

## 1. ILIÁDOS A

Wrath—sing, goddess, of the ruinous wrath of Peleus' son Achilles  
that inflicted woes without number upon the Achaeans,  
hurled forth to Hades many strong souls of warriors  
and rendered their bodies prey for the dogs,  
for all birds, and the will of Zeus was accomplished;  
sing from when they two first stood in conflict—  
Atreus' son, lord of men, and godlike Achilles.

Which of the gods, then, set these two together in conflict, to fight?  
Apollo, son of Leto and Zeus; who in his rage at the king  
raised a virulent plague through the army; the men were dying 10  
because the son of Atreus dishonored the priest Chryses.  
For he came to the Achaeans' swift ships  
bearing countless gifts to ransom his daughter,  
holding in his hands on a golden staff the wreaths of Apollo  
who strikes from afar, and beseeched all the Achaeans—  
but mostly the two sons of Atreus, marshalers of men:

"Sons of Atreus and you other strong-greaved Achaeans,  
may the gods who have homes on Olympus grant you  
to plunder the city of Priam, and reach your home safely;  
release to me my beloved daughter, take instead the ransom, 20  
revering Zeus' son who strikes from afar—Apollo."

Then the rest of the Achaeans all shouted assent,  
to respect the priest and accept the splendid ransom;  
but this did not please the heart of Atreus' son Agamemnon,

and violently he sent him away and laid a powerful warning upon him:

“Let me not find you, old man, near our hollow ships,  
either loitering now or coming again later,  
lest the god’s staff and wreath not protect you.

The girl I will not release; sooner will old age come upon her  
in our house, in Argos, far from her homeland, 30  
pacing back and forth by the loom and sharing my bed.  
So go, do not make me angry, and you will return the safer.”

Thus he spoke; and the old man was afraid and obeyed his word,  
and he went in silence along the shore of the tumultuous sea.

And going aside, the old man fervently prayed  
to lord Apollo, whom lovely-haired Leto bore:  
“Hear me, God of the silver bow, you who stand over Chryse  
and Killa most holy, you whose might rules Tenedos,  
God of Plague; if ever I roofed over a temple that pleased you,  
or if ever I burned as sacrifice to you the fatty thighbones 40  
of bulls and of goats—grant me this wish:  
May the Danaans pay for my tears with your arrows.”

Thus he prayed, and Phoebus Apollo heard him,  
and set out from the heights of Olympus, rage in his heart,  
with his bow on his shoulders and his hooded quiver;  
the arrows clattered on his shoulders as he raged,  
as the god himself moved; and he came like the night.  
Then far from the ships he crouched, and let loose an arrow—  
and terrible was the ring of his silver bow.  
First he went after the mules and sleek dogs, 50  
but then, letting fly a sharp arrow, he struck at the men themselves,  
and the crowded pyres of the dead burned without ceasing.

Nine days the shafts of the god flew through the army,  
and on the tenth Achilles summoned the people to assembly;  
the goddess of the white arms, Hera, put this in his mind,  
for she was distressed for the Danaans, since she saw them dying.  
And when they were gathered together and assembled,

Achilles of the swift feet stood and addressed them:

“Son of Atreus, I now think that, staggering back,  
we shall go home again—if we escape death that is— 60  
if after all war and plague alike are to rout the Achaeans;  
but come—let us ask some seer, or priest,  
or even an interpreter of dreams, for a dream, too, is from Zeus,  
who may tell us why Phoebus Apollo is so greatly angered,  
if perhaps he faults our vows and sacrifice,  
and whether receiving the burnt fat of sheep, of goats without blemish,  
he may somehow be willing to avert our destruction.”

Thus Achilles spoke and sat down. Then stood among them  
Calchas the son of Thestor, far the most eminent of bird-seers,  
who knew things that are, and things to come, and what had gone  
before, 70

and had guided the ships of the Achaeans to Troy,  
through his divination, which Phoebus Apollo gave him.  
He in his wisdom spoke and addressed them:  
“O Achilles, dear to Zeus, you bid me state the reason  
for the wrath of Apollo, the lord who strikes from afar.  
Then I will speak, but you listen closely and swear an oath to me  
that in good earnest you will stand by me in word and strength of hand;  
for I well know that I will anger a man who  
has great power over the Argives, and whom the Achaeans obey.  
For a king has the upper hand when he is angered with a  
base-born man; 80

if he does swallow his anger for that day,  
yet he also holds resentment for later, until he brings it to fulfillment,  
within his breast. You now declare whether you will protect me.”

Then answering him Achilles of the swift feet spoke:  
“Take courage, and speak freely of any omen you know;  
for by Apollo beloved of Zeus, to whom you, Calchas,  
pray when you reveal the gods’ omens to the Danaans,  
no man while I live and see light upon this earth

will lay heavy hands upon you by the hollow ships—  
 none of all the Danaans, not even if you speak of Agamemnon,  
 who now makes claim to be far the best man in the army.” 90

And then the blameless priest took courage and spoke:  
 “It is not with prayer, nor with sacrifice that he finds fault,  
 but for the sake of his priest, whom Agamemnon dishonored,  
 and did not release his daughter, and did not accept the ransom—  
 for that reason the god who shoots from afar has sent these sufferings,  
 and will send yet more;  
 nor will he drive this foul plague away from the Danaans  
 until we give back the dark-eyed girl to her dear father  
 without price, without ransom, and lead a holy sacrifice  
 to Chryse; propitiating him in this way we might persuade him.” 100

Thus speaking he sat down; and then rose among them  
 the warrior son of Atreus, wide-ruling Agamemnon,  
 greatly distressed, his darkening heart consumed with rage,  
 his eyes like gleaming fires.  
 Glaring, he first addressed Calchas:

“Prophet of evil, never yet have you spoken anything good  
 for me,  
 always to prophesy evil is dear to your heart.  
 You have never spoken nor yet accomplished any good word;  
 and now you speak in assembly of the Danaans, declaiming god’s will—  
 that for this reason, you say, the Archer who shoots from afar causes their  
 affliction— 110  
 because I was not willing to accept his splendid ransom  
 for the girl Chryseïs, since I greatly desire to have her  
 at home; for I prefer her to Clytemnestra,  
 my wedded wife, as she is not inferior to her,  
 not in figure or bearing, nor even in disposition or handiwork.  
 Yet, even so, I am willing to give her back—if this is for the best.  
 I wish my men to be safe rather than perish.  
 But make ready another prize at once, so that I alone

of the Achaeans am not unrecompensed, since that is not fitting.  
 For all of you are witness that my own prize goes elsewhere.” 120

Then answered him swift-footed, godlike Achilles:  
 “Most honored son of Atreus, of all men most covetous of possessions,  
 how then can the great-hearted Achaeans give you a prize?  
 We do not know of any great common store laid up anywhere,  
 but those things we carried from the cities, these have been distributed—  
 and it is not fitting to go about gathering these things again from the men.  
 But no, relinquish the girl to the god now; we Achaeans  
 will pay you back three times, four times over, if ever Zeus  
 gives us the well-walled city of Troy to plunder.”

Then answering him spoke powerful Agamemnon: 130  
 “Do not in this way, skilled though you be, godlike Achilles,  
 try to trick me, for you will not outwit nor persuade me.  
 Or do you intend—while you yourself have a prize—that I just sit here  
 without one—are you ordering me to give the girl back?  
 No, either the great-hearted Achaeans will give me a prize  
 suited to my wishes, of equal value—  
 or if they do not give one, then I myself will go and take  
 either your own prize, or that of Ajax, or I will  
 take and carry away the prize of Odysseus; and whomever I visit will be  
 made angry;  
 but we shall consider these things later. 140  
 For now, come, let us drag one of our dark ships to the bright salt sea,  
 and assemble in it suitable rowers, and place the sacrifice in it,  
 and take on the girl herself, Chryseïs of the lovely cheeks;  
 and let there be one man in command, some man of counsel,  
 either Ajax or Idomeneus, or noble Odysseus,  
 or you, son of Peleus, most terrifying of all men,  
 you might reconcile to us Apollo who works from afar, and perform  
 the sacrifice.”

Then looking at him from under his brows swift-footed Achilles  
 spoke:

"O wrapped in shamelessness, cunning in spirit—  
how can any man of the Achaeans obey your words with good heart,  
to journey with you or join men in violent battle?"

For it was not on account of Trojan warriors I came  
to wage battle here, since to me they are blameless—  
never yet have they driven off my cattle, or my horses,  
nor ever in Phthia, where the rich earth breeds warriors,  
have they destroyed my harvest, since there is much between us,  
both shadowy mountains and clashing sea.

But we followed you, O great shameless one, for your pleasure,  
to win recompense for Menelaos and for you, dog-face,  
from the Trojans; none of this do you pause to consider or care for.

And now you boast you will personally take my prize from me,  
for which I suffered much hardship, which the sons of the Achaeans  
gave me!

Never do I receive a prize equal to yours when the Achaeans  
sack some well-settled city of the Trojans;  
it is my hands that conduct the greater part of furious war,  
yet when it comes to division of the spoils  
yours is the far greater prize, and I bearing some small thing, yet also  
prized,

make my way to my ships, wearied with fighting.  
Now I am going to Phthia, since it is far better  
to go home with my curved ships, and I do not intend  
to stay here dishonored, hauling up riches and wealth for you."

Then Agamemnon lord of men answered him:

"Run, then, if your spirit so moves you. Nor will I  
beg you to stay here for my sake. Other men stand by me,  
who will pay me honor, and especially all-devising Zeus.  
You are most hateful to me of the kings cherished by Zeus;  
always contention is dear to you, and fighting and battles.  
If you are so very powerful, a god doubtless gave this to you.  
Go home with your ships and your companions—

be lord of the Myrmidons; of you I take no account,  
nor do I care that you are angered. But I promise you this:  
As Phoebus Apollo robs me of Chryseïs,  
whom I will send away, on my ship, with my companions—  
so I will take Briseïs of the pretty cheeks,  
yes, your prize, going myself to your hut, so that you will discern  
how much I am your better and so another man will be loath  
to speak as my equal, openly matching himself with me."

So he spoke. And anguish descended upon the son of Peleus  
and the heart in his rugged breast debated two ways,  
whether he should draw the sharp sword by his side  
and scatter the men and slay and despoil the son of Atreus,  
or check his anger and restrain his spirit.

While he churned these things through his heart and mind,  
as he was drawing from its sheath his great sword, Athena came to him  
down from heaven; for Hera the goddess with white arms dispatched her,  
who in her heart loved and cared for both men alike.  
She came up behind and grabbed the son of Peleus' tawny hair,  
appearing to him alone, and none of the others saw her.

Thunderstruck, Achilles turned behind him and at once recognized  
Pallas Athena; for her eyes gleamed terribly.  
And addressing her, he spoke winged words:

"Why do you come again, daughter of Zeus who wields the aegis?  
Is it to witness the outrage of Agamemnon, the son of Atreus?  
But I state openly to you, and I think that it will be accomplished,  
that by these insolent acts he will shortly lose his life."

Then the gleaming-eyed goddess addressed him:

"From heaven I have come to stop your anger, if you will heed me;  
Hera the white-armed goddess sent me forth,  
who in her heart loves and cares for you both alike.  
Come, leave off this contention, stay your hand on your sword,  
but rather cut him with words, telling him how things will be.  
For I will tell you this, and it will be accomplished;

someday you will have three times as many shining gifts because of this outrage; restrain yourself and obey me.”

Then in reply Achilles of the swift feet addressed her:

“I must obey the word of you both, goddess,  
enraged in spirit though I am; for so is it better.  
If a man heeds the gods, then they also listen to him.”

He spoke and checked his powerful hand on the silver sword hilt  
and back into the sheath thrust the great sword, nor did he disobey 220  
the word of Athena. Then she was gone to Olympus,  
to the house of Zeus who wields the aegis and the company of the other  
gods.

And the son of Peleus once more with menacing words  
addressed Agamemnon, and he did not hold back his anger:

“Wine-besotted, you who have the eyes of a dog and the heart of a deer,  
never do you have courage to gear up for battle with your people,  
nor go on ambush with the best of the Achaeans;  
to you that is as death.

Far better it is, all through the broad army of the Achaeans,  
to seize the gifts of the man who speaks against you. 230

King who feeds upon your people, since you rule worthless men;  
otherwise, son of Atreus, this now would be your last outrage.

But I say openly to you, and I swear a great oath to it—  
yes, by this scepter, that never again will put forth leaves and shoots  
when once it has left behind its stump in the mountains,  
nor will it flourish again, since the bronze axe has stripped it round,  
leaf and bark; and now in turn the sons of the Achaeans  
busy with justice carry it around in their hands, they who  
safeguard the ordinances of Zeus—this will be my great oath:  
someday a yearning for Achilles will come upon the sons of the

Achaeans, 240  
every man; then nothing will save you, for all your grief,  
when at the hands of man-slaying Hector

dying men fall in their multitude; and you will rip the heart within you,  
raging that you paid no honor to the best of the Achaeans.”

Thus spoke the son of Peleus, and hurled the gold-studded  
scepter to the ground, and sat down,  
while the son of Atreus raged on the other side. Then between them rose

Nestor,  
the sweet-sounding, the clear speaker from Pylos,  
whose voice flowed from his tongue more sweetly than honey. 250  
In his time two generations of mortal men had already  
perished, those who were born and raised with him in days of old,  
in sacred Pylos, and he was ruler among the third generation.  
With kindly thoughts to both he advised and addressed them:

“Oh look now, surely great trouble comes to the land of the  
Achaeans!  
Surely Priam and the sons of Priam would be gladdened  
and the rest of the Trojans greatly rejoiced in heart  
if they were to learn you two were fighting over all this—  
you who surpass the Danaans in counsel, who surpass them in fighting!  
But hearken; you are both younger than me.  
For once upon a time I banded with better 260  
men even than you, and never did they slight me.  
Never yet have I seen, nor shall see such men—  
Peirithoös and Dryas, shepherd of his people,  
and Kaineus and Exadios and Polyphemos like a god. 264  
These were raised to be strongest of earthly men; 266  
they were the strongest and they fought with the strongest—  
the Centaurs who lie in the mountains—and terribly they slaughtered  
them.

And yet with these men I kept company, coming from Pylos,  
far away, from a distant land; for they summoned me. 270  
And I fought by myself, I alone; against these men no  
mortal now upon earth could fight.

And yet they marked my counsels and heeded my word.  
 Now you two heed me, since it is better to do so.  
 You should not, great though you are, deprive him of the girl,  
 but let her be, as it was to him the sons of the Achaeans gave her as prize;  
 nor you, son of Peleus, venture to contend face-to-face  
 with your king, since the king bearing the scepter partakes of  
 a very different honor, and is he to whom Zeus has given distinction.  
 And if you are the stronger man, and the mother who bore you a  
 goddess,

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yet is this one more powerful, since he rules over more men.  
 Son of Atreus, restrain your spirit; for I—yes, I—  
 entreat you to relinquish your anger with Achilles, who is for all  
 Achaeans the great wall of defense against this evil war.”

Then in turn lord Agamemnon spoke:

“Indeed all these things, old sir, you rightly say;  
 but this man wants to be above all other men;  
 he wants to be lord over all, to rule all,  
 to give orders to all—which I think that one man at least will not obey.  
 And if the eternal gods have made him a spearman  
 they do not on that account appoint him to speak insults.”

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Interrupting, godlike Achilles answered him:

“May I be called a coward and of no account  
 if I submit to you in everything you should say.  
 Give such orders to other men, but do not act as master to me.  
 For I do not think it likely I will obey you.  
 And I will tell you something else and put it away in your mind—  
 I will not fight for the girl with strength of hand,  
 not with you, nor with any other man, since you who take her from me  
 also gave her.

But of other possessions beside my ships, swift and dark,  
 of these you can take nothing lifted against my will.  
 And I invite you to try, so that these men too will know—  
 very quickly will your dark blood gush round my spear.”

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Having fought like this with words, blow for blow,  
 they both stood, and broke up the assembly by the ships of the  
 Achaeans.  
 Peleus' son went to his shelter and balanced ships  
 with the son of Menoetius and his companions.  
 But the son of Atreus then drew a swift ship down to the sea,  
 and chose twenty rowers to go in her, and put on board the sacrificial  
 hecatomb  
 for the god, and fetching Chryseïs of the lovely cheeks  
 put her on board; and resourceful Odysseus came on as leader.

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Then, embarked, they sailed upon the watery way,  
 and the son of Atreus charged the men to purify themselves.  
 They cleansed themselves and cast the impurities into the sea,  
 and to Apollo they made perfect sacrificial hecatombs  
 of bulls and goats along the shore of the murmuring sea;  
 and the savor rose to heaven amid a swirl of smoke.

So they attended to these tasks throughout the army; but

Agamemnon did not  
 leave off the quarrel, in which he first threatened Achilles,  
 but spoke to Talthybios and Eurybates,  
 who were heralds and ready henchmen:  
 “Go to the shelter of Peleus' son Achilles;  
 take by the hand Briseïs of the lovely cheeks and lead her away.  
 And if he does not give her up, I myself will take her,  
 coming in force, and it will be the worse for him.”

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So saying, he sent them forth, and enjoined on them a harsh  
 command.

And they two went unwilling along the shore of the murmuring sea,  
 and came to the camp and ships of the Myrmidons.  
 They found Achilles by his shelter and dark ship,  
 sitting; and he did not rejoice to see them.  
 The two stood in fear and awe of the king,  
 and neither addressed him, nor questioned.

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But Achilles understood in his heart, and spoke to them:

“Hail heralds, messengers of Zeus, as also of men—  
come close; you are not to blame in my eyes, but Agamemnon,  
who sends you two forth on account of the girl Briseïs.  
But come, Patroclus, descended from Zeus, bring out the girl  
and give her to these two to take away. And let them both be witnesses  
before the blessed gods and mortal men alike,  
and before him, this stubborn king, if ever hereafter  
other men need me to ward off shameful destruction. 340  
For he surely raves in his ruinous heart,  
and knows not to look ahead as well as behind  
as to how the Achaeans shall fight in safety beside the ships.”

Thus he spoke and Patroclus obeyed his beloved companion,  
and from the shelter led Briseïs of the lovely cheeks,  
and gave her to be taken away. And straightway the heralds left for the  
ships of the Achaeans.

She the young woman, unwilling, went with them. But Achilles,  
weeping, quickly slipping away from his companions, sat  
on the shore of the gray salt sea, and looked out to depths as dark  
as wine;  
again and again, stretching forth his hands, he prayed to his beloved  
mother: 350

“Mother, since you bore me to be short-lived as I am,  
Olympian Zeus who thunders on high ought to  
grant me at least honor; but now he honors me not even a little.  
For the son of Atreus, wide-ruling Agamemnon  
has dishonored me; he keeps my prize, having seized it, he personally  
taking it.”

So he spoke, shedding tears, and his lady mother heard him  
as she sat in the depths of the salt sea beside her aged father.

At once she rose from the clear salt sea, like mist,  
and sat before him as he wept, 360  
and caressed him with her hand, and spoke to him and said his name:

“Child, why do you cry? What pain has come to your heart?  
Speak out, don’t hide it, so that we both know.”

Groaning deeply, Achilles of the swift feet spoke to her:

“You know; why should I recount these things to you who know them all?  
We came to Thebes, the holy city of Eëtion;  
we sacked it and brought everything here.  
The sons of the Achaeans fairly divided the things among them,  
and to the son of Atreus they gave out Chryseïs of the lovely cheeks.  
Then Chryses, a priest of Apollo who strikes from afar, 370  
came to the swift ships of the bronze-clad Achaeans  
bearing untold ransom to set free his daughter,  
holding in his hands the wreaths of Apollo who strikes from afar  
on a golden staff, and beseeched all the Achaeans,  
but mostly the two sons of Atreus, marshalers of men.  
Then all the rest of the Achaeans shouted assent,  
to respect the priest and take the splendid ransom;  
but this did not please the heart of Atreus’ son Agamemnon,  
but violently he drove him away and laid a strong injunction upon him.  
And in anger the old man went back; and Apollo 380  
heard him when he prayed, since he was very dear to him,  
and he let fly an evil arrow against the Argives; and now the men  
died in quick succession as the arrows of the god ranged  
everywhere through the broad army of the Achaeans. But then a seer  
possessed of good knowledge publicly declared to us the wishes of the  
god who works his will.

Straightway I led in urging that the god be appeased;  
but then anger seized the son of Atreus, and suddenly rising to speak  
he declared aloud a threat, which is now fulfilled.

For the dark-eyed Achaeans are sending the girl on a swift ship  
to the town of Chryse, taking gifts for lord Apollo; 390  
just now the heralds set out from my shelter leading  
the daughter of Briseus, whom the sons of the Achaeans gave to me.  
But you, if you have the power, defend your son;

go to Olympus and petition Zeus, if ever in any way  
 in word or in deed you delighted the heart of Zeus.  
 For many times in the halls of my father I have heard you  
 boast when you said that from the dark-clouded son of Cronus,  
 alone among immortals, you warded off shameful destruction,  
 at that time when the other Olympians sought to bind him—  
 Hera and Poseidon and Pallas Athena; 400  
 but you coming to him, goddess, released his bonds,  
 swiftly summoning to high Olympus the Hundred-Handed One,  
 whom the gods call Briareos the Strong—but all men call  
 Aigaion—he in turn is stronger than his father;  
 and this one seated himself beside the son of Cronus, rejoicing in his glory.  
 And the blessed gods trembled before him, and did no more binding.  
 Now remind Zeus of these things, seat yourself beside him and clasp his  
 knees  
 and see if he might be willing to aid the Trojans,  
 and to pen the Achaeans around the sterns of their ships and the sea,  
 dying, so that all may have profit of their king, 410  
 and he will know, Atreus' son, wide-ruling Agamemnon,  
 his delusion, when he paid no honor to the best of the Achaeans."

Then Thetis answered him, with tears flowing down:  
 "Ah me, my child, why did I, bitter in childbearing, raise you?  
 Would that you sat by your ships without tears, without pain,  
 for indeed your measure of life is so very small, not long at all.  
 And now you are at once short-lived and unlucky beyond all men;  
 so I bore you to an unworthy fate in my halls.  
 To speak your request to Zeus who hurls the thunderbolt  
 I myself shall go to Olympus of the deep snow; perhaps he will heed me. 420  
 But you stay now by your fast-running ships,  
 nurse your wrath at the Achaeans, and leave off the war entirely.  
 Zeus went yesterday to the river of Ocean among the blameless

Aethiopians,  
 to attend a feast, and all the gods accompanied him.

On the twelfth day he will come back to Olympus,  
 and then at that time I will go for you to the bronze-floored house  
 of Zeus,  
 and I will clasp his knees in supplication, and I think I will persuade him."

Then speaking thus she went away and left him there,  
 angered in his heart on account of the fair-belted woman,  
 whom they were taking by force against his will. And Odysseus 430  
 was drawing near the town of Chryse, bearing the sacred hecatomb.  
 When they had come inside the deep harbor,  
 they furled the sails, and placed them in the dark ship,  
 and deftly lowering the mast by the forestays, laid it in the mast-gallows,  
 and rowed her to her mooring under oars;  
 then they threw the anchor stones, and made fast the stern lines,  
 and themselves disembarked into the broken surf,  
 and disembarked the hecatomb for Apollo, who strikes from afar;  
 and Chryseïs disembarked from the seagoing ship.  
 Then leading her to the altar resourceful Odysseus 440  
 placed her in her father's hands and addressed him:  
 "O Chryses, Agamemnon, lord of men, dispatched me  
 to lead your child to you and to perform sacred hecatombs to Phoebus  
 on behalf of the Danaans, so that we might propitiate lord Apollo,  
 who has now sent sufferings, much lamented, upon the Argives."

So speaking, he placed her in the priest's arms, and he, rejoicing,  
 received  
 his beloved daughter; and the men swiftly set up the splendid hecatomb  
 for the god  
 in good order around the well-built altar,  
 then they washed their hands and took up the barley for scattering.  
 And Chryses prayed aloud for them, lifting his hands: 450  
 "Hear me, thou of the silver bow, you who stand over Chryse  
 and Killa most holy, you whose might rules Tenedos,  
 surely once before this you heard me when I prayed;  
 honoring me you smote hard the host of the Achaeans.



Now, as once before, fulfill this wish for me;  
 now this time ward shameful destruction from the Danaans."  
 Thus he spoke praying, and Phoebus Apollo heard him.

Then when they had prayed and thrown the scattering barley  
 before them,  
 they first drew back the heads of the sacrificial animals and cut their  
 throats, and flayed them,  
 and cut out the thighbones and covered them over with fat 460  
 they had made into double folds, and placed raw flesh upon them;  
 the old man burned these on a cleft-stick and over them poured in libation  
 dark-gleaming wine; and the youths beside him held sacrificial forks in  
 hand.  
 Then when the thighbones had been consumed by fire and they had  
 tasted the entrails,  
 they cut up the other parts and pierced them through on spits  
 and roasted them with care, and then drew off all the pieces.  
 And when they had ceased their work and prepared their meal,  
 they feasted, nor did any man's appetite lack his due portion.  
 And when they had put away desire for eating and drinking,  
 the young men filled mixing bowls brimful with wine, 470  
 and after pouring libations in each cup, distributed it to all;  
 then all day long they sought the favor of the god in dance and song,  
 the young Achaean men beautifully singing a hymn of praise,  
 celebrating the god who works from afar; and the god rejoiced in his  
 heart as he listened.

When the sun sank and dusk came on,  
 then they laid down to sleep by the stern lines of their ship;  
 and when dawn, born of the morning, shone forth her fingers of rosy light,  
 then they sailed out for the broad army of the Achaeans.  
 And to them Apollo who works from afar sent a following wind.  
 They stepped the mast and spread the glistening sails, 480  
 and the wind blew gusts in the middle of the sail, and around  
 the cutwater the bow-wave, shimmering dark, sang loud as the ship

proceeded.

She swept over the swell, making her course.  
 And when they arrived at the broad army of the Achaeans,  
 they dragged the dark ship ashore  
 high on the sand, and splayed long struts beneath,  
 and themselves scattered to their ships and shelters.

But, he, sitting idle by his fast-running ships, remained full of  
 wrath—  
 the Zeus-descended son of Peleus, Achilles of the swift feet;  
 never did he go to the assembly where men win glory, 490  
 never to war, but consumed his own heart,  
 biding his time there; yet he yearned for the war shout and battle.

But when at length the twelfth dawn arose,  
 then all the gods who live forever went to Olympus  
 together, with Zeus as their leader; and Thetis did not neglect her son's  
 directives, and she rose from the heaving surface of the sea,  
 and at dawn ascended to towering Olympus.  
 She found the far-thundering son of Cronus sitting apart from the others  
 on the topmost peak of ridged Olympus;  
 and she sat before him and clasped his knees 500  
 with her left hand, and with her right took hold of him beneath  
 his chin,  
 and in supplication addressed lord Zeus, the son of Cronus:  
 "Father Zeus, if ever among the immortals I helped you  
 by word or by deed, accomplish this wish for me:  
 honor my son, who was born short-lived beyond all men,  
 and yet now the lord of men Agamemnon has  
 dishonored him; he holds his prize, having seized it, he personally taking it.  
 Do you now revenge him, Olympian Zeus, all-devising;  
 give strength to the Trojans until that time the Achaeans  
 recompense my son and exalt him with honor." 510

So she spoke; but Zeus who gathers the clouds did not answer  
 her,

but sat silent a long while. And as she had clasped his knees, so Thetis now held on, clinging closely, and beseeched him again:  
 "Promise me faithfully, and nod your assent, or refuse me—you have nothing to fear—so that I may learn how much I am of all gods the most dishonored."

Greatly troubled, Zeus who gathers the clouds addressed her:  
 "This is a deadly business, when you set me up to quarrel with Hera, when she will harass me with words of abuse. As it is, she is always quarreling with me in the presence of the immortal gods, and maintains, as you know, that I help the Trojans in battle. Now go back, lest Hera notice anything; I will make these matters my concern, to bring them to accomplishment. Come, I will bow my head for you, so that you may be convinced; for among immortals this is the greatest testament of my determination; for not revocable, nor false, nor unfulfilled is anything to which I have bowed my head."  
 The son of Cronus spoke, and nodded with his blue-black brows, the ambrosial mane of the lord god swept forward from his immortal head; and he shook great Olympus.

Thus the two parted after conspiring; and she sprang into the deep salt sea from shining Olympus, and Zeus went to his home; and all the gods rose as a body from their seats before their father; nor did any dare remain seated as he approached, but all stood to meet him. So he took his seat there upon his throne; nor did Hera fail to perceive at a glance that silver-footed Thetis, the daughter of the old man of the sea, had conspired with him. Straightway she addressed Zeus, the son of Cronus, with taunting words:  
 "Which of the gods now, O cunning schemer, has conspired with you? Always you love being away from me, mulling over your secrets to make your decisions. Never yet to me have you willingly dared state what you are thinking."

Then the father of gods and men answered her:  
 "Hera, do not hope to know all my thoughts; they will be hard for you, although you are my wife. However, that which is fitting for you to hear, no other, of gods or men, will know before you; but that which I may wish to consider apart from the gods—do not press me about each and every thing, nor make inquiry."

Then answered him the ox-eyed lady Hera:  
 "Most dread son of Cronus, what sort of word have you spoken? Certainly before now I have neither pressed you, nor made inquiry, and entirely without interference you devise whatever you want. But now my heart is terribly afraid lest silver-footed Thetis, daughter of the old man of the sea, won you over; for at dawn she came to your side and clasped your knees. And I suspect you pledged faithfully to her that you would honor Achilles, and destroy many by the ships of the Achaeans."

Then in answer Zeus who gathers the clouds addressed her:  
 "What possesses you? You always suspect something, I never get past you. Nonetheless, you can accomplish nothing at all, but will only be further from my heart—and it will be the worse for you. If this is the way things are—then you may be sure this is the way that pleases me. Sit down and be silent, and obey my word, lest the gods in Olympus, as many as there are, be of no avail to you against me as I close in, when I lay my unassailable hands upon you."

Thus he spoke and the ox-eyed lady Hera was afraid, and she sat down in silence, bending her own heart into submission; and throughout the house of Zeus the heavenly gods were troubled. To them Hephaestus, famed for his art, began to speak, comforting his dear mother, white-armed Hera:  
 "To be sure this will be a deadly business, not to be born,

if you two quarrel this way for the sake of mortals,  
 carrying on this jabbering among the gods; nor  
 will there be any pleasure from our noble feast if unseemliness prevails.

I advise my mother, sensible as she is,  
 to be agreeable to our dear father Zeus, so that our father  
 will not reproach us again, and throw our feast into disorder.

For what if the Olympian wielder of lightning wished to  
 blast us from our seats—for he is much the strongest. 580

Rather address him with gentle words;  
 then straightway will the Olympian be favorable to us.”

Thus he spoke, and springing to his feet placed a  
 double-handled cup  
 in his dear mother’s hands, and addressed her:

“Endure, my mother, and restrain yourself, distressed though you be,  
 lest, dear as you are, I with my own eyes see you  
 struck down; then for all my grief I will have no power  
 to help you; for it is painful to oppose the Olympian.

For at another time before this, when I was trying to ward him  
 from you, 590

he grabbed me by the foot and cast me from the threshold of heaven;  
 the whole day I drifted down, and as the sun set  
 I dropped on Lemnos, and there was but little life still in me.  
 It was there the Sintian men quickly ministered to me after my fall.”

So he spoke and Hera, goddess of the white arms, smiled  
 and smiling accepted the cup from her son’s hand.

Then to all the other gods, serving to the right,  
 he poured sweet nectar like wine, drawing from a mixing bowl;  
 and unquenchable laughter broke out among the blessed gods  
 as they watched Hephaestus bustling through the halls. 600

Then all day long until the sun went down,  
 they feasted, nor was the appetite of any stinted of fair portion—  
 nor stinted of the beautifully wrought lyre, which Apollo held,  
 or of the Muses, who sang, one following the other, with lovely voice.

Then when the sun’s bright light went down,  
 they left to go to bed, each in his own house,  
 where the famous crook-legged god,  
 Hephaestus, had made a house for each with skillful understanding.  
 Olympian Zeus, wielder of lightning, went to his bed  
 where he was wont to retire when sweet sleep came to him;  
 here mounting his bed, he went to sleep, with Hera of the golden  
 throne beside him. 610

on this account I will speak to you, and you mark and hear me.  
 It was not so much in anger and resentment of the Trojans  
 I was sitting in my room; no, I wished to yield myself to grief.  
 Just now, my wife was coaxing me with gentle words,  
 urging me into battle. And it seems to me too that this  
 will be better; victory shifts from man to man.  
 But come, wait a bit, let me put on the armor of Ares;  
 or go, and I will come after; I expect I'll catch you up."

340

So he spoke, and Hector of the shimmering helm said nothing  
 to him.  
 But Helen addressed him softly:  
 "Brother-in-law of me, an evil-thinking dog who strikes cold fear,  
 would that on the day when first my mother gave me birth,  
 some foul-weather storm of wind carrying me had borne me  
 to a mountain or a swelling wave of the tumultuous sea,  
 where the wave would have swept me away before these deeds had  
 happened.  
 But since the gods have so decreed these evils,  
 then would I were the wife of a better man,  
 a man who knew what righteous blame was and the many reproaches  
 that men make.

350

But the wits of this man here are not steady now, nor will they be  
 hereafter; and I think that he will reap the fruit of this.  
 But come now, come in and take your seat upon this stool,  
 brother-in-law, since the toil of fighting has mostly stood astride your heart  
 because of me, a dog, and Alexandros' infatuation,  
 we on whom Zeus has laid this evil fate, so that even after this  
 there will be songs of us for men to come."

Then answered her great Hector of the shimmering helm:  
 "Do not have me sit, Helen, for all your love; you will not persuade me.  
 For my spirit has already set me to defend  
 the Trojans, who have great longing for me when I am away.  
 But you rouse this one, and let him hurry,

so that he might catch me up while inside the city.  
 For my part I am going home, so that I may see  
 my household and my beloved wife and little son.  
 For I do not know whether, returning once more to them, I will come  
 back again,  
 or if, already now, the gods will defeat me beneath the hands of the  
 Achaeans."

So speaking, Hector of the shimmering helm departed;  
 and quickly he reached his well-established home.  
 But he did not find white-armed Andromache in his halls,  
 for she with her child and fair-robed attendant  
 had taken her stand upon the tower, weeping and shedding tears.  
 And when Hector did not find his blameless wife,  
 he paused upon the threshold as he was going, and spoke among the  
 servants:

370

"Come, maids, and tell me clearly;  
 where has white-armed Andromache gone from the hall?  
 To some house of my sisters, or of my brothers' fair-robed wives,  
 or has she set out for the temple of Athena, where the other  
 Trojan women with lovely hair propitiate the dread goddess?"  
 And in turn his ready housekeeper addressed him:  
 "Hector, since you strongly bid me speak the truth,  
 it is not to some house of your sisters, or of your brothers' fair-robed wives,  
 nor has she set out for the temple of Athena, where the other  
 Trojan women with lovely hair propitiate the dread goddess,  
 but she has gone to the great tower of Ilion, because she heard  
 the Trojans are worn down, and that Achaean strength is great,  
 by now she has arrived at the tower in urgent haste  
 like a madwoman; the nurse with her carries the baby."

380

The housekeeper spoke, and Hector ran from the house  
 back the same way through the well-built streets.  
 When he arrived at the Scaean gates, having crossed the great city,  
 there where he intended to pass through to the plain,

390

there his worthy wife came to meet him, running,  
 Andromache, daughter of great-hearted Eëtion—  
 Eëtion, who once lived below wooded Plakos,  
 in Thebes below Mount Plakos, ruling the Cilician men;  
 his daughter was held as wife by bronze-armored Hector.  
 She met him then, and her attendant came with her,  
 the child held against her breast, tender-hearted, just a baby,  
 the cherished only child of Hector, beautiful like a star,  
 whom Hector used to call Scamandrios, but all others  
 Astyanax, lord of the city; for his father alone protected Ilion.

400

And looking at his child in silence, Hector smiled,  
 but Andromache came and stood close to him shedding tears  
 and clung to him with her hand and spoke to him and said his name:  
 “Inhuman one, your strength will destroy you, and you take no pity  
 on the child and young one, or on me who have no future, who will  
 soon be

bereft of you; the Achaeans will soon kill you,  
 the whole of them rushing in attack. And for me it would be better  
 with you lost to go down beneath the earth; for no other  
 comfort will there be hereafter, when you meet your fate,  
 but grief. I have no father or lady mother;  
 it was godlike Achilles who slew my father,  
 when he sacked the well-established town of the Cilicians,  
 high-gated Thebes, and killed Eëtion;  
 yet he did not strip his body, for in his heart he thought it shameful,  
 but he cremated him with his decorated war-gear,  
 and heaped a burial mound over. And around it elms were grown  
 by nymphs of the mountains, daughters of Zeus who wields the  
 aegis.

420

And they who were my seven brothers in our halls,  
 they all on a single day entered the house of Hades;  
 all of them swift-footed godlike Achilles slew  
 as they watched over their shambling cattle and white sheep.

And my mother, who was queen under wooded Plakos,  
 when he led her here with the rest of his plunder,  
 he set her free again, accepting untold ransom;  
 and, in the hall of her father, Artemis who showers arrows struck her down.  
 Hector, so you are father to me, and honored mother,  
 and my brother, and you are my strong husband.  
 So have pity now and stay here by the ramparts,  
 do not make your child fatherless, your wife a widow.  
 Station your men by the wild fig tree, where the city is  
 easiest to scale and the walls can be overrun.  
 Three times they came there and tested it, the best men  
 with the two Aiantes and illustrious Idomeneus,  
 and with the sons of Atreus and Tydeus' daring son;  
 perhaps some seer, well skilled, told them of it,  
 or it was their own spirit that urged and compelled them.”

430

And great Hector of the shimmering helm answered her:  
 “Surely, all these things concern me too, my wife; but greatly  
 I would dread what they would think, the Trojans and the Trojan women  
 with their trailing robes,  
 if like a coward I should shirk away from fighting.  
 My spirit does not allow me, for I have learned to be brave  
 always and to fight among the front rank of Trojans,  
 winning great glory for my father, and for me.  
 But I know this well in my mind and in my heart;  
 there will some time be a day when holy Ilion is destroyed,  
 and Priam and the people of Priam of the fine ash-spear;  
 but it is not the coming suffering of the Trojans that so much  
 distresses me,  
 nor of Hecuba herself, nor of lord Priam,  
 nor of my many and brave brothers who  
 will fall in dust at the hands of enemy men,  
 so much as distress for you, when some bronze-armored Achaean  
 leads you off in tears, taking away your day of freedom.

440

450

And in Argos you will work the loom for another woman,  
and carry water from the spring of Messeis or Hypereia  
time and again under compulsion, and necessity will lie harsh  
upon you.

And one day someone seeing you shedding tears may say:

"This is the wife of Hector, who used to be best of the horse-breaking

Trojans

in waging battle, at that time when men fought round Ilion.'

So one day someone may speak; and for you the pain will be new again,  
bereft of such a husband to ward off the day of slavery.

But may the heaped earth cover me over dead  
before I ever hear your cry as you are dragged away."

So speaking, shining Hector reached out for his son;  
but the child turned away, back to the breast of his fair-belted nurse,  
crying, frightened at the sight of his own father,  
struck with terror seeing the bronze helmet and crest of horsehair,  
nodding dreadfully, as he thought, from the topmost of the helmet.  
They burst out laughing, his dear father and lady mother.

At once shining Hector lifted the helmet from his head,  
and placed it, gleaming, on the earth;  
then he rocked his beloved son in his arms and kissed him,  
and prayed aloud to Zeus and to the other gods:

"Zeus, and you other gods, grant now that this child too,  
my son, will become, even as I am, conspicuous among Trojans,  
likewise skilled in courage, and rule Ilion in strength.

And one day may someone say of him, 'this man is far better than his  
father'

as he returns from war, and may he bear back bloodstained spoils of  
armor,

having killed an enemy man, and his mother's heart rejoice."

So speaking he placed in the hands of his beloved wife  
his son; and she took him to her perfumed breast,  
laughing as she cried. And her husband took pity, watching,

and with his hand he caressed her and spoke to her and said her

name:

"Foolish one, do not, I beg you, distress your heart too much.

No man against fate will hurl me to Hades;  
for no man, I think, escapes destiny,  
not the cowardly, nor the brave, once he is born.

But go to the house and tend to your work,  
to your loom and distaff, and direct your handmaids  
to ply their work; war is the concern of men,  
all men, and me most of all, who live in Ilion."

So speaking, shining Hector took up his helmet  
crested with horsehair; and his beloved wife went home,  
turning to look back all the while, letting the full tears fall.  
Soon she reached the well-established home  
of man-slaying Hector, and inside found her many  
handmaids; and she stirred all of them to lamentation.  
They lamented Hector in his own house while he was yet alive;  
for they did not think that he would come home again,  
returned from war, escaping the might and hands of the Achaeans.

Nor did Paris linger in his high-roofed house,  
but when he had put on his glorious armor, elaborate in bronze,  
then he sped through the city, confident in the swiftness of his feet.  
As when a horse confined to a stall, fed on barley at the manger,  
breaking his tether runs with pounding feet across the plain  
to immerse himself in the fair-flowing waters of his accustomed river,  
triumphant, and he holds his head high, his mane  
streaming about his shoulders; emboldened by his beauty,  
his knees bear him lightly to the pasture and places horses love;  
so Paris, son of Priam, from the heights of Pergamos  
set out radiant in his armor like the sun,  
laughing out loud, his swift feet carrying him. Quickly  
he found shining Hector, his brother, as he was about  
to turn from the place where he had spoken fondly with his wife.

## 21. ILIÁDOS Φ

And when they reached the crossing of the fair-flowing stream  
of whirling Xanthos, born of immortal Zeus,  
there Achilles split the Trojans, chasing half from the plain  
toward their city, to where the Achaeans had fled bewildered with fear  
the day before, while shining Hector raged;  
there the Trojans streamed in rout, but Hera  
began to spread dense mist ahead to check them; and the other half  
were crammed into the deep-flowing, silver-eddied river.  
In they fell, with a great crashing splash, and the headlong flowing waters  
roared,

and the banks echoed loud all round; crying in distress, men  
were trying to swim, spun here and there through the eddies.  
As when from under rushing fire locusts take to the air,  
fleeing toward a river, and the weariless fire blazes,  
stirred of a sudden, and the locusts shrink into the water,  
so before Achilles the flowing water of deep-eddying Xanthos  
was filled with the mingled roar of men and horses.

Then god-born Achilles left his spear there on the bank  
propped against the tamarisks, and leapt in like something more than  
human,

gripping his sword, intent in his heart on dark deeds;  
he struck, turning this side and that; abject groaning rose from those  
stricken by his sword, and the water was made red with blood.  
As before a great-mawed dolphin other fish

seeking safety fill the inmost coves of a well-sheltered harbor  
in their fear—for greedily it will devour whatever it catches—  
so the Trojans all along the running waters of the terrible river  
cowered under its steep banks; and Achilles, when he had wearied his

hands with slaughtering,  
picked out twelve youths alive from the river,  
blood payment for the dying of Menoetius' son Patroclus;  
these he led out of the river dazed with fear like fawns,  
and bound their hands behind them with straps of well-cut leather,  
which they wore around their own strong-woven tunics,  
and gave them to his companions to lead away to the hollow ships;  
then he charged back, raging still to cut more men to pieces.

And there he encountered a son of Dardanian Priam  
fleeing from the river, Lykaon, whom Achilles himself once  
captured and took by force from his father's orchards  
while on night excursion; the youth had been cutting with sharp bronze

a wild fig tree  
of its young branches, to be rails for his chariot;  
then evil unforeseen had come to him in godlike Achilles;  
at that time, Achilles sold him across the sea, leading him off  
to strong-built Lemnos in his ships, and the son of Jason paid for him;  
there a guest friend, Eëtion of Imbros, ransomed him,  
paying a great price, and dispatched him to bright Arisbe.

From there, slipping away, he arrived at his father's house,  
and for eleven days rejoiced his heart among his dear ones  
after coming back from Lemnos; but on the twelfth day a god  
cast him again in the hands of Achilles, who would  
dispatch him, unwilling yet, on his way to the house of Hades.

When, then, swift-footed godlike Achilles saw Lykaon  
naked, without helmet or shield, nor did he hold a spear—  
but all these things he had flung away to the ground as, wrung with  
sweat,

he fled from the river, and exhaustion overwhelmed his limbs—  
then Achilles, troubled, spoke to his own great-hearted spirit:  
“What is this? A great wonder is this I see with my eyes.  
Surely the great-hearted Trojans whom I killed  
will rise again from under the misted realm of darkness,  
seeing how this man appears, having escaped his pitiless day of death,  
he who was sold into holy Lemnos, nor did the deep  
of the gray salt sea keep hold of him, which detains so many against  
their will.

But come, and let him have a taste of my spear-point,  
so that I may know in my mind and learn  
whether likewise he will return even from Hades, or  
whether the life-giving earth will keep him, which detains even the  
mighty below.”

So his thoughts churned as he waited; but the other came close  
to him, dazed with fear,  
seeking to lay hold of his knees; and beyond all measure he desired in  
his heart

to escape death and evil and dark fate.  
He, godlike Achilles, lifted his great spear,  
seeking to stab him; but Lykaon ran under it and seized his knees,  
crouching, and the spear flying forward over his back  
stuck in the ground, eager to sate itself on human flesh.

And with one hand holding Achilles' knees he made supplication,  
with the other he held the pointed spear, nor let it go;  
and speaking winged words he addressed him:  
“At your knees I implore you, Achilles; respect me and have mercy on me.  
I am as your suppliant, god-cherished Achilles; respect my claim;  
for it was in your presence first I tasted the bread of Demeter  
on the day when you captured me in our well-laid orchard,  
and sold me across the sea, taking me far from my father and friends  
to holy Lemnos, and I earned you a hundred cattle.



Then paying three times as much I was freed for ransom; and this is the  
 twelfth dawn  
 for me, since I came to Ilion,  
 after suffering much; now again deadly fate  
 has put me in your hands; I must surely be hated by father Zeus,  
 who handed me to you again; to a short life my mother  
 Laothoë bore me, the daughter of aged Altes,  
 Altes, who rules the battle-loving Leleges,  
 holding steep Pedasos by the river Satnioeis.  
 Priam took his daughter in marriage—among many other women—  
 and we two sons were born of her; and you will cut the throats of both.  
 One already you killed among the foremost warriors,  
 godlike Polydoros, when you struck him with your sharp spear;  
 and now you will be my death here; for I do not believe  
 I will escape your hands, since some divine force has brought me to this  
 place.

Yet I will say one other thing to you, and put this within your heart;  
 do not kill me, since I am not born of the same womb as Hector,  
 who slew your strong and gentle comrade.”

So the glorious son of Priam addressed him,  
 entreating him with his words; but the voice he heard was implacable:  
 “Fool, do not with me propose ransom nor argue a case.  
 Before the day of fate reached Patroclus, it is true,  
 until then my heart chose to spare  
 the Trojans, and many I took alive and sold.  
 But now there is no one who will escape death, whom god  
 puts in my hands before the gates of Ilion,  
 of all the Trojans, but especially the sons of Priam.  
 Come friend, you die too; why bewail this so?  
 Even Patroclus died, who was far better than you.  
 Do you not see how magnificent and mighty I am?  
 I am born of a noble father, and a goddess the mother who bore me,  
 yet death and powerful fate is upon me too;

there will be a dawn or an afternoon or noon,  
 when someone will take the life from even me in battle,  
 striking with a spear or an arrow from a bowstring.”

So he spoke; and the knees and very heart of the other went  
 slack.

He let go the spear, and sank to the ground spreading both arms wide;  
 and Achilles, drawing his sharp sword,  
 struck him on the neck by the collarbone, and the whole of his  
 double-edged sword plunged in; and Lykaon face down upon the earth  
 lay outstretched; and his dark blood flowed forth, and soaked the earth.  
 Seizing his foot, Achilles flung him to the river to be carried off,  
 and vaunting over him spoke winged words:  
 “Lie there now with the fish, who will lick you, your wounds,  
 your blood, with no care for you; nor will your mother  
 mourn you on a funeral bier, but Scamander  
 will carry you as he whirls toward the broad breast of the sea.

Many a fish leaping through the waves will dart up beneath the dark  
 ruffling of the water,  
 to eat the white shining fat of Lykaon.  
 May you all die, until we fall upon the city of sacred Ilion,  
 you fleeing, and I ravaging from behind.  
 Nor will your river, for all its fair streams and silver eddies,  
 defend you, to which you have so long made sacrifice of many bulls,  
 and cast alive into its eddies single-hoofed horses;  
 but even so you will die, all, an evil death, until all  
 have atoned for the murder of Patroclus and the destruction of the  
 Achaeans,  
 whom you slew by the swift ships while I was away.”

So he spoke; and the river was provoked to growing anger in his  
 heart,  
 and turned over in his mind how he might stop godlike Achilles’  
 slaughter, and ward off destruction from the Trojans.  
 But holding his long-shadowed spear, the son of Peleus,