

Book 8

As saffron-robed Dawn was spreading over the whole earth,
Zeus, who delights in the thunderbolt, assembled the gods
up on the highest peak of many-ridged Olympos.
He addressed the meeting himself, and the gods all listened.
“Hear me out, all you gods, and all you goddesses, 5
while I tell you what the heart in my breast commands me.
And let none of you deities—whether male or female—
make an attempt to thwart my scheme, but all alike
assent to it, so I may speedily bring these things to pass!
Any I note as minded to leave the gods, and go off 10
to bring help to either the Danaäns or the Trojans,
will return to Olympos smitten and in bad shape—
or I’ll seize him and cast him down into gloomy Tartaros,
far off, where lies the deepest chasm below the earth,
where the gates are fashioned of iron and the threshold of bronze, 15
as far beneath Hādēs as the sky is above the earth:
then you’ll see by how much I’m the strongest of all gods!
Come on, you gods, just try it, that you all may know the truth—
take a cable of gold, suspend it from the heavens,
and all of you lay hold of it, both gods and goddesses: 20
you still couldn’t drag out of heaven down to earth
Zeus, supreme counselor, however great your effort!
But I, were I minded to pull with a will, could haul it up
along with earth itself, and all the sea besides;
as for the cable, thereafter I’d loop it around a peak of 25
Olympos, and leave the whole mass to hang in space!
It’s by *that* much I outmatch the gods, outmatch mankind.”

So he spoke, and they all became very quiet and silent,
shocked by his words, so powerfully had he addressed them.

But at last the goddess, grey-eyed Athēnē, took him up: 30

“Son of Kronos, our father, supreme among potentates,
we too indeed know well that your strength is ungovernable,
yet even so we feel pity for the Danaän spearmen
who will now fulfill a wretched fate, and perish.

Yet though we'll keep out of the battle, as you order, 35
 we'll offer advice to the Argives, such as may help them,
 so that they don't all perish through your fit of anger."
 Zeus the cloud-gatherer smiled at her, and replied:
 "Cheer up, Trītogéneia, dear child: the things I just said
 were not meant seriously, and to you I'm kindly disposed." 40

That said, to his chariot he harnessed his bronze-shod team,
 racers both, with their flowing golden manes,
 arrayed himself likewise in gold, took hold of the whip—
 well-wrought, of gold—stepped up to the driver's place,
 and lashed his steeds into action: they eagerly flew off 45
 midway between the earth and the starry heavens.

To spring-rich Ida he came, the mother of wild beasts,
 and Gargaros, site of his precinct and smoking altar.
 There the Father of gods and men reined in his horses,
 unharnessed them from the chariot, hid them in thick mist, 50
 and sat himself down on the heights, exulting in his splendor,
 gazing out at the Trojans' city, the ships of the Achaians.

Now the long-haired Achaians hurriedly took their meal,
 separately in their huts: that done, they donned their armor.
 The Trojans likewise, on their side, in the city, armed themselves; 55
 though fewer, they too were hot to join the crush of battle
 through the harsh need of protecting their wives and children.
 Then all the gates were flung open, the troops poured through them,
 on foot and mounted both, and a mighty clamor went up.

When they had come to one place, and were met together, 60
 buckler slammed against buckler, spears thrust, the bronze-clad rage
 of warriors pressed the attack, their bossed shields ground
 hard each upon the other, and a mighty clamor went up.
 There were groans and triumphant shouts, from warriors killing
 or being killed, and the earth ran wet with their blood. 65

While it was morning still, and the sacred light brightening,
 both sides' shots struck home, and men dropped, hit; but when
 the sun reached, and bestrode, the midpoint of the sky,
 then Zeus, the father, held up his golden scale
 and on it set two dooms of grief-laden death, 70
 for horse-breaker Trojans and bronze-corseleted Achaians.
 By the middle he grasped and raised it: the Achaians' fated day

sank, and their fates all settled on the provident earth,
 while those of the Trojans were raised to the wide sky.
 Zeus himself thundered loudly from Ida, sent a fiery
 flash down among the Achaian troops; when they saw it
 they were struck with amazement. Pale fear seized them all. 75

Then neither Idomeneus dared stand fast, nor Agamemnōn,
 nor the two Aiases, servants of Arēs both; Gerēnian
 Nestōr alone remained, the Achaians' protector, and he
 not willingly; his horse was done for, hit by an arrow
 from noble Aléxandros, husband of fair-haired Helen,
 on the top of its head, where the first hairs of the mane
 spring from the skull, its most vulnerable point. 80

It reared up in agony as the shaft struck into its brain,
 and, reeling from the wound, stampeded the yoke horses. 85

Then, while the old man jumped down and with his sword
 was cutting the horse's traces, through the rout there came
 Hektōr's swift horses, bringing a daring charioteer—
 Hektōr himself. And now the old man would have perished
 had not at once Diomēdēs, good at the war cry, noticed,
 and with a fearsome shout now urged Odysseus on: 90

"Son of Laertēs! Scion of Zeus! Resourceful Odysseus!
 Where are you off to, back turned, like some coward, with the rest?
 Hey, someone may plant a spear in your back as you run!
 Stand firm then, let's keep this wild fellow away from the old man!" 95

So he spoke, but noble Odysseus, the much-enduring,
 paid him no heed, hurried on to the Achaians' hollow ships;
 and Tydeus's son, though alone, moved up to the front line,
 stood there before the horses of the old man, son of Nēleus, 100
 and addressed him, speaking with winged words: "Good old sir,
 these young fighters, clearly, are wearing you down:

your strength is not what it was, a harsh old age attends you,
 your charioteer's a weakling, your horses are sluggish.

Come now, get into my chariot, see for yourself 105

the breed of these horses of Trōs—how well they're trained
 to course on the plain here, in pursuit or flight—
 the ones I took from Aineias, harbingers of rout!

Your team here our squires can attend to, while these we'll drive
 straight at the horse-breaker Trojans, so even Hektōr 110
 may know well whether my spear too is raging in my grasp."

Nestōr, Gerēnian horseman, did not ignore his words.
 While Nestōr's mares were looked after by the two squires,
 powerful Sthenelos and the courtly Eurymedōn,
 both warriors climbed aboard Diomēdēs' chariot, 115
 and Nestōr took in his hands the shining reins,
 whipped the horses, and quickly they came abreast of Hektōr,
 who charged straight at them. Tydeus's son let fly
 his spear, and missed him, but hit his charioteer,
 Ēniopeus, the son of high-spirited Thēbaios, 120
 in his chest beside the nipple, as he gathered the reins,
 and he fell from the chariot, and the galloping horses
 swerved aside, and there his life and strength were undone.
 Bitter grief for his charioteer now spread over Hektōr's heart,
 yet he left him—though sad for his comrade—to lie there, 125
 and looked for another bold driver; not very long
 did his pair lack a master, for in short order he found
 Iphitos's son, the dashing Archeptolemos, made him mount
 up there behind the horses, put the reins into his hands.

Destruction would have followed, actions irreparable, 130
 and they'd have been penned up in Ilion like sheep,
 had the Father of gods and men not quickly taken note,
 thundered terribly, and let fly a white-hot bolt,
 hurling it earthwards in front of Diomēdēs' horses,
 so that a terrible flame of burning sulphur shot up, 135
 and the two horses cowered in terror under the chariot.
 Then the shining reins slipped out of Nestōr's hands,
 and he, terrified at heart, cried out to Diomēdēs:
 'Son of Tydeus, turn back your whole-hoofed horses, flee!
 Can't you see that the might of Zeus is not behind you? 140
 For now it's him, it's Hektōr, to whom Zeus, son of Kronos,
 gives glory today; hereafter, if he so pleases,
 he'll grant it to us. But there's no man can thwart his purpose,
 however valiant: Zeus is more powerful by far."

Diomēdēs, good at the war cry, answered him thus: 145
 "In all this, indeed, old sir, you have spoken duly;
 but there's this bitter concern besets my heart and spirit,
 that one day Hektōr will say, speaking among the Trojans,
 'Tydeus's son fled before me, all the way to the ships.'
 So he'll boast: when he does, let the earth gape wide for me." 150

Then Nestōr, Gerēnian horseman, answered him thus:
 “Ah me, son of doughty Tydeus, what a thing to have said!
 Even were Hektōr to call you coward and weakling,
 neither Trojans nor Dardanians would be persuaded,
 nor all those high-spirited Trojan warriors’ wives 155
 whose manly bedfellows you’ve cast down into the dust.”

This said, he wheeled round the whole-hoofed team for flight
 back through the rout, while the Trojans and Hektōr raised
 a fabulous clamor, showered them with baleful missiles,
 and great bright-helmeted Hektōr shouted loudly at him: 160
 “Son of Tydeus, the swift-horsed Danaäns used to honor
 you above all, with meat, full cups, a privileged seat;
 but now they’ll despise you—it seems you’re a woman at heart!
 On your way, craven dolly! Not through any yielding of mine
 will you set foot on our ramparts, or in your vessels carry 165
 our women off: long before that I’ll have settled your destiny.”

So he spoke, and Tydeus’s son was divided in his mind:
 should he wheel round his horses, fight Hektōr head-on?
 Thrice he debated, uncertain, in his mind and spirit;
 and thrice from Ida’s mountains Zeus the counselor thundered, 170
 sending the Trojans a sign: victory in the conflict
 was changing sides. Hektōr now shouted to the Trojans:
 “Trojans! Lycians! Dardanian hand-to-hand fighters!
 Be men, my friends! Remember your fighting valor!
 Kronos’s son, I see, has now chosen me in earnest 175
 for triumph and great glory—but for the Danaäns, woe!
 Fools they were, the ones who contrived these ramparts,
 flimsy, useless, that won’t stop my raging charge—
 our horses will jump without effort over the ditch they dug!
 But when I get in there, right among their hollow ships, 180
 then you be mindful to have destructive fire at hand,
 so I can both burn their ships and kill the Argives themselves,
 panic-stricken with all the smoke, there by the ships.”

That said, he called out to his horses, addressed them thus:
 “Xanthos, and you, Podargos, Aithōn, and noble Lampos— 185
 now recompense me for all the generous upkeep
 that Andromachē, daughter of great-hearted Êētiōn,
 lavished on you first of any—the honey-sweet wheat,

the wine she mixed you to drink, when your fancy called for it—
 even prior to me, who indeed am her strong young husband. 190
 Come on then, look sharp, move smartly, so we can seize
 Nestōr's shield, its fame now spread across the heavens—
 it's said to be all of gold, both it and its hand grips—
 and strip from the shoulders of Diomēdēs the horse breaker
 the intricate corselet that Hēphaistos labored to make him. 195
 If we could get these two things, I'd hope to force
 the Achaians aboard their swift ships this very night."

So he spoke,
 boasting: the lady Hērē waxed indignant at him,
 started up on her throne, making high Olympos tremble,
 and directly addressed the mighty god Poseidōn: 200

"Shame on you, wide-ruling Earth-Shaker! Even in
 your private heart there's no grief for the Danaāns dying,
 though for you to Aigai and Helikē they bring pleasing gifts
 in abundance—and once, indeed, you were all for their victory!
 For if we chose, all those of us who side with the Danaāns, 205
 to force back the Trojans, curb the will of wide-thundering Zeus,
 he'd soon be sitting alone there, in a pet, on Ida."

Deeply troubled, the lordly Earth-Shaker answered her:
 "Hērē, rash chatterer, what a thing it is you've said!
 I for one wouldn't want all the rest of us fighting against 210
 Zeus, son of Kronos, since he's the mightier by far."

This was how they were speaking, one to the other. By now
 all the space, away from the ships, between wall and ditch
 was full of horses and shield men, penned in together,
 and he who'd penned them all was that equal of swift Arēs, 215
 Hektōr, Priam's son, when Zeus gave him the glory.
 And now he'd have burned the trim ships with blazing fire
 had the lady Hērē not put it in Agamemnōn's mind
 to quickly bestir himself, urge the Achaians into action.
 So he set out along the line of their huts and vessels, 220
 clutching his great purple cloak in one solid fist,
 and stopped by Odysseus's ship, black and deep-hulled,
 that lay halfway along, so a shout could reach either end,
 be heard at the huts both of Aias, Telamōn's son,
 and those of Achilles: the two who had drawn up their trim ships 225

furthest away, relying on their prowess, their hands' strength.
 Now in a carrying voice he cried out to the Danaäns:
 "Shame on you, Argives, base cowards, good only to look at!
 What's become of our boasts, when we swore we were the best—
 those empty public boasts you would utter on Lēmnos, 230
 as you wolfed down plentiful meat of straight-horned cattle,
 and swilled the bowls that were brimming over with wine,
 that each man would take on in battle a hundred—no, two hundred!—
 Trojans; but now we're not even a fit match for one,
 Hektōr, who'll all too soon torch our ships with blazing fire! 235
 Zeus, Father, was there ever a powerful king before this
 that you so struck with delusion, so robbed of his great glory?
 Yet I never, I tell you, ignored any splendid altar of yours
 on my ill-fated journey here in my many-benched vessel,
 but stopped at each to burn the fat and thighbones of oxen, 240
 impatient though I was to lay waste strong-walled Troy.
 Still, Zeus, this plea at least fulfill on my behalf:
 allow us ourselves to escape, get clean away—
 don't let the Achaians be thus vanquished by the Trojans."

So he spoke: the Father felt pity for him as he wept, 245
 and nodded assent, that his people should indeed go safe, not perish.
 Then he at once sent an eagle, best omen of all winged creatures,
 a fawn, born of a swift hind, clutched in its talons.
 It dropped the fawn close beside Zeus's splendid altar,
 where the Achaians sacrificed to him as sender of all such signs; 250
 and so, when they saw that the bird had come from Zeus,
 they attacked the Trojans more fiercely, had ardor for battle.

Then not one of the Danaäns, many though they were,
 could claim to have urged his swift steeds ahead of Tydeus's son
 across the ditch and into the hand-to-hand combat: he was 255
 the first by far to bring down a leading Trojan warrior,
 Phradmōn's son Agelaös, who was turning his horses to flee;
 but as he wheeled Diomēdēs rammed a spear in his back
 squarely between his shoulders, drove it through to his chest.
 He fell from the chariot: his armor rattled upon him. 260

Close behind came Atreus's sons, Agamemnōn and Menelaös,
 and after them the two Aiases, both clad in daring valor,
 followed by Idomeneus, along with Idomeneus's henchman

Mērionēs, a match for Enyalios, killer of men,
 and close behind these Eurypylos, Euaimōn's splendid son; 265
 and Teukros came as the ninth, stringing his back-bent bow,
 hidden behind the shield of Aias, Telamōn's son.

When Aias pulled back his shield, then this hero would
 take a quick look round, shoot off an arrow at someone
 there in the fray; the man would fall, yield up his life, 270
 and back the archer would dart, like a child to its mother,
 to Aias, who'd shelter him behind his gleaming shield.

So, who was the first Trojan that blameless Teukros slew?
 Orsilochos first, then Ormenos, and in third place Ophelēstēs,
 Then Daitōr, Chromios, and godlike Lykophontēs, 275
 Polyaimōn's son Amopaōn, and finally Melanippos—
 all these in turn he stretched on the nurturing earth.

The lord of men, Agamemnōn, rejoiced at the sight of him
 with his powerful bow sending death into the Trojans' ranks,
 and he came and stood close by, and spoke these words to him: 280

“Teukros, dear heart, son of Telamōn, your people's lord,
 keep shooting like this! You may bring a ray of hope to the Danaāns
 and to your father Telamōn, who reared you as a child
 and cared for you in his home, his bastard though you were:
 bring him, however distant, into your glory's sphere! 285
 This too I'll declare to you, and indeed it will come to pass:
 If it's granted to me by Zeus of the aegis and Athēnē
 to lay waste Ilion's well-built citadel, then
 in your hands first, after mine, I'll place the prize of honor—
 either a tripod, or else two horses with their chariot, 290
 or a woman who's ready to go up and share your bed.”

Then blameless Teukros answered him in these words:
 “Most glorious son of Atreus, why urge me on when I
 myself am eager already? While there's still strength in me
 I'll not stop; ever since we forced them back towards Ilion, 295
 from that time on I've been watching my chance with my bow
 to bring down men. Eight long-barbed shafts I've shot off,
 and all are fixed in the flesh of lusty spry young fighters:
 it's only this mad dog I'm unable to hit.” That said,
 he let fly one more shaft from his bowstring, aiming straight 300
 at Hektōr, his will dead-set on bringing him down—
 but missed again: instead his arrow struck blameless Gorgythiōn,

Priam's fine son, in the chest: the mother who bore him
had come as a bride from Aisymē, the beautiful Kastianeira,
a woman most like to the goddesses in stature. 305

His head drooped to one side: as a garden poppy sinks
under the load of its seed and the springtime showers,
so bowed his head sideways, weighted down by its helmet.

Teukros now let fly one more shaft from his bowstring,
straight at Hektōr, his will dead-set on bringing him down— 310
but missed yet again, for Apollo diverted his arrow,
and struck Archeptolemos, Hektōr's dashing charioteer,
as he plunged into the fray—in the chest, beside the nipple.

He fell from the chariot: his swift horses shied away
in terror, and there his spirit and strength were undone. 315

Bitter grief for his charioteer now spread through Hektōr's heart;
nevertheless he left him—though sad for his comrade—to lie there,
and ordered Kebrionēs, his brother, then close nearby,
to take over the horses' reins: he heard, and did not fail him.

Hektōr at once leapt down from his gleaming chariot, 320
with a terrible shout, scooped up a rock in one hand,
and charged straight at Teukros, dead-set on bringing him down.

Teukros had drawn from his quiver another bitter arrow,
and laid it against the bowstring, but bright-helmeted Hektōr—
as Teukros drew the string back to his shoulder, where 325

the collarbone's fixed between neck and chest, a fatal spot—
hit him right there, as he aimed, with his jagged rock,
snapping the bowstring; his hand went numb at the wrist,
he sank on his knees, and stayed thus. The bow dropped from his hand.

But Aias did not fail to notice his brother's collapse: 330

he ran up, and stood over him, covering him with his shield,
till there reached down beneath it two of his trusty henchmen,
Echios's son Mēkisteus, and the noble Alastōr,
who bore Teukros off, groaning heavily, to the hollow ships.

Then once more the Olympian whipped up fury in the Trojans: 335
they thrust the Achaians straight back towards the deep ditch,
and Hektōr pressed on with the foremost, exultant in his strength.

As when a hound on the heels of a wild boar or lion
will snap at it from behind, while in swift pursuit,
pouncing on flank or quarter—but watches in case it turns— 340
so Hektōr harried the long-haired Achaians, again and again

killing the hindmost, and they took to flight in terror.
 But when they'd got past the palisade and the ditch
 in their flight, with many laid low by Trojan hands,
 then they halted and made a stand beside their vessels, 345
 calling to one another, each man with lifted hands
 shouting his prayers to all the gods. But Hektōr
 kept wheeling his fine-maned horses this way and that,
 his eyes like those of the Gorgon, or murderous Arēs.

Seeing and pitying them, the goddess, white-armed Hērē, 350
 at once addressed Athēnē with winged words: "Look now,
 daughter of Zeus of the aegis, are we two no longer
 to care for these dying Danaāns, even at their last moment?
 They're about to fulfill their wretched destiny, finished
 by the onslaught of one man, his mad rage unstoppable— 355
 Priam's son Hektōr! Already he's done them so much harm—"

In reply to her the goddess, grey-eyed Athēnē, said:
 "How I wish this man might lose both strength and life,
 slain by the Argives here, on his own native soil!
 It's my father who rages madly in his unwholesome mind, 360
 stubborn, always malicious, thwarter of my desires!
 He has no recollection whatever of the many times
 I rescued his son¹ when he buckled under Eurystheus's tasks,
 and would cry to high heaven, and then from high heaven Zeus
 would send me down to help him. Had I only been 365
 sharp-witted enough to figure this business out
 when he was dispatched to the realm of Hādēs' gatekeeper,
 to bring back from Erebos the hound of loathsome Hādēs,
 he'd never have got past those sheer falls of Stygian water!
 But now Zeus hates me, and has furthered the plans of Thetis, 370
 who kissed his knees and, taking his chin in her hand,
 begged him to honor Achilles, the sacker of cities. And yet
 some day he'll once more call me his grey-eyed darling!
 But now you get ready for us our whole-hoofed horses,
 while I go into the palace of Zeus of the aegis, 375

1. The son is Hēraklēs, and the reference is to the fetching up from Hādēs of the three-headed dog Kerberos, one of the twelve Labors imposed on him (probably, as Apollodorus records, in expiation for killing his children), and carried out under the direction of his cousin Eurystheus. The river Styx, with its famous falls, was thought to guard one of the Peloponnesian entrances to Hādēs.

and arm myself in my war gear. I want to find out
 whether this son of Priam, bright-helmeted Hektōr,
 will be glad when we two show up along the battle lines,
 or whether a Trojan, too, will glut the dogs and birds
 on his fat and flesh, after falling by the Achaians' ships." 380

So she spoke: the goddess, white-armed Hērē, did not ignore her,
 but went off to harness the gold-frontleted horses—
 she, Hērē, high goddess, daughter of mighty Kronos!—
 while Athēnē, the daughter of Zeus the aegis-bearer,
 let fall on her father's floor the soft embroidered robe 385
 that she herself had made, worked with her own hands,
 and, donning the tunic of Zeus the cloud-gatherer,
 armed herself in all grim warfare's accoutrements.
 Into the fiery chariot she then stepped, grasping her spear—
 weighty, huge, thick—with which she quells the ranks of men, 390
 those heroes who've angered this child of a mighty sire.

Now Hērē gave a quick flick of her whip to the horses;
 of themselves the sky's gates groaned open, kept by the Seasons,
 to whom are entrusted the great firmament and Olympos,
 whether to lift off the thick clouds, or impose them. 395
 Straight through those gates they drove their goad-spurred horses.

Zeus the Father, seeing them from Ida, exploded in wrath,
 and sent golden-winged Iris out to them with a message:
 "Up, go now, swift Iris! Turn them back, don't let them
 come face to face with me here! We'd do no good by fighting. 400
 For this I say straight out, and it will come to pass:
 I'll cripple their swift horses in their harness, I'll hurl
 themselves from the chariot, which I'll smash to pieces:
 not in ten circling years will they get over the wounds
 that my thunderbolts will inflict upon them! That way 405
 Miss Grey-Eyes will learn what it means to fight her father!
 With Hērē, though, I'm not so displeased or angry:
 she's always been used to frustrating whatever I decree."

So he spoke, and gale-footed Iris took off with his message,
 setting out from the mountains of Ida to high Olympos. 410
 Right outside the gates of Olympos the many-clefted
 she met the pair, stopped them, and passed on the word from Zeus:
 "Where's the hurry, you two? What's put you in such a rage?
 Kronos's son won't allow you to give aid to the Argives:

this was his threat, and he'll certainly carry it out—
he'll cripple your swift horses in their harness, he'll hurl
yourselves from the chariot, which he'll smash to pieces;
not in ten circling years will you get over the wounds
that his thunderbolts will inflict upon you! That way,

Miss Grey-Eyes, you'll learn what it means to fight your father!
With Hērē, though, he's not so displeased or angry:
she's always been used to frustrating whatever he decrees.
But you're a real horror, you shameless bitch, if you truly
dare to lift up your prodigious spear against Zeus."

So saying, swift-footed Iris went on her way,
and Hērē addressed Athēnē in the following words:
"Look, child of Zeus of the aegis, I no longer endorse
this scheme for us to fight Zeus on behalf of mortals—
as for them, let one die, and another survive, by chance,
while *he* can judge entirely as he's a mind to
between Trojan and Danaän. That is what's fitting."

She spoke,
and proceeded to wheel her whole-hoofed horses around.
So the Hours unharnessed their fine-maned horses for them,
and tethered them at their ambrosial mangers, and propped
the chariot over against the shining courtyard wall,
while they themselves sat down on golden chairs
among the other gods, both vexed at heart.

Zeus, the Father,
from Ida now drove his strong-wheeled chariot and horses
quickly back to Olympos and entered the gods' assembly,
and the famed Earth-Shaker unyoked his horses for him,
set the chariot on its stand, and spread a cloth over it,
while far-seeing Zeus himself settled down on his golden throne,
and under his feet the whole of great Olympos trembled.

Only Athēnē and Hērē took their seats apart from Zeus,
and neither greeted nor questioned him. Nevertheless
he understood in his heart, and addressed them, saying:

"Why are you vexed in this fashion, Athēnē and Hērē?
Surely you two aren't tired of destroying Trojans in battle
that brings men honor, so great is your grim hatred of them?
But such is my might, so irresistible my hands,

there's no way that all the gods on Olympos could shift me—
 and as for you two, trembling seized your illustrious limbs
 before you ever glimpsed warfare, and warfare's hurtful deeds.
 This I'll tell you straight out, and it would have happened:
 not on your chariot, once my thunderbolts had struck you, 455
 would you have come back to Olympos, the immortals' abode."

So he spoke, but Athēnē and Hērē went on muttering against him,
 sitting side by side, planning trouble for the Trojans.
 Athēnē kept quiet now, expressed nothing openly,
 though angry with Zeus her father, gripped by wild resentment; 460
 but Hērē's breast could not contain her fury. She exclaimed:
 "Most dread son of Kronos, what's this you're telling us?
 As we too know well, your strength is far from trifling—
 nevertheless we feel pity for the Danaän spearmen,
 who'll fulfill their wretched destiny, and so perish. 465
 Yes, we'll abstain from battle, if you so command us;
 but advice we'll still offer the Argives, that will help them,
 and ensure that not all of them perish through your anger."

In answer to her cloud-gatherer Zeus declared:
 "At dawn tomorrow the yet-mightier son of Kronos— 470
 you can watch if you want to, my ox-eyed lady Hērē—
 will be destroying a great mass of Argive spearmen:
 for mighty Hektōr will not abstain from battle until
 Pēleus's swift-footed is stirred to action by the ships
 on that day when they'll be fighting, in the direst straits, 475
 at the ships' sterns, over the body of Patroklos.
 For thus it's ordained. As for you, I do not care one jot
 for your anger, not even should you go to the nethermost
 limits of earth and sea, where Iapetos and Kronos
 sit, without joy from Hyperīōn Helios's rays, 480
 or from any breeze, but deep Tartaros surrounds them!
 Should you even wander that far, I still care nothing
 for your wrath, since nothing more shameless than you exists."

So he spoke, but white-armed Hērē made no answer,
 and down into Ocean dipped the sun's bright light, 485
 drawing night's blackness across the grain-giving earth:
 against the Trojans' will daylight ebbed, but to the Achaians
 most welcome, much prayed for, was dark night's arrival.

Now illustrious Hektôr called an assembly of the Trojans,
 led them away from the ships to an open space beside 490
 the eddying river, where the ground was clear of corpses.
 Stepping down from their chariots they heard out the speech
 that Hektôr, beloved of Zeus, now made, in his hand a spear
 eleven cubits in length: before him its bronze point
 gleamed bright; round the shaft there ran a golden ferrule. 495
 Leaning on this, he spoke his mind to the Trojans:
 "Listen to me, you Trojans, Dardanians, and allies:
 I thought, just now, we'd destroy the Achaians with their ships,
 and then would make our way back to windy Ilion;
 but too soon darkness fell, and that, above all, preserved 500
 the Argives and their vessels out there by the breaking waves.
 So for now we must needs yield to the blackness of night,
 and make ready our supper. Unyoke your fine-maned horses
 from their chariots, and set out fodder before them,
 and bring from the city both oxen and fattened sheep, 505
 quickly, provide yourselves with honey-hearted wine
 and bread from your homes, and gather plentiful wood,
 so that all night long until early-stirring dawn
 we can burn many fires, have their flames light up the sky,
 in case under cover of night the long-haired Achaians 510
 hurry to make their escape on the broad back of the sea.
 Don't let them board ship at ease, without a struggle:
 rather make sure that many take home a wound
 to nurse there, dealt by an arrow or sharpened spear
 while boarding their vessels, so that others may think twice 515
 before launching war's miseries against the Trojans!
 And let heralds, men dear to Zeus, now proclaim through the city
 that stripling youths and grey-haired elders all must
 take station around the city on the god-built ramparts;
 and as for the women—our wives, each in her own house, 520
 should kindle a great fire; and let a constant watch be set
 lest a raiding force enter the city when our troops are away.
 Be it done, great-hearted Trojans, as I now proclaim,
 and let this good counsel of mine suffice for the present:
 at daybreak I shall have more for you Trojan horse breakers! 525
 In high hope I pray now to Zeus and the other gods
 to drive off from here these dogs, brought in by the death-spirits

[whom the death-spirits brought here aboard their pitch-black vessels!].²

For this night we shall keep good watch over ourselves.
Tomorrow at dawn, then, fully armed and ready, 530
let's go to the hollow ships, start some sharp engagements:
I'll find out if Tydeus's son, this mighty Diomēdēs,
will drive me back from the ships to the wall, or whether
I'll cut him down with the bronze, carry off his bloodied spoils.
Tomorrow he'll measure his prowess: will he stand firm 535
against my spear's onset? Among the foremost, I think,
he'll lie pierced through, and many a comrade round him,
as the sun comes up tomorrow. For myself I wish
I might be immortal and ageless all my days,
and honored as highly as are Athēnē and Apollo, 540
as surely as now this day will bring trouble to the Argives."

Such was Hektōr's speech, and the Trojans cheered it loudly.
They unharnessed their sweating horses from under the yoke,
and each man tethered his own with straps by his chariot;
and they brought from the city both oxen and fattened sheep 545
quickly, provided themselves with honey-sweet wine
and bread from their homes, and gathered plentiful wood,
[and offered full rich sacrifices to the immortals, so that]
the wind bore the smell of them skyward, up from the plain,
[savory, sweet: but the blessed gods did not share it, 550
nor did they wish to: hateful to them were sacred Ilion,
and Priam, he of the good ash spear, and Priam's people.]³

So these, planning great endeavors, all night through
stayed there on the battle lines, with many a fire ablaze.
Just as in the heavens about a bright moon the stars 555
shine clear when the high air is windless, and sharply visible
is each mountain peak, each tall headland and ravine,

2. Line 528 has been rightly suspected as an interpolation.

3. Apart from 549, none of these lines appear here in our medieval MSS; they are quoted in the pseudo-Platonic dialogue *Alcibiades II* (149D) and are, except for 550, a cento of verses put together from different contexts (548: 1.315 = 2.306; 551–52: 24.27–28). Kirk reminds us that not only do the gods not consume part of the sacrifice in the *Iliad*, but that even their appreciation of the meat's aroma has been suppressed; and, further, that the idea that the gods were all hostile to Troy is absurd (Kirk 2: 340).

and down from heaven breaks out the infinite air,
and every star can be seen, and the shepherd is glad at heart:
in such numbers, between the ships and the streams of Xanthos, 560
gleamed the fires that the Trojans kindled, out there before Ilion.
A thousand fires were alight in the plain, and by each one
fifty men were gathered in the glow of the blazing fire
while their horses, munching away at white barley and spelt,
stood by their chariots awaiting the bright-throned Dawn.