

with your aid!" Tears followed on her words. The goddess seemed to move, indeed, did move her altar, the doors of the temple shook, her moon-shaped horns shot forth gleams of light and the sistrum rattled noisily. Not yet quite free from care and yet rejoicing in the good omen, the mother left the temple; and Iphis walked beside her as she went, but with a longer stride than was her wont. Her face seemed of a darker hue, her strength seemed greater, her very features sharper, and her locks, all unadorned, were shorter than before. She seemed more vigorous than was her girlish wont. In fact, you who but lately were a girl are now a boy! Go, make your offerings at the shrines; rejoice with gladness unafraid! They make their offerings at the shrines and add a votive tablet; the tablet had this inscription: THESE GIFTS AS MAN DID IPHIS PAY WHICH ONCE AS MAID HE VOWED. The morrow's sun had revealed the broad world with its rays, when Venus, Juno, and Hymen met at the marriage fires, and the boy Iphis gained his Ianthe.

Ovid, Metamorphoses

the story of Orpheus

BOOK X

SO THROUGH THE BOUNDLESS air Hymen, clad in a saffron mantle, departed and took his way to the country of the Ciconians, and was summoned by the voice of Orpheus, though all in vain. He was present, it is true; but he brought neither the hallowed words, nor joyous faces, nor lucky omen. The torch also which he held kept sputtering and filled the eyes with smoke, nor would it catch fire for any brandishing. The outcome of the wedding was worse than the beginning; for while the bride was strolling through the grass with a group of naiads in attendance, she fell dead, smitten in the ankle by a serpent's tooth. When the bard of Rhodope had mourned her to the full in the upper world, that he might try the shades as well he dared to go down to the Stygian world through the gate of Taenarus. And through the unsubstantial throngs and the ghosts who had received burial, he came to Persephone and him who rules those unlovely realms, lord of the shades. Then, singing to the music of his lyre, he said: "O divinities who rule the world which lies beneath the earth, to which we all fall back who are born mortal, if it is lawful and you permit me to lay aside all false and doubtful speech and tell the simple truth: I have not come down here to see dark Tartara, nor yet to bind the three necks of Medusa's monstrous offspring, rough with serpents. The cause of my journey is my wife, into whose body a trodden serpent shot his poison and so snatched away her budding years. I have desired strength to endure, and I will not deny that I have tried to bear it. But Love has overcome me, a god well-known in the upper world, but whether here or not I do not know; and yet I surmise that he is known here as well, and if the story of that old-time ravishment is not false, you, too, were joined by love. By these fearsome places, by this huge void and these vast and silent realms, I beg of you, unravel the fates of my Eurydice, too quickly run. We are in all things due to you, and though we tarry on

earth a little while, slow or swift we speed to one abode. Here we all make our way; this is our final home; yours is the longest sway over the human race. She also shall be yours to rule when of ripe age she shall have lived out her allotted years. I ask the enjoyment of her as a wish; but if the fates deny this privilege for my wife, I am resolved not to return. Rejoice in the death of two."

As he spoke thus, accompanying his words with the music of his lyre, the bloodless spirits wept; Tantalus did not catch at the fleeing wave; Ixion's wheel stopped in wonder; the vultures did not pluck at the liver; the Belides rested from their urns, and you, O Sisyphus, sat upon your stone. Then first, tradition says, conquered by the song, the cheeks of the Eumenides were wet with tears; nor could the queen nor he who rules the lower world refuse the suppliant. They called Eurydice. She was among the new shades and came with steps halting from her wound. Orpheus, the Thracian, then received his wife and with her this condition, that he should not turn his eyes backward until he had gone forth from the valley of Avernus, or else the gift would be in vain. They took the up-sloping path through places of utter silence, a steep path, indistinct and clouded in pitchy darkness. And now they were nearing the margin of the upper earth, when he, afraid that she might fail him, eager for sight of her, turned back his longing eyes; and instantly she slipped into the depths. He stretched out his arms, eager to catch her or to feel her clasp; but, unhappy one, he clasped nothing but the yielding air. And now, dying a second time, she made no complaint against her husband; for of what could she complain but that she was beloved? She spake one last "farewell" which scarcely reached her husband's ears, and fell back again to the place from which she had come.

By his wife's double death Orpheus was stunned, like that frightened creature who saw the three-headed dog with chains on his middle neck, whose numbing terror left him only when his former nature left, and the petrifying power crept through his body; or like that Olenos, who took sin upon himself and was willing to seem guilty; and like you, luckless Lethaea, too boastful of your beauty, once two hearts joined in close embrace, but now two stones which well-watered Ida holds. Orpheus prayed and wished in vain to cross the Styx a second time, but the keeper drove him back. Seven days he sat there on the bank in filthy rags and with no taste of food.

Care, anguish of soul, and tears were his nourishment. Complaining that the gods of Erebus were cruel, he betook himself to high Rhodope and wind-swept Haemus.

Three times had the sun finished the year and come to watery Pisces; and Orpheus had shunned all love of womankind, whether because of his ill success in love, or whether he had given his troth once for all. Still, many women felt a passion for the bard; many grieved for their love repulsed. He set the example for the people of Thrace of giving his love to tender boys, and enjoying the spring-time and first flower of their youth.

A hill there was, and on the hill a wide-extending plain, green with luxuriant grass; but the place was devoid of shade. When here the heaven-descended bard sat down and smote his sounding lyre, shade came to the place. There came the Chaonian oak, the grove of the Heliades, the oak with its deep foliage, the soft linden, the beech, the virgin laurel-tree, the brittle hazel, the ash, suitable for spear-shafts, the smooth silver-fir, the ilex-tree bending with acorns, the pleasant plane, the many-colored maple, river-haunting willows, the lotus, lover of the pools, the evergreen boxwood, the slender tamarisk, the double-hued myrtle, the viburnum with its dark-blue berries. You also, pliant-footed ivy, came, and along with you tendrilled grapes, and the elm-trees, draped with vines; the mountain-ash, the forest-pines, the arbuté-tree, loaded with ruddy fruit, the pliant palm, the prize of victory, the bare-trunked pine with broad, leafy top, pleasing to the mother of the gods, since Attis, dear to Cybele, exchanged for this his human form and stiffened in its trunk.¹

Amid this throng came the cone-shaped cypress, now a tree, but once a boy, beloved by that god who strings the lyre and strings the bow. For there was a mighty stag, sacred to the nymphs who haunt the Carthæan plains, whose wide-spreading antlers gave ample shade to his own head. His antlers gleamed with gold, and down on his shoulders hung a gem-mounted collar set on his rounded neck. Upon his forehead a silver boss bound with small thongs was worn, and worn there from his birth. Pendent from both his ears, about his hollow temples, were gleaming pearls. He, quite devoid of fear and with none of his natural shyness, frequented men's homes and let even strangers stroke his neck. But more than to all the rest,

(resuming the story of Orpheus
after a digression)

BOOK XI

WHILE WITH SUCH SONGS the bard of Thrace drew the trees, held beasts enthralled and constrained stones to follow him, behold, the crazed women of the Cicones, with skins flung over their breasts, saw Orpheus from a hill-top, fitting songs to the music of his lyre. Then one of these, her tresses streaming in the gentle breeze, cried out: "See, see the man who scorns us!" and hurled her spear straight at the tuneful mouth of Apollo's bard; but this, wreathed in leaves, marked without harming him. Another threw a stone, which, even as it flew through the air, was overcome by the sweet sound of voice and lyre, and fell at his feet as if 'twould ask forgiveness for its mad attempt. But still the assault waxed reckless: their passion knew no bounds; mad fury reigned. And all their weapons would have been harmless under the spell of song; but the huge uproar of the Berecyntian flutes, mixed with discordant horns, the drums, and the breast-beatings and howlings of the Bacchanals, drowned the lyre's sound; and then at last the stones were reddened with the blood of the bard whose voice they could not hear. First away went the multitudinous birds still spellbound by the singer's voice, with the snakes and the train of beasts, the glory of Orpheus' audience, harried by the Maenads; then these turned bloody hands against Orpheus and flocked around like birds when in the day they see the bird of night wandering in the daylight; and as when in the amphitheatre in the early morning of the spectacle the doomed stag in the arena is the prey of dogs. They rushed upon the bard and hurled at him their wands wreathed with green vines, not made for such use as this. Some threw clods, some branches torn from trees, and some threw stones. And, that real weapons might not be wanting to their madness, it chanced that oxen, toiling beneath the yoke, were plowing up the soil; and not far from these, stout peasants were digging the hard earth and sweating at their work. When these beheld

the advancing horde, they fled away and left behind the implements of their toil. Scattered through the deserted fields lay hoes, long mattocks and heavy grubbing-tools. These the savage women caught up and, first tearing in pieces the oxen who threatened them with their horns, they rushed back to slay the bard; and, as he stretched out his suppliant hands, uttering words then, but never before, unheeded, and moving them not a whit by his voice, the impious women struck him down. And (oh, the pity of it!) through those lips, to which rocks listened, and to which the hearts of savage beasts responded, the soul, breathed out, went faring forth in air.

The mourning birds wept for you, Orpheus, the throng of beasts, the flinty rocks, and the trees which had so often gathered to your songs; yes, the trees shed their leaves as if so tearing their hair in grief for you. They say that the rivers also were swollen with their own tears, and that naiads and dryads alike mourned with dishevelled hair and with dark-bordered garments. The poet's limbs lay scattered all around; but his head and lyre, O Hebrus, you received, and (a marvel!) while they floated in mid-stream the lyre gave forth some mournful notes, mournfully the lifeless tongue murmured, mournfully the banks replied. And now, borne onward to the sea, they left their native stream and gained the shore of Lesbos near the city of Methymna. Here, as the head lay exposed upon a foreign strand, a savage serpent attacked it and its streaming locks still dripping with the spray. But Phoebus at last appeared, drove off the snake just in the act to bite, and hardened and froze to stone, just as they were, the serpent's widespread, yawning jaws.

The poet's shade fled beneath the earth, and recognized all the places he had seen before; and, seeking through the blessed fields, found Eurydice and caught her in his eager arms. Here now side by side they walk; now Orpheus follows her as she precedes, now goes before her, now may in safety look back upon his Eurydice.

However, Bacchus did not suffer such crime as this to go unavenged. Grieved at the loss of the bard of his sacred rites, he straightway bound fast all those Thracian women, who saw the impious deed, with twisted roots. For he prolonged their toes and, in so far as each root followed down, he thrust their tips into the solid earth. And as a bird, when it has caught its foot in the snare which the cunning fowler has set for it, and feels that it is caught, flaps and

flutters, but draws its bonds tighter by its struggling; so, as each of these women, fixed firmly in the soil, had stuck fast, with wild affright, but all in vain, she attempted to flee. The tough roots held her, and though she struggled, kept firm their grasp. And when she asked where were her fingers, where her feet, her nails, she saw the bark come creeping up her shapely legs; striving to smite her thighs with hands of grief, she smote on oak. Her breasts also became of oak; oaken her shoulders. Her arms you would think had been changed to long branches—nor would your thought be wrong.

Nor is this enough for Bacchus. He leaves their very fields and with a worthier band seeks the vineyards of his own Timolus and his Pactolus; although this was not at that time a golden stream, nor envied for its precious sands. His usual company, satyrs and bacchanals, thronged round him; but Silenus was not there. Him, stumbling with the weight of years and wine, the Phrygian rustics took captive, bound him with wreaths, and led him to Midas, their king. To this Midas, together with the Athenian Eumolpus, Thracian Orpheus had taught the rites of Bacchus. When now the king recognized the comrade and assistant of his revels, right merrily to celebrate the coming of his guest he ordered a festival which they kept for ten continuous days and nights. And now the eleventh dawn had driven away the ranks of stars on high, when the king with joyful heart came to the Lydian fields and gave Silenus back to his dear foster-child.

Then did the god, rejoicing in his foster-father's safe return, grant to the king the free choice of a good, a pleasing, but useless gift. Midas, fated to make an ill use of his gift, exclaimed: "Grant that whatsoever I may touch with my body may be turned to yellow gold." Bacchus granted his prayer and gave him the baleful gift, grieving the while that he had not asked better. The Berecynthian hero gaily went his way, rejoicing in his fatal gift, and tried its promised powers by touching this and that. Scarcely daring to believe, from a low oak-branch he broke off a green twig: the twig was changed to gold. He picked up a stone from the ground: the stone, also, showed a light golden hue. He touched a clod: beneath that magic touch the clod became a mass of gold. He plucked some ripe wheat-heads: it was a golden harvest. He picked an apple from a tree and held it in his hand: you would suppose the Hesperides had given it. If he laid his fingers on the lofty pillars, the pillars gleamed

before his eyes. When he bathed his hands in water, the water flowing over his hands could cheat a Danaë. His mind itself could scarcely grasp its own hopes, dreaming of all things turned to gold. As he rejoiced, his slaves set a table before him loaded with meats; nor was bread wanting. Then indeed, if he touched the gift of Ceres with his hand, the gift of Ceres went stiff and hard; or if he tried to bite a piece of meat with hungry teeth, where his teeth touched the food they touched but yellow plates of gold. He mingled pure water with the wine of Bacchus, giver of his gift; but through his jaws you would see the molten gold go trickling.

Amazed by this strange mishap, rich and yet wretched, he seeks to flee his wealth and hates what he but now has prayed for. No store of food can relieve his hunger; his throat is parched with burning thirst, and through his own fault he is tortured by hateful gold. Lifting his hands and shining arms to heaven, he cries: "Oh, pardon me, Lenaeus, father! I have sinned. Yet have mercy, I pray you, and save me from this curse that looks so fair." The gods are kind: Bacchus restored him to his former condition when he confessed his fault, and he relieved him of the gift which he had given in fulfilment of his pledge. "And, that you may not remain encased in gold which you have so foolishly desired," he said, "go to the stream which flows by mighty Sardis town, take your way along the Lydian hills up the tumbling stream until you come to the river's source. There plunge your head and body beneath the foaming fountain where it comes leaping forth, and by that act wash your sin away." The king went to the stream as he was bid. The power of the golden touch imbued the water and passed from the man's body into the stream. And even to this day, receiving the seed of the original vein, the fields grow hard and yellow, their soil soaked with water of the golden touch.

But Midas, hating wealth, haunted the woods and fields, worshipping Pan, who has his dwelling in the mountain caves. But stupid his wits still remained, and his foolish mind was destined again as once before to harm its master. For Tmolus, looking far out upon the sea, stands stiff and high, with steep sides extending with one slope to Sardis, and on the other reaches down to little Hypaepae. There, while Pan was singing his songs to the soft nymphs and playing airy interludes upon his reeds close joined with wax, he