at with the steel of blow after blow of the axes and the farmers eagerly vie with each other to uproot it, it continually threatens to fall, its foliage shivers and sways as its lofty top is shaken until, gradually, overcome by its injuries it groaned its last and, torn away from the hill-top crashed in ruin to the ground. I climb down and, with the goddess leading me, I make my way amongst the flames and the enemy. The weapons give way and the flames recede before me.

Lines 634-654

And now when I reached the threshold of my father's ancient house, my father, whom I wished to take away high up into the mountains and who was my first concern, refuses to prolong his life and suffer exile after the destruction of Troy. He said, "you, whose blood is untouched by age and whose strength is solid in its own vitality, you must plan your escape. If the gods had wanted me to prolong my life, they would have saved my home. It is enough and more than enough that I have seen one destruction and survived my city when it was captured; speak to me as I now am, composed as if in death, then depart. I myself shall find death by myself one of the enemy will pity me, or want loot. Loss of
* burial matters have been uselessly delaying the years from the time when the father of the gods and king of men blasted me with his thunderbolt and struck me with lightning. As he spoke these words he stood firm and remained unmoved. We, on the other hand, Creusa my wife, Ascanius and the whole house cried, pleading with my father not to want to destroy everything with him and add his weight to the burden of our fate. He refused and stayed firm in his intention and in the ~~palace~~ ^{place} where he was.

VIRGIL AENEID II

Lines 721-767

Having said this, I cover over my broad shoulders and bowed neck with a cloak of tawny lion-skin, and I take up my burden. Little Iulus clutches my right hand and follows his father with unequal steps. My wife comes up behind. We make our way through the shadowy places and, although until a moment ago no weapons hurled at me moved me, nor the Greeks gathered in a hostile mob, now every breeze terrifies me, every sound disturbs me as I worry and fear both for my companion and my burden. And now I was approaching the gates and seemed to have passed safely along every road when suddenly I thought I heard the sound of footsteps. My father, peering through the shadows exclaims, "my son, flee; they are approaching. I can see their gleaming shields and flashing bronze." At this, in my fear, some unfriendly divine power took hold of my confused mind. For while running down pathless places and leaving the direction of paths I knew, alas my wife Creusa stopped and was snatched away to a wretched fate - whether she wandered off the path or slipped and sank down is uncertain, but after this we never saw her again. And I did not look back for my lost one or turn my attention to her until we came to the mound of old Ceres and her sacred temple. Here and only here, when everyone had gathered together, one person was missing one person had slipped away from her companions, her son, and her husband. In my madness what man or god did I not blame? In all the overthrown city what have I seen that is more cruel? I entrust Ascanius, my father Ancises and the household gods of Troy to my companions and hide them in the curve of a valley. I myself set off again for the city and gird myself with gleaming armour. It is my resolve to experience again every mishap and return through Troy and expose my life again to dangers. First of all I go back to the walls and the shadowy gateway from which I had gone out. I find and trace my tracks back through the darkness, scanning (the ground) with my eyes.

Everywhere I am horrified and at the same time the very silence terrifies me. Then I go back to my house to see if, if only she had gone back. The Greeks had broken in and were holding every building. Immediately a devouring fire, fanned by the wind rolls up to the top of the roof. The flames leap over it and the heat rages up into the air. I move on and revisit Priam's palace and citadel. Now chosen guards, Phoenix and Ulysses were guarding booty in the empty colonnades of Juno's sanctuary. From every quarter, Troy's treasure grabbed from burning temples, tables of the gods and bowls of solid gold (and captured tapestry) were being piled up here. Boys and mothers stand around in a long line.

Lines 671 - 716

Then I gird myself with a sword again and was fitting my left hand into a shield and making my way outside the house. But see, my wife was lingering on the threshold, clasping my feet and holding out little Iulus to his father:

"If you are going away to meet a certain death, then take us with you to face everything; but if, from your knowledge you put some hope in the weapons you have taken up, then defend this house first. Who are you leaving little Iulus to? and your father and me, who was once called your wife?"

Crying out these words she filled the whole house with her groans when a sudden and miraculous omen occurred. For behold, a flickering tongue of flame seemed to pour light down from the top of Iulus' head, just as he was between his parents' hands and sad faces; but the flame was harmless to the touch and seemed to lick his soft hair and feed around his temple. We were trembling and panic-stricken with fear and tried to put out his burning hair and extinguish the holy flames with water. But father Anchises happily raised his eyes to the sky and with these words held out the palms of his hands to the sky:

"Almighty Jupiter, if you can be influenced by any prayers, look upon us and if through our righteousness we are worthy, give us help, O father, and confirm this omen, this is my one prayer."

Scarcely had the old man spoken than there was a sudden crash of thunder on the left and a star fell down from the sky shooting through the darkness with a great flash of light as if trailing a torch. We saw it clearly gliding over the rooftops, then bury itself on Mt. Ida, lighting up the roads. Then the furrow in its long track glowed and all around, far and wide smoked with sulphur fumes.

Then indeed father Anchises was convinced and, raising himself up to his full height he addresses the gods and worships the holy star:

"Now, now I am no longer reluctant. I will follow and go wheresoever you lead, O gods of the fatherland, save your house, save your grandson. This is your omen and Troy is now under your divine protection. I give way, my son, nor do I refuse to accompany you on your journey."

He had spoken and now through the city walls the fire can be heard more clearly with the heat rolling the flames nearer.

"Come then, dear father and put yourself on my neck: I myself shall lift you up on to my shoulders and this task shall not weigh heavy upon me, however things may turn out we shall face one and the same danger, our one hope shall be for both of us. Let little Iulus stay with me, and my wife follow my tracks at a distance. You slaves pay careful attention to my words. On leaving the city, there is a mound and an old and abandoned temple of Ceres, and nearby there is an ancient cypress-tree which, through the piety of our fathers, has survived throughout the many years. From different directions we shall all come to this one place.