

Gruzelier translation of *DRP*:

preface to Bk 1:

He who first cut the deep with the ship he had invented and disturbed the waters with rough-hewn oars, who dared to commit his vessel of alder-wood to the unreliable blasts and made available by his art ways which nature denies, at first trusted himself trembling to the calm waves, coasting along the edge of the shores on a safe course; soon he began to try out vast bays, to leave the land and spread his sails to the mild south wind; but when, little by little, his impetuous boldness grew and his heart forgot sluggish fear, roving now far and wide he burst upon open water, and, following the sky, mastered Aegean storms and the Ionian Sea.

Bk 1:

My inspired mind bids me bring forth in bold song the horses of the robber from the underworld, the stars' infection by the breath of his Taenarian chariot-team, and the dark bridal chamber of the queen of the lower regions. Withdraw your steps, you who are uninitiated. Now frenzy has driven human senses from my breast and my heart breathes nothing but Phoebus; now I see the shrine stirring on its trembling foundations and the threshold scattering a clear light, bearing witness to the arrival of the deity; now a mighty rumbling is heard from the depths of the earth, the temple of Cecrops bellows back, and Eleusis lifts up the sacred torches. The snakes of Triptolemus hiss and raise their scaly necks that are chafed by the curved yoke, and, rearing upright in their bright passage, they stretch their rosy-pink crests towards the songs. See how Hecate rises from afar in her three different forms, and together with her advances smooth-faced Iacchus, with flourishing ivy in his hair and covered by a Parthian tiger-skin, its gilded claws gathered into a knot; the Lydian thyrsus props up his drunken footsteps.

O gods, who are served by the numberless and sluggish crowd of empty Avernus, to whose greedy coffers is granted whatever perishes in the world, whom the barrier of Styx flows round with livid-grey shallows, and past whom Phlegethon proceeds with panting eddies, whirling his smoking waters: disclose to me the mysteries of sacred matters and the secrets of your world: with what torch Love made Pluto bend; how high-spirited Proserpina was stolen away and came to possess Chaos as her dowry, and over how many shores her anxious mother wandered on her troubled course; whence grain was given to the nations and, with the abandonment of acorns, the oak of Dodona gave way to the discovery of corn.

The leader of Erebus once upon a time blazed forth into swelling anger, intending to stir up war against the gods above because he alone was unmarried and had long been wasting away barren years, unable to bear his ignorance of the marriage-bed and the fact that he knew not the allurements of a bridegroom and the sweet name of father. Now all the monsters that lurked in the abyss of the dead rushed to form squadrons and a battle-line, and the Furies swore a joint oath against the Thunderer, and Tisiphone with hair of evil-doing snakes, brandishing a pine-torch of inauspicious gleam, summoned the spirits of the dead in arms to the ghostly camp. The elements, once again fighting with resisting matter, would have almost broken their bond, and the young Titans, their prison torn open within the depths and their chains unloosed, would have seen the light of heaven, and again bloody Aegaeon would have thrown off the knotted ropes from his enlarged body and battered at the thunderbolts hurled at him with the blows of his hundred hands.

But the Fates forbade these threats and, fearing for the world, spread before the feet and throne of the leader the streams of their grim grey hair, and with tears of entreaty put out their hands towards his knees: those hands under whose law all things are held, which draw out the succession of destiny with their thumb, and unwind the long ages from their iron spindles. First Lachesis, with hair unkempt and dishevelled, cried out these words to the fierce king: 'O mightiest ruler of night and master over the shades, for whom our threads toil, who appoint the end and seeds of all things and balance the alternation of birth in turn with death, who govern life and destruction (for whatever matter brings forth anywhere is created at your gift and is owed to you, and after the fixed

detours of time souls are despatched once more into the confines of flesh): do not seek to dissolve the established laws of peace which we have given and our distaff has spun, nor overturn the bonds of brothers with the trumpet-blast of civil war. Why do you raise the standards of unrighteousness? Why do you give the sinful Titans access to the airs of heaven? Ask Jupiter; you will be granted a wife.' He reluctantly desisted and blushed at her prayers, and his fierce temper abated, though unschooled to bending: as when Boreas is heavily armed with strident storm and, bristling with snowy ice, his wings stiff with Getic hail, [he desires to blow forth], intending to seize upon sea, woods, and plains with sounding blast; if Aeolus chances to shut the bronze doors against him, the violence of his attack vanishes into emptiness and the gales return broken to their prison. Then he ordered Mercury, the child of Maia, to be summoned to deliver his heated words. The winged god of Cyllene at once stood by him, brandishing his sleep-bearing wand, his head covered by a cap. Pluto himself sat supported by a rough-hewn throne, and awesome in black majesty: his vast sceptre was scaly with foul decay; a cloud of saddest gloom added severity to his elevated head, and inflexible was the harshness of his dreadful form; his resentment increased his terribleness. Then he thundered out these words from his lofty mouth (as the tyrant spoke, his halls trembled and were silent; the huge door-keeper curbed his threefold barking, Cocytus sank down, choking the spring of his tears, Acheron grew dumb with noiseless waves, and the banks of Phlegethon quietened their roaring):

'Arcadian-born grandson of Atlas, spirit shared by the underworld and the heavens, who alone have the right to pass either threshold and traffic with both worlds, go, tear through the swift south winds and bear my orders to proud Jupiter: "Are you, most savage of brothers, to have so much control over me? Has injurious fortune taken from me thus my strength along with the light of heaven? Surely I have not lost my power and arms, if day has been stolen from me? Or perhaps you think me cast down and cowardly because I do not unsheathe weapons made by the Cyclopes or mock the empty breezes with thunder? Does it not seem enough that, destitute of welcome light, I endure the deficiencies of the third and final lot which brought me these hideous regions, while you are adorned by the rejoicing Zodiac and girdled by the glittering brilliance of the Septentriones; but you even prevent me from marrying? Amphitrite, daughter of Nereus, encircles Neptune in her grey-green embrace; your sister Juno receives you in her bosom when you are tired from hurling thunderbolts. Not to mention your secret love for Latona, or Ceres, and great Themis. You have had so much opportunity of becoming a father; a happy crowd of children encircles you. But I, mourning ingloriously in my deserted palace—shall I not solace my harsh cares with a pledge of love? Such inactivity cannot be borne. I call to witness primeval night and the inviolate pools of the dreaded marsh: if you refuse to obey my words, I will lay open and stir up Tartarus, I will unfasten the ancient chains of Saturn, I will obscure the sun with darkness, the structure of the world will be loosened and the shining heavens will be mingled with shadowy Avernus.'" '

Scarcely had he spoken and already the messenger was among the stars. Father Jupiter had heard the message and was considering it by himself, being in several minds about who would consent to such a marriage and be willing to exchange the sun for the recesses of Styx. As he looked for a solution, at last his purpose became fixed and settled.

Ceres of Aetna had a single child, long-wanted and fresh in youth. Lucina granted her no second offspring and her womb, exhausted after the first birth, ceased its functioning; barren she might be indeed, but she stood higher than all mothers and Proserpina outweighed the loss of numbers. This child she cherished, and followed about; not more caressingly does its glowering mother attend upon a calf which does not yet trample the fields under foot and whose newly budding horns have not yet curved in a moon over her forehead. Her maidenhood had matured with the fullness of years so that she was now ripe for marriage, now the wedding-torch stirred her delicate modesty and she trembled at the vow with a mingling of fear. The palace resounded with suitors: Mars, better with the shield, and Phoebus, more outstanding with the bow, vied equally for the maiden; Mars offered Rhodope, Phoebus bestowed Amyclae and Delos and his dwelling at Claros; on the one side Juno, full of rivalry, and on the other Latona claimed her as a daughter-in-law. But golden-haired Ceres disdained both and, fearful of abduction (oh how blind to the future!), she secretly consigned her

child to the land of Sicily, trusting in the nature of the place. [She entrusted the nurture of her daughter to a treacherous dwelling; she deserted heaven and removed (her) to the shores of Sicily.] Trinacria was once a conjoined part of Italy, but sea and time have changed the lie of the land. Victorious Nereus burst his boundaries and washed between the severed mountains with his waters, and a small division keeps apart these kindred countries. Now Nature has set against the sea that three-pronged island that is broken from its related ground: at one point the headland of Pachynus spits back from its jutting cliffs the fury of the Ionian Sea; at another Gaetolian Thetis barks and, rising up, batters the curving arms of Lilybaeum; at another the raging Tyrrhenian, indignant at being restrained, shakes the barrier of Pelorus. In the middle Aetna stretches out with its charred crags, Aetna which will never keep silence about the triumphs over the Giants, the pyre of Enceladus, who, with his wounded back fast bound, breathes exhaustless sulphur from his flaming wound, and whenever with rebellious neck he shifts his burden on to his right or left side, then the island is plucked from its foundations and swaying cities totter together with their fortifications. The peaks of Aetna can be known only by sight, and may not be attempted by any approach. The rest of it is leafy with trees, but the summit is not trodden by any farmer. Now it vomits forth the clouds that are born within it and defiles the daylight, that is oppressed with pitchy gloom; now it assails the stars with terrifying masses of rock and feeds fires by expending itself. But although it seethes over, boiling with excessive heat, it knows how to keep faith with the snows and equally with the hot ashes: the ice hardens, untroubled by all the steam, protected by its secret chill, and the flame harmlessly licks the nearby frost with smoke that is loyal to its pledge. What engines whirl these crags? What mighty force amasses the contents of the caverns? From what spring flows the river of Vulcan? It may be that the wind, rushing to and fro round the obstacles that shut off its path, rages through the fissured rocks while it probes its way, and, demanding back its liberty, lays waste the crumbling caverns with wide-roving blasts: or it may be that the sea, brought in through the bowels of the sulphurous mountain, catches fire when its waters are compressed and launches weighty rocks.

When the most faithful of mothers had hidden her child in this place for safe keeping, freed from care she made for her Phrygian home to visit tower-crowned Cybele, guiding the sinuous limbs of her serpents, which marked the pervious clouds with their flying trail and moistened the reins with gentle poison: a crest covered their foreheads, green markings dappled their mottled backs, and red gold sparkled between their scales. Now with their coils, they swam through the Zephyr breezes, now they cut the fields as they flew on a lower path. The gliding wheel fertilized the furrowed earth with white dust: the rut grew yellow with corn-ears, the springing grain concealed the traces, and an accompanying harvest clothed the path.

Now Aetna was left behind and all Sicily grew smaller in receding view. Ah how often, foreboding ill, did she stain her cheeks with a welling dew, how often wrench back her eyes to her dwelling, uttering such words: 'Farewell, most pleasing of lands, which I have preferred to heaven: to your care I commit the joy of my blood and the dear labour of my womb. Worthy rewards await you: you will suffer no mattocks and be turned by no blow of the hard ploughshare; your fields will flower of their own accord; and while the ox idles, a richer farmer will wonder at the harvest that has appeared of itself.' So she said and reached Ida with her tawny serpents.

Here is the holy seat of the goddess and the sacred flint of her worshipful temple, which the pine-tree shades with dense foliage, playing whistling songs on its cone-bearing branches, though no storm stirs the groves. Within are the frightening bands of worshippers and the wild shrine echoes with the mingled chants; Ida revels with shrieks; Gargarus sways his swelling forests. After Ceres was seen, the drums curbed their bellowing; the dancers grew silent; the Corybant ceased striking with his sword; no sound came from the boxwood pipes or the bronze timbrels, and the lions lowered their manes coaxingly. Cybele, overjoyed, jumped from the shrine and bent down her towered head for a kiss.

Jupiter had long seen this, watching from the height of heaven, and he opened to Venus the inner chambers of his mind: 'I will confess to you, goddess of Cythera, the secret of my troubles. It has long been decreed that shining Proserpina should be given in marriage to the king of Tartarus: thus

Atropos presses me, thus has been the prophecy of aged Themis. Now that her mother is out of the way, it is time for the deed to be accomplished. Fall on the territory of Sicily and compel Ceres' daughter to frolic in the open fields when tomorrow's light has unveiled the scarlet sunrise, armed as you are with those deceits with which you are used to inflame everything, often even myself. Why should the lowest kingdom be at peace? Let no region be exempt and no breast amongst the shades be unfired by Venus. Now let the gloomy Fury feel the ardours of passion; let Acheron and the iron heart of stern Pluto grow soft with the arrows of wantonness.'

Venus hastened to do his commands, and at the bidding of their father Pallas and Diana, she who terrorizes Maenalus with her curved bow, joined her as companions. The path they took shone brightly beneath their divine steps, just as a comet bearing an unfavourable omen glides headlong down, with blood-red fire crimsoning portentously: no sailor sees it with safety, no nations without peril, but it announces with its threatening trail of hair either winds to ships or enemies to cities. They came down to the place where Ceres' dwelling glittered, shaped by the hands of the Cyclopes: the walls stood steep with iron, the gates were iron-clad, and steel fastened the massive doors. No work did Pyragmon or Steropes build with so much sweat, nor ever did the blasts of the bellows breathe with such gusts or in such a stream did the molten metal overflow from the weary furnace. Ivory encircled the hall, the roof was strengthened with beams of bronze, and electrum rose in tall pillars.

Proserpina herself, soothing the house with tender song, was weaving in vain a gift for her mother's return. Here she was marking out with her needle the chain of elements and her father's abode, the law by which Mother Nature separated out primeval chaos and the seeds of things parted in their proper places: whatever was light was carried on high, and the heavier particles fell to the middle; the air grew bright; flame drove on the pole of the sky; the sea flowed; the earth hung suspended. Nor was the tapestry merely of a single hue: she kindled the stars in gold and flooded the sea in purple. She raised the shorelines with gems, and the threads, even now embossing the counterfeit billows, swelled as a result of her art. You would believe that the seaweed was being dashed against the crags and the harsh roar of the waves was snaking up on the thirsty sands. She added five zones: the middle one, beset with heat, she marked out with red yarn; the scorched strip was parched dry and the threads were thirsty from the constant sun; on either side lay the two habitable zones, over which ranged a temperate mildness suitable for men to dwell in; at the furthest borders she extended the two inert zones and made her weaving ugly with everlasting winter and gloomy with eternal cold. And she also depicted the sacred regions of her uncle Dis, and the spirits, her fateful lot; nor was there an omen lacking, for, as if knowing the future, her face was drenched with sudden tears. She had even now begun to curl the Ocean with its glassy waves round the very edge of the weaving; but the door-hinge turned and she saw that the goddesses had arrived and left her work unfinished; a deep red, kindling over her clear cheeks, stained her snow-white countenance, and the torches of chaste modesty began to shine: not so brightly glows the beauty of ivory which a Lydian woman has coloured with Sidonian purple.

The wave had sunk the daylight, and damp night, scattering sleep, had brought languorous ease in her dark-blue chariot; already Pluto was beating his way to the upper air, forewarned by his brother. Hateful Allecto harnessed beneath the shaft the fierce team of horses which champ the pastures of Cocytus, roam the dark meadows of Erebus, and, drinking the torpid pools of calm Lethe, drip the foam of weak oblivion from their slumbrous tongues: Orphnaeus, flashing balefully, Cthonius, swifter than an arrow, Nycteus, sublime glory of the Stygian herd, and Alastor, marked with the brand of Dis. They stood harnessed before the doors and neighed savagely, waiting for the next day's enjoyment of their approaching spoils.

Bk 2:

preface:

When Orpheus was at rest, his songs lulled to sleep, and had long laid by his neglected ivory instrument, the nymphs began to mourn that their comfort had been snatched from them and the sorrowing rivers missed his sweet tunes. Their savage nature returned to the wild beasts and, in fear

of the lion, the cow besought the aid of the mute lyre. Even the rugged mountains lamented his silence and the woods which had often followed his Thracian tortoise-shell.

But after Hercules, despatched from Inachian Argos, reached the fields of Thrace with his peace-bringing foot, overturned the terrible mangers of the bloody king, and pastured the horses of Diomedes on grass, then the poet, overjoyed at his country's festive time, returned to the melodious chords of his disused lyre and, playing on the inactive strings with his smooth plectrum, performed a glorious work with festive fingers. Hardly had he been heard—the winds and waves were bridled, Hebrus became more slow and sluggish with ice-constricted waters, Rhodope stretched out crags that thirsted for songs, Ossa, bending lower, shook off its chill snows; the towering poplar came down from the bare slopes of Haemus, and the loving pine dragged along its companion the oak, and although it had despised the skill of the god of Delphi, the laurel came, driven by the utterances of Orpheus. Molossian hounds caressingly nuzzled the fearless hare, and the lamb offered its side nearby to the wolf. Does gambolled in harmony with the striped tigress, and stags did not fear the mane of the Massylian lion.

He sang of the stepmother's goads that drove Hercules and the monsters subdued by his strong hand; how as a child he showed the strangled snakes to his frightened mother and fearlessly laughed with a savage expression: 'You were terrified neither by the bull that shook the Cretan cities with his bellowing, nor the rage of the hound of Styx, nor the lion that was soon to return to the starry poles of heaven, nor the boar that was the glory of Mount Erymanthus. You loose the Amazon's girdle, attack the Stymphalian birds with your bow, lead the herds from the western world, and hurl to the ground the many limbs of the three-bodied leader, and three times return victorious from a single enemy. Useless were the falls of Antaeus, useless the sprouting of the Hydra, nor did its flying feet rescue the deer. Cacus' flame died, the Nile grew red with Busiris' blood, Pholoe was drenched with the slaughter of the cloud-born centaurs. At you the gulfs of Libya were astonished, at you mightiest Ocean shivered when you were weighed down by the burden of the heavens: the sky was poised more firmly on Hercules' neck; Phoebus and the stars moved in procession round your shoulders.' So sang the Thracian poet. But you, Florentinus, are a second Hercules to me: you set the plectrum of my lyre in motion and shake up the caverns of the Muses that are sluggish from their long slumber, and lead their gentle bands in the circle of the dance.

Bk 2:

Day that was not yet clear struck the Ionian waves with its herald of light; the burning brightness quivered on the shimmering waters and the straying flames frolicked over the blue deep. And now, bold of heart and forgetful of her faithful mother, tricked by Dione's daughter, Venus, Proserpina made for the well-watered glades—such was the doom spun by the Fates. Three times as the hinge turned the doors sang a note of foreboding; three times, conscious of destiny, Aetna rumbled mournfully with terrible bellowing. Yet she was restrained by no portents and no omen. The sisters joined their steps in companionship.

First went Venus, rejoicing in her guile and spurred on by the great vow, and in her heart she assessed the coming abduction, thinking that she would soon bend hard Chaos, soon lead the shades in mighty triumph as her slaves after the subjection of Dis. Her hair was twined into manifold curls, parted with a Cyprian pin; a brooch, the sweated toil of her husband, supported her purple cloak with its gem.

Behind her hastened Diana, the shining queen of Parrhasian Lycaeus, and Pallas, who protects the citadel of Pandion with her spear—both maidens: the one harsh with grim wars, the other feared by wild beasts. Tritonia on her tawny bronze helmet bore an engraved Typhon, whose upper body was slain while his lower parts still thrived, part dying and part surviving; her spear, rising with terrible iron through the clouds, had the size of a tree; only the hissing neck of the Gorgon she shaded by spreading before it her gleaming robe. But Trivia's appearance was gentle, and there was much of her brother in her face; you would think they were Phoebus' cheeks and Phoebus' eyes, and only her sex made the difference. Her bare arms shone; she had shaken out her unruly hair to stray in the light breezes, and the cord of her unstrung bow was idle; her arrows hung behind her back. Her

Cretan tunic undulated with its double fold, flowing down only to her knee, and on the moving cloth Delos drifted and trailed along with a gilded sea flowing round it.

Among them Ceres' daughter, now the glory of her mother, soon to be her sorrow, made her way over the grass with equal step, no less than they in her stature or her beauty, and she could have seemed to be Pallas had she carried a shield, Phoebe had she carried darts. Her garments were gathered together and clasped with rounded jasper. Never did a happier outcome of art befall the cleverness of the shuttle; no weaving had such harmonious threads nor did they delineate their figures to such a degree of truth. Here she had worked the sun being born from the seed of Hyperion, and the moon in like manner, though of different shape, the bringers of dawn and night; Tethys provided their cradle and comforted the sobbing babies in her lap, and her deep-blue bosom gleamed with her rose-pink nurslings. On her right arm she carried the strengthless Titan, who was not yet oppressive with his light nor high-crested with maturing rays: he was depicted more mildly in his infancy, and as he wailed, he dribbled a gentle flame. On the left side his sister drank sips from the glassy breast, and her temples were marked with a tiny crescent moon.

With such elegant attire did she disport herself. The Naiads accompanied her as she went and crowded about her on either side in a friendly throng, those nymphs who haunt your springs, Criniseus, and stone-rolling Pantagia, and Gela, which gave its name to the city; those whom lazy Camerina nurses in her marshy shallows, or the waters of Arethusa, or the foreigner Alpheus (Cyane overtops the whole company): just like the beautiful squadron of Amazons, who exult with their curved shields whenever the maiden warrior Hippolyte, after ravaging the north, leads on her snowy-skinned ranks after battle, whether they have laid low the yellow-haired Getae, or have perchance broken frozen Tanais with the axe of their native Thermodon; or like the Lydian nymphs whom Hermus rears, performing the rites of Bacchus and dashing through their father's waters, drenched with gold; the river rejoices in his cave and tilts his overflowing urn with a gush.

Aetna, mother of flowers, had seen the sacred throng from her grassy summit and addressed Zephyrus, who was sitting in the curve of the valley: 'O dearest father of the springtime, you who ever exercise your sway through my meadows with playful flight and bedew the year with ceaseless breaths, behold the company of nymphs and the tall offspring of the Thunderer deigning to frolic over my fields. Now be present and help me, I pray; may you now be willing that all the copses sprout with new birth, that fertile Hybla may be envious and not deny that her gardens are surpassed. Whatever airs Panchaia breathes from her incense-bearing woods, whatever blandishments sweet-smelling Hydaspes lavishes from afar, whatever the long-lived phoenix gathers from the furthest Sabaeans, seeking new beginnings from his desired grave—spread throughout my veins and foster my countryside with bountiful breezes. May I deserve to be plucked by divine fingers and may deities desire to be decked with my garlands.'

She ceased speaking; he shook his wings wet with fresh nectar and played the bridegroom's part to the soil with fertile dew, and wherever he flew there followed the blush of spring; all the earth swelled into shoots and the vault of heaven stretched wide, its centre cloudless. He tinged the roses with a blood-red brilliance and the bilberries with black, and splashed the violets with deep purple sweetness. What Parthian belts, fit to tie around the breasts of kings, are variegated with so many jewels? What fleeces are so dyed in the rich froth of bronze Assyrian vats? Juno's bird does not spread wide such wings, nor thus is the gathering storm garlanded with its arch that changes through countless hues when in curved course its moist path shines green amid the parted storm-clouds.

The beauty of the spot surpassed the flowers; the plain, rounded in a slight swell and raised with gentle slopes, grew into a hill; springs issuing from the living stone were licking the dewy grasses with hurrying streams, and a wood tempered burning suns with the chill of its branches and in the midst of the heat claimed winter for itself: the fir suitable for seas, the cornel fit for wars, the oak loved by Jupiter, the cypress for covering grave-mounds, the holm-oak filled with honeycombs, the bay, foreknowing of the future; here the box-tree undulated, swaying with its head of dense foliage, here crept the ivy, here the vine-tendrils clothed the elms. Not far from this spot extends a lake (the Sicani have called it Pergus), and, being girdled with a leafy border of groves, its nearby waters

show pale: it admits observing eyes into its depths, and the water, transparent afar, leads the unobstructed gaze under its clear flood and betrays the innermost secrets of its pellucid depths. [Slipping away to this place, the troop came rejoicing through the flowery countryside.]

Venus urged them to gather flowers: 'Go now, sisters, while the air sweats in advance of the morning sun's rays, while my Lucifer moistens the yellow fields, carried on ahead by his dewy steed.' So speaking, she plucked the flower that was the symbol of her own grief. Then the rest of the troop fell upon the varicoloured glades: you would believe swarms of bees were pouring out, eager to seize upon the thyme of Hybla, when the kings move their waxen camps, and the honey-bearing army, sent forth from the hollow bole of a beech-tree, buzzes about the choice plants. The glory of the meadows was despoiled: this nymph wove lilies together with dusky violets, this one was adorned with pliant marjoram; this one walked along starred with roses, this one white with privet-flowers. You also they harvested, Hyacinthus, mourning with your letters of lamentation, and Narcissus—now famous buds of spring, but once preeminent boys: you, Hyacinthus, were born at Amyclae, Narcissus Helicon begot; you the swerve of the discus struck, him love of the spring deceived; for you mourned the god of Delos with battered forehead, for him Cephisus with broken reeds.

Before the others, the only hope of the goddess of grain burnt with feverish greed to gather flowers: now she filled her beaming baskets of woven osier with the spoils of the fields; now she linked a chain of flowers and crowned herself unknowingly, a fateful presentiment of the marriage-bed. Moreover, Pallas herself, who has power over trumpets and weapons of war, now relaxed in light pursuits the hand with which she routs strong columns of men and pulls up firmly built gates and walls; she put down her spear and taught her helmet to grow soft with unaccustomed garlands: the iron peak ran riot with flowers, the martial terror retreated, and the plumes blossomed with spring now that the lightning of war was pacified. Nor did Diana despise the dances, she who searches out the scent of game on Mount Parthenius with her hounds, and she desired to curb the freedom of her hair only by casting over it a crown of flowers.

While such things were going on all around, as is the manner of young girls—look! suddenly a crash bellowed out, towers collided, and cities, shaken to their roots, were laid flat. The reason was concealed; only the goddess of Paphos understood the uncertain cause of the tumult and rejoiced, though with a mingling of fearful terror. And now the ruler of souls was seeking his way through the shadowy labyrinth beneath the earth and was trampling over groaning Enceladus with his heavy steeds. His chariot-wheels sliced the enormous limbs and the giant struggled at bearing Sicily along with Dis upon his crushed neck and tried to stir feebly and entangle the axle with his weary serpents; the smoking wheel-rim slid forward over his sulphurous back. And just as the concealed soldier proceeds against the unsuspecting enemy and beneath the foundations of the tunnelled field leaps across the walls which are cheated by a secret passage, and a crowd bursts out victoriously into the outwitted citadel, in imitation of the earth-born men: so the third heir of Saturn probed the out-of-the-way hiding-places with roving reins, desirous of emerging beneath his brother's sky. No door lay open: crags standing in his path checked him on every side and restrained the god with their solid construction. He did not endure the delay and indignantly struck the rocks with his sceptre as big as a beam of wood. The caverns of Sicily rang; Lipare was disturbed; Mulciber left his furnace in astonishment and the agitated Cyclops cast down his thunderbolts. It was heard by those shut in by Alpine ice, and him who swam you, Tiber, when you were not yet circled with a crown of Latin trophies, and him who rowed an alder-wood boat launched upon the River Po. So when the rock-encircled marsh occupied Thessaly, while Peneus lay stagnant, and prevented the submerged fields from being tilled, Neptune struck against the opposing mountains with his three-pronged trident: then, wounded by the mighty blow, the peak of Ossa sprang apart from icy Olympus; the waters were released from their prison, and by the breaking through of the passage the river was restored to the sea and the earth to farmers.

After Sicily, subdued by his hand, loosened its hard bonds and separated wide with an immense gaping cleft, the terror suddenly became visible to the sky: the stars abandoned allegiance to their courses; the Bear bathed himself in the forbidden ocean; terror hastened lazy Bootes to his setting.

Orion shuddered; Atlas grew pale when he heard the neighing steeds; their cloudy panting darkened the bright heavens and the sun's orb terrified the horses, who had been accustomed to graze in the long darkness: they came to a standstill, champing their bits, astonished by the better world, and struggled to return again to fearful Chaos with downward-tilting yoke-pole. Presently, when they felt the lash on their beaten backs and learnt to endure the sunlight, they galloped on, rushing quicker than a winter torrent and swifter than a hurtling spear: not so fast speeds the Parthian javelin or the onset of Auster or the nimble keenness of a troubled mind. Their bits were warm with blood; their death-bringing breath infected the breezes; the sand was poisoned, polluted by their foam. The nymphs scattered; Proserpina was snatched away in the chariot and appealed to the goddesses. Now Pallas uncovered the Gorgon's face, and the goddess of Delos hastened up with her bow drawn, and they did not yield to their uncle: their common maidenhood spurred them on to fight and aggravated the crime of the fierce abductor. He was like a lion who, when it has gained hold of a heifer which is the glory of the stall and herd, and dug at the bared entrails with his claws and exhausted his savagery on all its limbs, stands foul with clotted gore, shakes out the tangles of his mane, and disdains the insignificant rage of the shepherds.

'Conqueror of a cowardly rabble, lowest of the brothers,' Pallas said, 'to what point have your Furies stirred you with their goads and impious torches? Why have you left your abode and dare to defile heaven with your Tartarean chariot? You have the ugly Dirae, the other spirits of Lethe, the grim Furies, worthy to have you as husband. Leave your brother's dwelling, forsake the territory allotted to another, be gone and rest content with your own darkness. Why do you mingle the living with the buried? Why do you trample over our world, when you belong elsewhere?'

Shouting out these words, she struck the steeds which were eager to pass by with her threatening shield-boss and slowed them down with the obstacle of her buckler, pressing upon them with the hissing of the Gorgon's snakes and overshadowing them with her spreading plumes; her ashen spear was poised to strike, illumining the black chariot before it, and had almost been launched when Jupiter from the height of heaven hurled the peace-imposing wings of his bright-red thunderbolt, admitting himself to be the father-in-law: a wedding-song thundered in the gaping clouds and flames confirmed the marriage as witnesses.

Reluctantly the goddesses gave way. Latona's daughter checked her bow with a moan and uttered these words: 'O remember us and a long farewell. Respect for our father has stood in the way of assistance, and we cannot defend you against his wishes; we admit that we are defeated by a greater power. Your father conspires against you and you are delivered up to the silent people, alas! destined not to behold again your sisters and the group of comrades who desire you so greatly. What ill fortune has carried you away from the upper world and condemned the stars to such mourning? No longer do I wish to fasten nets over the lairs of Parthenius or carry quivers; let the boar foam without care in any place and the savage lions roar with impunity. For you the ridges of Taygetus, for you Maenalus shall weep, their hunting laid aside, and for long will you be mourned by sorrowful Cynthus. Even the shrines of my brother at Delphi will be silent.'

Meanwhile Proserpina was being carried off in the swift chariot, her hair streaming in the wind, beating her arms in lamentation and breaking forth in vain complaints to the clouds: 'Why have you not hurled at me your weapons forged by the hands of the Cyclopes, father? Has it pleased you to deliver me thus to the cruel shades, thus to drive me from all the world? Does no love move you and is there nothing of a father's heart in you? By what crime have I stirred such great anger in you? I did not bear standards against the gods when Phlegra was raging with fierce uproar; nor was it by my strength that icy Ossa carried frosty Olympus. What sin have I attempted, of what fault am I guilty that I am thrust down in exile to the monstrous maw of Erebus? O how fortunate were all the girls that other abductors have carried off! At least they enjoy the common light of day. But to me is denied both my virginity and the heavens, my chastity is stolen along with the light, and, leaving the earth behind me, I am led as a captive to serve the tyrant of Styx. O flowers loved to my cost, and scorned advice of my mother! O the arts of Venus which I detected too late! Mother, help! Whether in the Phrygian vales of Ida the wild boxwood pipe sounds about you with Mygdonian tune, or whether you dwell on Mount Dindymus, which shrieks with blood-stained Galli, and behold the

drawn swords of the Curetes, aid me in this disaster, restrain this madman, check the deathly reins of this grim robber!'

Fierce Pluto himself was overpowered by these words and her becoming sobs and felt the sighs of a first love. Then he wiped away her tears with his dusky cloak and consoled her sorrowful grief with gentle speech: 'Stop troubling your heart with mournful cares and empty fear. A greater sceptre will be granted you, and you will not endure marriage with an unworthy husband. I am that child of Saturn whom the framework of nature serves, and my power extends through the limitless void. Do not believe that you have lost the daylight. We have other stars and other worlds, and you will see a purer light and wonder rather at the sun of Elysium and its righteous inhabitants. There dwells an age of greater worth, a golden generation, and we possess for always what those above have obtained but once. Nor shall you be without soft meadows; there ever-blooming flowers, such as not even your Aetna has produced, breathe to kindlier Zephyr breezes. In the shady groves there is also a most precious tree, whose curving branches gleam with verdant metal: this is appointed as sacred to you—you will possess the blessed harvest and will ever be enriched with its tawny-gold fruit. But these are small details that I speak of: whatever the clear air embraces, whatever the earth feeds, whatever the sea plains swirl round, what the rivers sweep along, what the marshes have nourished—all living things alike shall yield to your sovereignty, all that lies beneath the sphere of the moon, which is the seventh planet enclosing the earth's atmosphere and separating things mortal from the eternal stars. To your feet will come purple-clad kings, their extravagant splendour laid aside and mingling with the crowd of poor—death is the leveller of all—you will sentence the guilty, you will bring rest to the righteous, at your judgment the guilty will be compelled to confess the wicked deeds of their lives. Receive the Fates as your slaves, together with the flood of Lethe; let whatever you wish be fulfilled.'

So saying, he urged on his exultant steeds and entered Tartarus in milder mood. The spirits assembled, numberless as the leaves which the stormy South Wind shakes down from the trees, the raindrops it gathers in the clouds, the waves it breaks up, or the sands it whirls, and all generations crowded together with headlong speed to see the celebrated bride. Soon Pluto himself walked in serenely, submitting to be softened by an affable smile and unlike his usual self. At the entrance of his rulers huge Phlegethon arose: his shaggy beard was wet with rivers of flame, and fires streamed from all his countenance.

There hastened speedily to meet them attendants picked from the mass: some brought back in the lofty chariot and, loosening the bridle, turned the horses, retired from duty, into their familiar pastures; some held the canopies; others fringed the doorways with branches and raised elegant hangings to form a bridal couch. The matrons of Elysium surrounded their queen in a chaste company, alleviated her fears with gentle talk, fastened up her dishevelled hair, and arranged the wedding-veil over her face to screen her troubled modesty.

The colourless country rejoiced, the buried peoples ran riot, and the shades were at leisure for the marriage-feast: the garlanded spirits held enjoyable banquets. Unaccustomed song broke the shadowy silences; the wailing was stilled; the foulness of Erebus eased of its own accord and allowed the eternal darkness to grow less dense. Minos' urn did not shake out its uncertain lots; no lashes cracked and Tartarus, abode of sinners, resounding with no lamentation, drew breath at the postponement of punishments: the wheel on which Ixion was hung, did not whirl him headlong, the jealous water was not withdrawn from Tantalus' lips; [Ixion was set free, Tantalus found the water.]

Tityos at last raised up his extensive limbs and uncovered nine acres of foul ground (so big was he!), and the vulture, the slow furrower of his shadowy flank, was reluctantly dragged from his exhausted breast and grieved that the entrails it had laid hold of no longer grew to feed it.

Forgetful of crimes and their dreaded frenzy, the Furies made ready the mixing-bowl and drank wine with their fierce hair: with their threats laid aside and now gently singing, they stretched out their companion snakes towards the full cups and kindled the festive torches with an unwonted light. Then too, o birds, you passed unharmed over the pacified river of pestilential Avernus and Amsanctus restrained its blast: the abyss grew silent, its torrent stilled. Then they say that the springs of Acheron changed their flood and swelled with new milk, and they tell how Cocytus,

green with ivy leaves, billowed with sweet wine. Lachesis did not break off threads of life, nor did confused wailing interrupt the sacred songs with their clamour. No death stalked the earth and no parents bewailed the funeral pyre. The sailor did not die from the wave, nor the soldier by the spear; towns flourished exempt from destructive death, and the old ferryman covered his uncombed forehead with reeds and plied the oars of his empty boat with a song.

Now the underworld's own evening star had come forth; the maiden was led into the marriage-chamber. As brideswoman, Night stood nearby, her breast spangled with stars, and touching the bed, she sanctified the marriage omens with an everlasting bond; the blessed spirits raised their voices in joy, and beneath the roof of Pluto's palace made this prelude, accompanied by wakeful applause: 'Our own mighty Juno and you, o brother of the Thunderer and his son-in-law, learn partnership of single-souled sleep and entwine your mutual vows together with each other's arms. Already fortunate offspring come into being; already happy Nature awaits the gods that will be born. Give to the world new deities, and bring forth for Ceres the grandchildren she longs for.'

Bk 3:

Jupiter meanwhile bade Iris, daughter of Thaumas, girt with clouds, to go and fetch the gods from all the world. She, gliding upon the Zephyr breezes in coloured flight, called together the deities of the sea, rebuked the lingering nymphs, and summoned the rivers from their damp caves. They hastened forth in uncertainty and agitation as to the reason that had roused them from their repose, and the matter that had to be handled with so much commotion. When the starry dwelling was opened up, they were told to take their seats, nor was their ranking confused: the first place was given to the heaven-dwellers; the lords of the sea occupied the second stretch, calm Nereus and the gleaming grey hair of Phorcus; in the last row were Glaucus of double form and Proteus, who was going to remain of fixed appearance. To the elderly rivers also was granted the honour of sitting; the rest of the young spirits stood in the manner of the common people—a thousand streams. The dripping water-nymphs leaned upon their clear-flowing fathers, and the fauns in silence marvelled at the stars.

Then the father gravely began to speak thus from high Olympus: 'The matters of mortal beings have once again diverted my attention—matters that I had long neglected after I found out about the idleness of Saturn's rule and the decline of that slothful age, and I decided to urge on with the spurs of an anxious life peoples long rendered lethargic by the inactivity of my father's reign, so that their crops should not grow high of their own accord in untilled fields, nor the woods flow with honey, nor wine well up from the springs and all the rivers roar into wine-cups. It is not indeed that I begrudge it—for it is not right for gods to feel jealousy or cause injury—but, because extravagance is a dissuasion from a virtuous life and abundance muddies the minds of human beings, I acted so that poverty, becoming ingenious, should challenge men's sluggish spirits and gradually investigate the hidden ways of nature, and so that cleverness should give birth to skills and practice nourish them.

'Now Nature nags at me with interminable complaints to relieve the human race, calls me a harsh and pitiless tyrant, mentions the ages under my father's rule, and cries that Jupiter is miserly while she is rich, alleging that I want the plains rough with decay and the countryside full of thorn-bushes, and that I do not deck the year with any fruits; she complains that she, who had previously been the mother of mortal creatures, has now suddenly transformed her habits into those of a terrible stepmother: "What benefit has it been that men have drawn their mind from the heavens, that they have held up their heads on high, if they range over pathless regions in the manner of beasts, if they crack acorns like them for fodder? Does this kind of life please them, hidden away in woodland morasses, an existence indistinguishable from that of wild animals?" Seeing that I have often endured such complaints from Mother Nature, at last, feeling more kindly disposed towards the world, I have decided to divert nations from the nourishment of Chaonian oaks; and for that reason it is decreed that Ceres, who now, ignorant of her ills, is lashing the lions of Mount Ida in company with her grim mother, should hasten to and fro over sea and land with avid grief until, gladdened by the evidence of her daughter's discovery, she should bestow the gift of grain, and her chariot be

carried through the clouds to scatter amongst the peoples corn-ears previously unknown, and her sky-blue serpents submit to an Attic yoke. But if any of the gods dares to reveal the identity of the abductor to Ceres, I swear by the greatness of my empire and the profound peace of nature, be it my son or my sister or my wife or one of my train of daughters, be it even she who boasts that she was conceived within my head, that one will feel from afar the anger of my aegis and the blow of my thunderbolt, will regret that he was born to a divine destiny, and pray for death; then, stricken by a wound, he will be delivered over to my son-in-law Pluto himself, to endure the realms he has betrayed, and he will know whether Tartarus is united behind its own cause. Thus it is ordained: let destiny flow on unchangeably in this course.' He spoke and convulsed the stars with his awful nod. But far away, visions now definite of the evil that had been carried out were terrifying Ceres, long carefree and peaceful beneath the rocks of the cave resounding with weapons; the nights redoubled her fear and Proserpina perished in her every sleep. For now she shuddered at her entrails being assailed by missile-points, now at her garments changing their colour to black, now at sterile ash-trees sprouting leaves in the middle of the house. Furthermore, there stood a bay-tree dearer than all the grove, which once used to overshadow the chamber of her maiden daughter with its chaste leaves: she saw this cut down to the bottom of the stump and its unkempt branches defiled with dust, and when she asked about this abomination the wailing Dryads said that the Furies had conquered it with an axe of the underworld.

But then her daughter's actual semblance was borne in upon her mother's sleep to announce her fate with ambiguities no longer: for Proserpina appeared, covered over by the dark recess of her prison and bound by cruel chains, not such as Ceres had previously entrusted her to the fields of Sicily, nor such as the goddesses recently admired in the rose-strewn valleys of Aetna: her hair more beautiful than gold was unkempt, night had tinted the fires of her eyes, pale and drained with cold was that blush, the fiery glory of her magnificent complexion, and her limbs, that would not yield in whiteness to the hoar-frosts, were tinged with the darkness of the pitch-black realm. And so, when with difficulty and hesitating gaze she was at last able to recognize her daughter, Ceres said: 'For what crime have you received so many punishments? Whence comes this unsightly thinness? Who has such power of savagery over me? Why have your soft arms deserved bonds of hard iron hardly fit for wild beasts? Are you my child? Or am I deceived by an empty shadow?'

Proserpina replied: 'O harsh mother, who are unmindful of your daughter's destruction! O you really have surpassed tawny lionesses in hardness of heart! Are you so thoughtless about me? Am I so contemptible, despite being your only child? Certainly the name of Proserpina must be sweet to you, when I am now, as you see, shut up in a chasm like this and worn out with torments; while you, cruel mother, give yourself over to dancing and are yet shrilling throughout the cities of Phrygia! But if you have not yet banished all motherliness from your heart, if you are my mother, Ceres, and it was not a Caspian tigress who bore me, rescue me, I beg you, from my wretchedness in these caverns and restore me to the upper world. If the fates forbid my return, at least you could come and visit me.'

So saying, she tried to stretch out her trembling hands. The wicked strength of the iron prevented her and the shaking of the chains released Ceres from sleep. She stiffened at the vision; she rejoiced that it was not true; she grieved that she could not embrace her daughter. Wildly she ran out from inside the shrine and accosted Cybele with this speech: 'No longer will I linger in the land of Phrygia, holy mother; the guardianship of my dear child at last recalls me, as she is of an age that is exposed to all manner of harm. Nor do I have sufficient confidence in my dwelling, even though it was built by the forges of the Cyclopes. I am fearful in case rumour has revealed our hiding-place and Trinacria too carelessly conceals my trust. I am dismayed that the fame of the region is too well publicized. I must search out a more secret retreat on other shores. Because of the groaning and nearby flames of Enceladus, our shelter cannot go unmentioned. Moreover, unlucky dreams of various forms often give me warning, and there is no day that does not threaten some gloomy portent. How often does the wreath of golden corn fall from my hair of its own accord! How often does blood overflow from my breast! Copious streams of tears burst forth over my unwilling face and unbidden my hands beat my amazed bosom. If I wish to blow into the boxwood flutes, they

wail funereally; if I beat the timbrels, they return the sound of breast-beatings. Ah, I fear that these omens portend some truth! Ah, this lengthy lingering has been the cause of some harm!

'May the winds carry your words far away without effect,' replied Cybele: 'and let not the Thunderer be too slothful to despatch thunderbolts in defence of his child. But go, return home undisturbed by any mishap.'

When this was said, Ceres departed from the temple. No speed is sufficient for one in haste: she complained that her serpents were slow and did not even move and, urging on their inoffensive wings by lashing one after the other, she looked to see Sicily when she had not yet lost sight of Ida. She panicked at every sign and abandoned all hope. With such anxiety seethes a bird which has entrusted her tender young to a low-growing mountain ash while she goes to bring food, and mulls over numerous fears in her absence: perhaps the wind has shaken down the fragile nest from the tree, perhaps the chicks are exposed to the theft of man or the robbery of snakes.

When she saw the house unguarded, the watchmen gone, the doors flung back without care of the hinges, and the wretched appearance of the silent palace was clear to see, without waiting to take a second look at the damage she rent her cloak in pieces and tore away the broken corn-ears along with her hair. Her tears would not flow and her voice and breath deserted her, and a trembling shook the inmost marrow of her bones. Her failing steps reeled; and, opening the doors, as she passed through the empty rooms and deserted halls, she recognized the half-ruined weaving with its disordered threads and the work of the shuttle that had been broken off. That wonderful task of the goddess had gone to waste and the bold spider was completing the gap left behind with her sacrilegious web.

She did not weep or lament the evil; she merely imprinted kisses on the weaving and stifled her complaints dumbly upon the threads; the shuttles worn by her daughter's hand, the bundles of wool she had cast aside, and all her pastimes scattered about in girlish playfulness Ceres pressed to her bosom as if they were her daughter; she surveyed the chaste couch, the deserted bed, and all the places where Proserpina had once sat: just like a shepherd, shocked at his vacant stall, whose flock has been attacked by the unexpected savagery of African lions or marauding troops; but he has returned too late, and as he examines his empty pastures he calls and beseeches his bullocks that cannot reply.

And there, lying in a private part of the dwelling, she beheld Electra, who was her daughter's assiduous nurse, the best known among the old nymphs of Oceanus. Her love for Proserpina was equal to that of Ceres; it was she who had been accustomed to fetch the small girl from her cradle and carry her in her dear bosom, take her to mightiest Jupiter and settle her to play on her father's knee; she was her companion, her guardian, and was considered her second mother. Then, with her hair torn, dishevelled, and filthy with grey dust, she was lamenting the abduction of her star-bright nursling.

Ceres accosted her, when at last her grief gave free rein to her sighs, and said: 'What disaster do I behold? Who carries me off as his booty? Does my husband still rule or do the Titans possess heaven? What hand has dared this, while the Thunderer is alive? Have Typhon's shoulders burst open Inarime? Has Alcyoneus shattered the structure of Vesuvius' ridge and sped on foot through the still waters of the Tyrrhenian Sea? Or has my neighbour Aetna brought forth Enceladus from its convulsed jaws? Or perhaps the hundred swarming hands of Briareus have attacked my dwelling? Oh, where is my daughter now? Where have my thousand attendants gone? And Cyane? What force has driven away the winged Sirens? Is this your loyalty? Is this the rightful way to watch over others' children?'

The nurse trembled, sorrow gave way to shame, and she would have preferred to die rather than to bear the gaze of the unhappy mother, and, long motionless, she delayed disclosing the tale of the evildoer who was unknown and the disaster which was plain to see. But with difficulty she spoke thus: 'Would that the insane battle-line of giants had caused this destruction! Common troubles are lighter to bear. But the goddesses and, what you would least expect, her own sisters have conspired only too well to ruin us. It is the plotting of the gods above that you behold, the wounds of sisterly envy. Heaven has been more hostile towards us than Phlegra!

'The house was thriving in peacefulness; and the girl was not bold enough to leave the threshold or visit the green glades, bound by your injunctions. She had her weaving for work and the Sirens for relaxation; she enjoyed the pleasure of conversations with me, with me she slept and she amused herself circumspectly throughout the halls: when suddenly (I do not know who showed her how to find our hiding-place) Venus came, and so that she should not be suspected by us she brought with her both Diana and Pallas as companions. Straight away with a lavish smile she pretended to be overjoyed, embraced Proserpina over and over again, and repeatedly called her by the name of 'sister', complaining about her hard-hearted mother, who preferred to condemn such a beauty to a back corner, and by forbidding her to converse with the goddesses had banished her far from the stars of her father's heaven. Our naïve child rejoiced in these wicked words and arranged a feast with plentiful nectar. Now she put on Diana's weapons and clothing and tried out her bow with soft fingers, now, with Minerva's approbation, she filled the goddess's helmet, sporting a horsehair crest, and struggled to carry the huge shield.

Venus first with evil speech thrust on her notice the fields and countryside of Aetna and slyly kept on mentioning the nearby flowers, and asked about the merits of the spot as if ignorant, refusing to believe that the wintry cold preserves the roses without harm, that the chill months flush with buds of other seasons, and that the spring copses do not fear the anger of Bootes. As she marvelled over the spot and burnt with eagerness to go and see it, she persuaded Proserpina; oh how prone youth is to slip with its unformed character! What laments did I pour forth to no purpose, what prayers in vain did my mouth utter! She still hastened off, trusting in the protection of her sisters; and her nymphs followed behind as attendants in a long line.

'They went to the hills forever clad in grass, and began to gather flowers at first light, when the tranquil countryside is chill with dew and the violets drink the scattered moisture. But after the sun rose higher and took its stand in the middle of the sky, look! a foul night seized the heavens and the island trembled and swayed with the beat of horses' hooves and the clatter of wheels. It was impossible to recognize the charioteer: whether he was the messenger of death or death himself. A leaden grey seeped over the grass; the streams failed; the meadows were scaly with blight and nothing survived the horses' breath; I saw privets pale, roses expire, lilies shrivel away. When the driver sharply turned the reins in his screeching course for the return journey, the chariot was escorted by its own darkness and light was restored to the world. Persephone was nowhere. The goddesses, their wishes fulfilled, returned without delay. In the middle of the fields we found Cyane lifeless: her garlanded neck lay drooping and blackened wreaths were wilting on her forehead. We approached at once and enquired after her mistress's fate (for she had stood closer to the disaster): what was the appearance of the horses? who drove them? She made no reply, but, tainted by some silent poison, dissolved into water. Moisture crept trickling over her hair, her feet and arms flowed into dew, and soon licking our feet was a pellucid spring. The others departed; the Sirens, daughters of Achelous, rose on swift wings and have gone to haunt the cliff of Sicilian Pelorus, where, incensed by this ill deed, they have turned their lyres, no longer harmlessly melodious, to destruction: their alluring voice holds ships fast; at the sound of their song the oars are curbed. Alone in the house I am left to drag out my old age in mourning.'

Ceres so far was held in suspense and distraughtly feared each detail of the account as if it had not yet taken place; then, wrenching away her eyes, with fury in her heart she sped to accost the heaven-dwellers of her own volition. Thus lofty Niphates is shaken by the Hyrcanian tigress, whose cubs a trembling horseman has carried off to be the playthings of a Persian king; she pursues swifter than her husband the West Wind and scatters her accumulated anger from her green stripes, and when she is just on the point of engulfing the man in her cavernous maw she is delayed by the reflection of her shape in a glass.

Just so the mother raged all over Olympus, crying: 'Restore my child. No vagabond stream gave me birth; I am not one of the rabble of Dryads; tower-crowned Cybele bore me also to Saturn. What has become of the laws of the gods, of the ordinances of heaven? What will be the use of living honestly? See how Venus with her well-known modesty dares to show her face after the bonds of Lemnos! Have that virtuous sleep and chaste couch given her this courage? Have her modest

embraces earned this? It is no wonder that she considers nothing disgraceful after that. What about you goddesses who lack knowledge of the marriage-bed? Have you so abandoned the honour paid to virginity, so changed your minds? Do you now go hand in hand with Venus as accomplices of abductors? Oh, both of you are worthy to be worshipped in the temples of Scythia and at altars thirsty for human beings! What is the reason for such rage? Which of you has my dear Proserpina harmed even by the lightest word? I suppose she either drove you, Diana of Delos, from your beloved woods or usurped your place, Tritonian Pallas, on the very field of battle! Or was she ponderous with her eloquence? Or perhaps she was troublesome in begging to attend your dances? But in fact she dwelt far away in deserted Sicily so as not to be a burden to you. What good does it do her to have hidden? No retirement can appease the fury of bitter jealousy.'

With these words she reproached them all. But they—their father's decision prevented them—either remained silent or said they did not know anything and shed tears in reply to the mother's enquiry. What was she to do? She slackened off, defeated, and sank to grovelling entreaties: 'Pardon me if a mother's love has swelled somewhat with anger, if I have done anything more passionate than befits the wretched. I throw myself in dispirited supplication at your knees. Let me learn my lot, only this I ask, to have sorrows that are certain. I beg to know the nature of the evil; let me be aware of whatever fortune you have appointed for me and I will bear it and think of it as destiny, not a crime. Grant her mother a sight of her, I entreat; I will not ask for her return. Keep without fear what you have gained by deed of hand, whoever you are; I maintain your possession of the spoils; cease to be afraid. But if the abductor has forestalled me by making some agreement, you at least, Latona, answer me; perhaps Diana has confessed it to you. You know what childbirth is, what terror you have for your children's sake, what great love, and you have borne twins; this is my only child. So may you ever take delight in Apollo's hair, so may you live a happier mother than I. Now your faces grow wet with abundant showers of tears; what is worth such grief and yet such silence?

'Woe is me, they are all departing! Why do you delay longer to no purpose? Do you not realize it is open war with the gods? Why do you not rather look for your daughter over land and sea? I will gird myself to scour the world, unwearied I will speed through the byways of the universe. I will not slacken my search at any hour, I will have no rest, no sleep, until I find my stolen treasure, though she be sunk in the lap of the Spanish Ocean or lying fenced round in the depths of the Red Sea. Not the ice of the Rhine nor the Rhiphaean cold will hold me back, nor will the Syrtes delay me with its uncertain tides. I am resolved to penetrate the bounds of the South Wind and to track down the snowy home of the North; I will trample upon Atlas where the sun first sets and Hydaspes will shine bright with my torches. Let impious Jupiter see me wandering through countryside and through cities; let Juno be sated with the annihilation of her rival. Exult over me, rule proudly in heaven, celebrate a glorious triumph over Ceres' offspring.' So she said and glided down to the ridges of familiar Aetna to fashion torches to aid her night-roaming labours.

There was a grove near the River Acis, which shining Galatea often prefers to the sea and cleaves with her beauteous swimming—a grove of thick foliage, which covered as far as possible the peaks of Aetna with interwoven branches. It is there that father Jupiter is said to have laid down his bloody aegis and brought his captured booty after the battles. The wood exults in the spoils of Phlegra and victory clothes all the forest. Here hang the gaping jaws, here the monstrous hides of the giants, faces nailed to tree-trunks still threaten cruelly, the enormous bones of serpents whiten everywhere in bloodless heaps, and the stiff skins smoke from many thunderbolts; there is no tree which does not boast of some great name: this one supports with difficulty on its bending foliage the drawn swords of hundred-handed Aegaeon; that one exults in the leaden-grey plunder of Coeus; this one bears up the arms of Mimas; the spoils of Ophion weigh down these branches. But a silver fir, taller than all the trees and casting a broad shade, bears the smoking trophies of Enceladus himself, the supreme king of the earth-born giants, and it would fall, burdened by the weight, but that a nearby oak props up its weariness. Thence comes the awe and divinity of the place, and the old age of the grove is spared, and it is considered a sin to damage the trophies of heaven. No Cyclops dares to pasture his sheep there or injure the trees, and Polyphemus himself flees from the sacred shade.

But Ceres was not hindered by this. She was actually fired by the sanctity of the spot and brandished her axe aggressively, even ready to strike Jupiter himself; she hesitated whether to cut down pines or rather to lay low knotless cedars, and investigated manageable trunks and the line of the upright stem, testing out the branches with an assured force. So when a man, intending to transport merchandise over remote waters, constructs his vessel on dry land and makes ready to expose his life to gales, he measures up beeches and alders and adapts the timber in its raw state to various uses: the long one will provide yard-arms for the swelling sails; the strong one is better for the mast; the pliant one will be good for oars; the one that puts up with swamp water should be fitted to the keel.

Two cypresses raised their inviolate heads on the grass nearby, finer trees than any admired by Simois on the crags of Ida, or washed by the rich waters of Orontes, who feeds Apollo's grove. Indeed, you would have thought them sisters, so did they stand out, their brows at equal height, their twin crowns looking down on the grove. These won her approval as torches; briskly she assailed each one, the folds of her robe girt up, her arms bared, and equipped with a double-edged axe, striking them in turn, and, with all her strength pushing against them as they trembled, she toppled them. Together they trailed destruction, and together laid down their foliage and sank upon the plain, a grief to fauns and Dryads. She clasped them both just as they were and lifted them on high and, with her hair streaming loose behind her, she climbed the ridge of the panting mountain, surmounted the boiling heat and rocks accessible to no one, and trampled the sand that scorned footsteps. She was like fierce Megaera hastening to animate to wickedness baleful yew-trees, whether she demands the punishment of Cadmus' walls or hurries to savagery in Thyestean Mycenae: the darkness and the spirits give way to her and Tartarus rings with her iron footsteps, until she halts at the wave of Phlegethon and catches up its plenteous billows with her torch. After she arrived at the mouth of the blazing crag, turning aside her face, she at once thrust the cypresses that were to burn into the middle of its jaws, covering over the crater on all sides and blocking off the chasm that brimmed with flames. The mountain thundered with suppressed fire and Vulcan struggled against his confinement: the smothered steam could not escape. The cone-bearing tree-tops flared up and Aetna grew with fresh ashes; the branches crackled at the application of the sulphur. Then, so that the fires should not die out during her long wanderings, she bade them always remain never-setting and unsleeping, and drenched the trunks with that secret juice with which Phaethon bedews his horses and the Moon her steers.

And now night silence unfolded upon the earth the ever-returning time of sleep; with lacerated breast Ceres began her long journey, and as she set off, spoke thus: 'It was not such torches as these, Proserpina, that I hoped to carry for you, but I had the wishes common to all mothers: of marriage-bed and festal torches and a wedding-song to be sung in heaven before everyone's eyes. Thus we deities are carried along by the fates and Lachesis rages without discrimination! How exalted was my recent state, by how many keen suitors was I encircled! What mother of numerous children did not give place to me on account of my one child? You were my first delight and my last; by bearing you I was accounted fertile. O my glory, O my peace, O dear pride of your mother; when you were flourishing I was indeed a goddess, with you safe I was in no respect inferior to Juno; now I am neglected and worthless! This is the will of your father Jupiter. But why do I attribute these tears to him? It is I, I confess it, who have cruelly destroyed you, who have deserted you and have actually exposed you in your isolation to the pursuit of enemies. For without concern for you I was enjoying the shrill revels, and happily amidst the clanging weapons was yoking Phrygian lions while you were being carried off. Learn of the punishments which I have deserved. See my face gaping with wounds and great furrows red in my breast! See, my forgetful womb is bruised with a hail of blows! In what part of the world, beneath what quarter of heaven should I seek for you? Who will be my guide? What tracks will lead me? What chariot was it? Who was that fierce driver? A dweller of earth or of sea? What marks of his flying wheels shall I detect? I will go, I will go wherever my feet, wherever chance will bid me. Even so may Dione be deserted and seek for Venus. Will my toil be successful? Will I once again be allowed to embrace you, my daughter? Does that beauty of yours last still, that brightness of your cheeks? Or in my unhappiness will I perhaps see you as you

are when you come in the night, as I have seen you in dreams?'

So she said, and from Aetna first she made her toilsome way, and, cursing its flowers as culprits in the disaster and the very location of the robbery, she followed the scattered traces of the chariot's path and probed the fields with the full light of her lowered torches. Every wheel-rut was wet with her weeping; at every furrow she uttered a cry wherever she went over the plain. Her shadow floated upon the straits and the furthest reflection of light struck Italy and Libya: the Etruscan shore grew bright and the Syrtes gleamed with their waters alight; she made for the cave of Scylla some way off, and the monster drew back her dogs, some of which were silent with amazement, while others, not yet completely terrified, still barked.