NONNOY
DIONYCIAKWN
A'
nonnos of panopolis
dionsos
in his deeds

book one

ONE has lightbearing Zeus
Putting a Nymph to sad use;
The skystriking fists of Typhoon
Drag down darkness at noon.
SING,
O MUSE:

Kronides' gobetween gutting the pallet in blaze/
Thunderbolt's orgasm birthing in strain at the coupling flash/
Sheet Lightning, Semele's chambermaid, strewing her bridebed/

& SING:
Twyborn Bacchos’s blessed event:

Unfinished foetus
of mother unmidwifed, scooped still damp from the embers by Zeus --
whose gingerly fingers slot his thigh to a he-man womb,
a uterine device which double-casts him, matripaternal,
to bring the baby to term in terms of his prior confinement:
From forehead gravid with swollen bolus by temple spermatick,
Zeus fired unconceived, unconceivable Athene glinting in full kit.

MUSES:

Here with my spear of fennel/
thrum and thrimble the cymbals;
stuff my fist with the thyrsus of Bacchos, my bel canto’s burden. . .
Not Solo:

As I impinge on the ensemble, nip next door
to Phaeros and find me my partner and pattern—polymorph Proteus
muffled in multifold forms: I thumb a multiform anthem.

Let Proteus sneak in as snake and score a spiral spoor:
I’ll render the score hung up by my Hero’s cissoid shillelagh,
rendering brigades of Giants, hispid with viperoid bangs.

Let Proteus bristle his mane in a shaggy upsweep:
I’ll hooray Bacchos balanced on Rhea’s stubbly elbow,
depleting her titanic teat in deceit, lactation of lions.

Let Proteus project himself in cyclonic bound from his pads
and, poised in air, baroquely refurbish his form to a leopard’s:
I’ll hosanna Zeus’s issue who flindered the Indian race,
cayused their elephants into the ground with leopard-drawn droshkies.
Let him mutate his mode to facsimile boar:
   I'll hymn Thyone’s
scion poleaxed by the sex appeal of pigsticking Aura,
Kybele’s daughter, mother of late-gotten Bacchos the thirdmost.

Let Proteus dissolve to aqua falsa:
   I'll sing Dionysos’
plunge to the pleats of the sea when Lykourgos waved his crest.
Or let him switch to tree and swish in an ersatz rustle:
I’ll tell the tale of sprinter Ikarios, whose feet competed,
flat soles drubbing vinefruit to slush in the dybbuk winetub.

MAENADS:

Here with my spear of fennel/
   Off with my drabble
of everyday togs/
   And drape my shoulders with the dotted dash
of dappleback fawnskin, fresh with the essence of vintage nectar,
drawn tight over my heaving chest/

[Old Homer and one
of his principal nymphs, Eidothea, can fend with the strong rank reek
of sealskin bespoke for Menelaos’ foray into basse couture.]

Fetch me the hallelujah timbrels/
   Reach me the loudbooming goatskin/
But hold the twintoned hautboys of soulsweet strain, and check them
out to another/
[I refuse to pique my Apollo, who disowns
the naughty notes from the breathed-on reed—ever since he shamed
the impious pipes of Marsyas, husked that hubristic herdsman,
and hung the pared-off hide on a tree to bulge in the breeze.]

* * * *

Take it, **muse**, from the top—

from Kadmos, the Roving Researcher:

Lang syne on the sands at *Sidon* did *Zeus* the bull, horns high,
low from his counterfeit larynx a bogus mating moooo
and shake to a stink of sweetness when *Eros* wrestled a woman
into position. Locking his hands in the curl of a twin-pronged
band 'round her belly, the godlet heave-ho'ed. Beside him, the bull
who strides the sea depressed the hump of his crest to mattress
the virgin's mounting and slithered meek and oblique to his knees;
then, fretting the strings of his slackened back into tautness, he raised
*Europa* up, and scudded away over walkable water,
his upborne hoof in silence scoring the sea with the tiniest
tippytoe traces. Aloft above the main, the maiden
pulsed in a spasm of terror, but held her course on bullback,
high and dry.

To a casual glance, identity doubtful:
Mayhap *Thetis*, or else *Galateia*, if not *Amphitrite*
[the girl who goes to bed with *Earthquake*]—say, *Aphrodite*
bestriding the back of a *Triton*.

And bluetressed *Earthquake* gaped
at the slewfoot cruise. Bemused by *Zeus’s* seducer's mooo,
*Triton* disconced his conch and blew a fugal toot
to the tune *Here Comes the Bride*. *Nereus* noticed the horny
stranger aswim; his phthisic finger stirred fright with funk,
tracing the attractive *tourista’s* track for his daughter *Doris*. 
On high, the virgin traveled steerage, light freight which barely dampened her ox's dewlap. Atwitter at the soaring yaws of her sloshy excursion, she clutched at the cuckoldly rudder.

Desire crewed.

Boreas, flustered with lust, twitched in libidinous bluster, slyly bellied her shift away from her body, the better to whistle in lurking amaze on her brace of budlet breasts.

AS WHEN:

Up from the ocean's basement a nimble Nereid bobs, bestraddles a dolphin, and slaps at the jellied flood from her sinusoid chairlift, flapping her hand in a dewy pastiche of the breaststroke, the while her watery wayfarer fairs through water halfseen, hump-backed, his airy passenger arid of brine, lightly limning his route with the splaytined fork of his flukes . . .

SO:

The bull carried cargo, with tensing, taunting rumple.

And Cowboy Cupid laid on, lambasted the subjugant neck with his mother's ensorcelled cincture, hefted his bow to shoulder like a drover's crook, raddled Hera's hardbreathing helpmeet with the rod of Kypris and drave him to damp Poseidonian pasture.

And bluish blushed the virgin cheek of motherless Pallas, aghast to gaze at her purebred daddy bridled by bride.

But on Zeus coursed, scissored the surge in a saturate gouge, his hot not damped by the wet of salacious sea, which once, pregnant in submarine womb from skysonw furrow, outsquirted the foamy, amorous, glamorous goddess damp on a clamshell.

And so, steerswoman for the hush-hush transit of Taurus, our virgin shipped as pilot and payload.
A peregrine boatswain from *Achaia*
goggled at the pumping knees of the trumped-up hugger-mugger lugger
[no meeker vessel], and screamed a statement, somewhat as follows:
"Now, there is something you don’t see every day:
    what’s ahoy?
A bovine agronomist taking the waters, plowing the sounding
depth to raise a crop in the sea unabounding? Strange.
Has Zeus decreed the dredging of dry land? Is a road being mapped
for a line of waterlogged wagons?
    A hodgepodge passage, this.
Has Lady Moon removed from the wild blue yonder to take
the tour by single bull through the wild bull hither? Has Thetis
deserted the depths for the reins, to jockey in a soggy sweepstakes?

Something’s fishy.
    Perhaps it’s the Sea-Bull, or Ox-Ray, that haunts
these waters [Cephaloptera Giorna; carnivore; staggering bulk]...
but no. The image is wrong; this is garden-variety bull.
And if that’s a Nereid wetback goading her eccentric steer
to unharnessed riptide ambles, she’s damnably out of costume,
swathed in that prissy pelisse:
    A Nereid’s normally nude.

A tufted hairdo?
    Perhaps it’s Demeter who harrows the wheat,
cultivating combers, scratching the briny’s spine with an ox-hoof.
If so, up top, Poseidon! Bloom, and be transplanted!
You’ve had your surfeit of surf; your sealegs are lost—and now,
luffing at sandstorms, beach your pedestrian barge and trudge
to gouge Demeter’s groove.

—Hey, Barnacle Bull!
You’ve gone straight off the charts! Nereus curries no cattle;

Proteus prods no plow; Glaukos futters no parsnips.
No marshes here, no meadows to fill the billows. This,
I say, is the SEA!
Barren, uncropped, and cropless. Its toilers are sailors. They harrow no harbors, prefer the tiller’s slice to the ironshed split. Earthquake’s minions sow no furrows. Ruminant, please, and respect the peculiar traits of the seafarm.

A gloss:

Fruit: kelp.
Seed: spume.
Rube: gob.
Rut: wake.
Share: ship.

But—putting your aqueous humor aside—why, pray, are you carrying on with that virgin? Do bull’s libidos itch to snatch women?
Don’t tell me Poseidon’s at it again, re-raping in mufti?
Rivergod’s horns—same tired disguise—to sham the shape of Bos Domesticus?

Shame, Poseidon!

Plotting another ploy for The Lays of Ancient Greece, with Tyro still warm?
It was only a day ago you forced her freshwater loveseat, aping the mucky Enipeus, dissolving in bogus gurgles!”

In such a fashion, a passing Hellenic seadog expressed his shock and amazement.

Meanwhile, back at the bull,
our maiden, scenting a stable union, ripped her coiffure and broke into plaintive yawn:

"O Waters who bear no oars,
O Beaches who know no speech, proclaim my plea to the bull [presuming, of course, that cattle communicate feasibly]:

BULL,

TAKE PITY AND SPARE THIS VIRGIN!

O Shores, inform my daddy
his darling Europa’s abroad, an emigrant holding a seat on a bull who swims, who abducts, who now—I imagine—rapes.
O Breezes who wheeze about me, deliver my mother my bridecurls.
O Boreas, god of the North Wind, who snatched a bride from Athens,
waft me aloft on your wings . . .

Oh, no, Voice, STOP!
Better let sleeping winds lie. This bull’s an old goat, but Boreas
might just—oh, dear—be a wolf!"

And these, the heartrending peals
of the girl as she wrung her bad ferry’s withers, spurred and sped
Kadmos’s travels. He stepped from land to land, bulldogging
the ceaselessly unsparing spoor of the ox turned groom.

At length
he came to the bloody pit pockmarking the erstwhile site
of the far-ranging Arima range, those mounds snapped loose from their roots
to bruise Olympos’s shockproof postern, what time the Gods
took chicken-heart wing over Nile (that utter stranger to weather),
marching in fabricant flutter safe birdlife, tactless, intact,
flailing bizarrely an outré wake through the blast of heaven,
flogging the welkin through seven ringing zones.

—The cause?

Zeus (son of Kronos), the ever-moving mover, all in a sweat
to breach the bed of Plouto (daughter of Kronos) and beget
Tantalos (frantic felon who’d burgle celestial goblets),
had stowed his Luftwaffen, locked his lightning deep in the marrow
of the living rock. Confined, claustrophobic, the thunderbolts coughed
smoke and smutted the cliff’s chalk cheeks. Darkly, a spark
rose from a firebarbed arrow, enchafted a springsource . . .

and down
the Mygdonian flume the torrid torrents boiled and moiled
to debouch in reboant boom.

At this, from Cilicia, the monster
[a.k.a. Typho, Typhaeus, and Typhon; a thoroughly bad hat]
returned with his hundred bestial heads the nod of his mother
Earth, extended his twice a hundred hands, and rifled
the Thunderer's weathergod arsenal, weapons of fire and snow.
He rallied the ranks of his throats from their usual guttural rumble
to blend their animal howls in a deafening zoo's diapason.
He sprouted snakes, which slicked across his Leopards' chops,
licked at this Lion's bushy thatches, looped the crumpled horns of his Bulls with flick-flack helical twists of their tails.
From tapertongued chins, the toxin that darts with death at a distance dripped and swirled, combining in fatal form with Boar spit.

Locking Zeus' simmering misses away in a rocky pocket,
the monster stretched straight up. An airborne scramble—and heaven bloomed sudden hands. Massed metacarpals formed into fists and assaulted the vault.

—There's one! Down by the skydome's shank,
pulling Little Bear's tail!
—Up there! Kallisto's relaxed
on the Zodiac's axle, but one's got her by the short hairs, pitches Big Bear from her perch!
—Another's aiming its knocks at the Ox herd:
it batters Boötes!
—Alas for Lucifer, Star of the Morning . . .
mugged!
—And down at the turnaround rim of the sky, the vain and plaintive swish of a whip:
   With Dawn abducted, and Taurus
penned in her path, the stunted Season, trapped out of time,
dismounts for a breather.
   Light wriggles through a scaly fringe
of corkscrew curls, glow fused to gloom. My Lady Moon
seeks daywork, rises to share the shining with My Lord Sun.
No rest for the busy colossus: About-face, quickstep, HARCH!
On parade from North to South, he quits one pole for a post
at the other. A longhand snatch secures him The Man With The Jug
as a switch to flail a shower of hail from Capricorn’s back.
Fishing in troubled heavens, he hooks the finned twins Pisces
and chucks them back in the sea. Aries he rams and leaves sheepish,
unsnaps that fastener star that clips the heavenly band
in place, that plugs the day to the dark in the unshorted circuit
of its blazing springtime boarder.

Erected to cloudy estate
on back-dragging feet, Typhoon arrays his multi-armed forces,
departures his spraddled bands of hands on a widespread front,
and blankets the sky’s unclouded silver blaze with his blitz—
the sidwinding ranks of snakes.

—There goes one now! It shoots
on a line through the Zodiac’s rim en grand jeté to the spine
of Draco[the resident Serpent of heaven], and hisses a warwhoop.
A hoopsnake bounces to Cepheus’ daughter, twirling itself
in a loop precisely the size of the maiden’s starstudded bracelets;
bending skewed in a band beneath her bonds, it bundles
Andromeda Bound in a double bind.

—Cerastes cornutus,
horny as ever when like meets like, encircles a spike
of its Doppelhörner, the Bull, hangs down in a spiral athwart
the bovine brow to mimic and madden with jaws agape
the Hyades [winsome quintet disposed as the spit-and-image
of Moon when she wears her horns].

—Clutches of vipers,
banded together in venemous cummerbunds, are belting
Boötes!

—Another, espying Olympus’s second Serpent,
eyssays a mighty leap: It loops the anguiferous wrist
of The Handler of Snakes, then leaps ahead, neck bent
and belly coiled, to slither and shake in a bonnie braiding,
a new coronet to crown Ariadne’s existing Tiara.
No shortage of arms: A stretch, and Typhoon flaps West Wind’s belt,
wags East Wind’s wing, with a simultaneous twist and turn
in either direction to touch both ends of the world at once.
He follows the Star of the Morning’s dejection with Star of the Evening’s,
and leaves the far-west crests of the Atlas very depressed.
HOW OFTEN IT HAPPENS:

He angles in Ocean’s kelpy cleavage, hooks onto Poseidon’s rig, and flicks it up from the deep to lie on the dry. He tangles a hand in the pickled mane of a stabled stallion, fishes it out of its submarie stall, and flings the displaced mustang away, an airborne missile—its target, Olympus. A Palpable Hit! The Sun’s two-seater shudders on impact; its team strains along its gloomy-go-round with many a whinny.

HOW OFTEN IT HAPPENS:

He snatches an ox who only a moment ago was relaxing its limbs by a back-country ploughtree; in the cattle-rattling grip of his threatening forearm, he frets the creature to mawkish moos, then launches it straight at its hornbearing double, the crescent Moon, and punctuates her career with a full stop. He screeches through heaven in mad cadenza, dispensing the vicious drip-drop-drip of a viperoid hiss, then snaffles her bridle in deadly downbeat to cut off her white-strapped bulls at the yoke in sudden Grand Pause.

But Luna, true spawn of Titans, throws in no towel at his onslaught: Battling the Giant head to heads and antler to antlers, she racks up many a notch to score the glistening arc of her bullish horns.

Then hark! A moo from My Lady Mooa’s oxen, glowing and lowing on high in amaze at the cavernous chasm of Typhoon’s gullet!

No deference found in the Seasons; they outfit their starry brigades. The heavenly Orbits, ranked and arrayed in the round for the fray by the Zodiac’s muster, burn hot for combat.
Newspangled battalions sparkle in crazy gavotte through heaven to the tune of their fires' wild hiss, a stellar assemblage amassed from North, from *West Wind*’s back, from the edge of *East*, from the crook of *South Wind*’s elbow.

Like a single heavenly body, the *Fixed Stars* [that imperturbably static crew] desert their stations and amble away to greet their vagabond fellows, united in *NOISE*.

The hubbub flutters the *Axis*, the pole that pierces the void of heaven stiff through its middle; it squeaks and moans. *Orion the Hunter*, fixing his gaze on the wild-beast show, lugs out his claymore; the blazing machete’s *Tanagran* blade glints and sparks as its bearer prepares his mettle for battle. At his heels, the *Major Canis*, sensing the coming of dog-days, sparkles and thirsts as his starry throat boils over and erupts in ardent barking. Forsaking his usual prey—the *Rabbit*—between his teeth he vomits forth a jet of steam on *Typhoon*’s zoo.

Reboant, the welkin resounds.

Rebooming in turn to the seven circles of heaven, from an equal number of throats there ululates forth a seven-mouthed wail for war [the *Pleiades*’ contribution]. The *Planets* [again a seven] increase the foofaraw’s swell with a balancing banging and clanging.

One glimpse of the *Giant*’s ophidian form, and *The Handler of Snakes* blushed forth into blaze. One shake of his venomproof hands removed the clutches of bottle-green *Serpents* who nursed at his flames and molded their mottled mass to a lopsided missile of mischief he then fired off. Around his fires, the hurricanes howled, as viperine shafts went twanging aslant and unbalanced the air into madness.
Now Capricorn’s buddy [bold enough to befriend a being half goat and half fish] The Archer snaps a shot. Inside the Wagon’s circle, the Serpent [you know, he’s bright in the middle, and portioned out—half to the Little Bear, half to the Great] flailed a sparkling gauge in the sky with his heavenly tail; the Virgin’s next-door neighbor Boötes [he drives the Wagon and shares its route] shook in spasmodic seesaw the crook in his flashing hand.

Close by the knee of the Kneeler [or Idol, as you prefer] and over against its companion Swan, the starry Lyre sounded a prophecy:

Zeus Will Win.

So much for the sky.

Typhoon pounced down on Corycius’ peak and tweaked it viciously, squashed the flux of Cydnus River (a neighbor of his in Cilicia), and, pinching between two fingers, rammed it through downtown Tarsus.

Off shot a volley of crags to batter the deep’s battalions, marking a shift in operations: Ordnance: Clifftops.

Objective: To Paddle the Sea.

The Monster lumbered his way through the combers on saltsoaked soles. Above, in the buff, his crupper was dry; the billows broke at mid-thigh in pounding resounding. His snakes slithered down for a dip, hissing assault from gullets bespattered with spume and venting their venom in marine mêlée.
Picture Typhoon:
Stockstill in midocean,
his feet’s flat plats aroot in the depths of its weedy bed,
awash with fish. His belly, massaged by clouds, holds close
intercourse with air. And, up at his summit, the Giant’s Airlions
flaunt their manes and roarrrr. Down deep, the Sealion shudders
and skulks in his slimy crevasse.

The vasty deep was congested:
Leviathan legions, behemoth brigades overspilled the abyss. . . .
And everywhere

GIANT!

He gluttoned the sea till he strained its seams
with his earthborn bulk and overbulked earth, his ungirt girth
outflanking the banks.

A bleat from the Seals.
The Dolphins dove
in purposive panic to hiding.

Only the Octopus stuck:
Slick and shifty, knotting his supple twists in a netted
coil of collage on his usual rock, his tentacles tracing
a parodic boulder.

Nothing There Was That Did Not Tremble.

[Especially so the Lamprey: Lost in her lust for serpents,
she quivered and spent in mad nymphomaniac joy at the impicus
hiss of the Snakes—so MANY!—in submarine war with heaven.]

The high seas soared. Pyramiding, the main piled up to keep
Olympus company. Streaming, it forded the sky until
that arid bird of the upper air, who never knows water,
noticed the ocean next door and took an overdue bath.
Typhon reached over and ripped up an island, a flange from the land that edges the briny. Cupping this improvised trident in the palm of a fathomless hand, he wound up, whirled it around, and let the whole mass fly in an inside outshoot. To support the onslaught, his hands took arms, moved in on the stars, and sortied forth to Olympus’ haughty headland.

Slipping the bounds of sea and the bountiful seat of earth, the pseudo-Zeus shaped his grip to the thunderbolt’s blazing barbs. But Kronion’s kit of equipment was massy, a weight which scarce the concerted grabs of Typhon’s two hundred hands could manage, flat out and straining. [True Zeus was used to hefting the load with the flip of a knuckle.]

The plugugly tugged.

Nothing.
No nimbus gathered.

The thunder rubbed at his bonedry arms and emitted a muffled pfft, a sotto voce plop to a clapless echo. Air shriveled, and only one weazedn wisp of dew dropped down in a withered snowflake.
The lightning fizzled and flickered, a frail fire, flaming in fittfully flashy abashment like smoke from a greasy grid.
The bolts, embarrassed, sensed the clumsy touch of a tyro; their masculine splendor shrank to a soft and sissified shimmer, repeatedly slide with spontaneous jerks from the numberless thumbs.
The firebrands mourned the loss of their normal heavenly guidance and glided off course.

**AS WHEN:**

A man with a horsewhip [unknown to the horse, and horsemanship strange to him] artlessly flogs and flogs again with no success at a stubborn, bit-spitting stallion. The animal flouts him, instinct sensing his driver’s sham from the bogus handling.

It shies in frenzy, checks; raises its bentknee forelegs, flails, paws madly ahead, jerks its neck aloft till the bulky mane that spraddles along its spine flaps broadcast down over both its shoulders.
SO:

The *Giant* tried hand after hand, in moil and toil
to uprear the runaway flash of a bolt that would not stay put.

Now, Rover Kadmos was paying his call at the Arima Mountains...

Meanwhile, over in *Crete*, the aquatic bull inclined
his neck and delivered his virgin, unspotted, unsoaked, on the strand
below *Mt. Dicte*.

But *Hera*—who always has eyes for cattle—
saw *Kronides* quiver in lechery’s spasms. Demented with envy,
she compressed and exploded her pique into speech with a highpitched
cackle:

"*Phoebus, dear, do give your father some moral*
*support. Let’s not have a rustic catching and hitching the great god*
*Zeus to the earthshaking plow.*

*On the other hand, why not?*
*Yes, lace him up in the traces! I have a few words that a bull*
*can certainly follow:*

‘Hut, you rotter! Haw for the harrow
and Gee for the girls!’

—*But Phoebus, dear, although you’re a famous*
*bównan, you do have another title: God of Pastures.*
*Go down and earn it. Heed me, and herd your father. A stray*
*is always fair game. Take the Lady Moon: A woman drover*
*like her just might stick Kronides under the yoke in her rash*
to visit the shepherd Endymion’s bed, and tattoo Zeus’ back
*with the swish and the slash of her lash!*

—*Hey, milord Zeus!*

Poor *Io*—

so sad she had to miss you like this, you ox, when you were
her lover and she was a simple crumplehorned cow. What might
have been that fling’s sweet issue—a precocious calf, as horny
as daddy!

And do be careful of Hermes. Nice lad, of course,
but still, by trade, a compulsive cattle-thief. *I’m afraid*
—your being a bull, and all—they boy might rustle his father,
and have to give Phoebus (your son, remember) another harp...
to pay for the raper raped!
—But what can I do? Pen him up?
If only Argos were still alive, and peeking from every
pore with those shining eyes. Oh, he’d ride herd for Hera,
haul Zeus off to a godforsaken pasture, and jab
and beat those cheating ribs with a crook!”

And so spoke Hera.

—The ebullient son of Kronos, however, demuzzled and slipped on
a stripling’s shape, then gyred around the chaste young thing
in a giddy chase. A tentative touch of her ankle, her knee,
and now he became the very first to loosen the band
that bound her bosom, to squeeze in assumed confusion the swelling
round of her firm, proud breast, to kiss her lips on the tips,
to fold back the long preserved and holy girdle
from unwed maidenhood, to crop the fresh firstfruits of love.

Her womb soon swelled and tossed, plump with gestating twins...
and Zeus her mate turned over his gravid bride and her blessed
travail to Asterion, King of Crete, a husband rich
and famous enough for any girl.

The freshwed starstudded Bull
of Olympus mounted the sky to shine by Auriga’s shin.
In Spring he rises, keeping his back [which dotes on dew]
to the Sun, whose track he squats athwart. Observe him halfsunk
in the Ocean, pointing his right hoof out to Orion. At evening
he speeds his pace on the rim and outstrips Auriga, who rises
to share his race.

Thus did he gain his place in the sky.

BUT:

TYphoon’s TENURE OF ZEUS’S MUNITIONS WAS NOT TO CONTINUE...
Collecting the little *Lovegod*—and bidding him bring his bow—
*Kronides* quitted the dizzy zenith to encounter Relentless Kadmos,
the Roving Researcher, tramping the mountains. The trio concocted
a complex congame, sewing a shroud for *Typhoon* from the deadly
thread on the spindle of *Fate*. And goatnibbled *Pan* put in
for a sharee, and supplied Omnipotent *Zeus* with appropriate props:
cattle and sheep and goats and goats and goats. He plaited
wattles, strung them in spiral swaths to fashion a cabin,
and moored it fast to the ground. In mufti not to be fathomed,
he draped the shape of *Kadmos* with timetested rustic vestments,
and, turning him out in this bogus livery, turned him into
a synthetic shepherd. To pilot *Typhoon* in his race to erasure,
he handed canny *Kadmos* his own beguiling *Panpipes*.

*Zeus*, then assembling the humbug herdsman and the winged driver
of procreant lust, imparted his single overall plan:

“*Please, Kadmos, pipe for life! Then heaven’s climate will clear.*
*But hold back only a bit, and Olympus loses its skin.*
*At present, Typhoon is equipped with the weapons I use in the sky;*
*all I have left is the aegis—and tell me, what possible good*
*can a goatskin cape do me in a fight when he’s stolen my thunder?*
*I’m frankly afraid of becoming a butt: Titanic titters*
*from old daddy Kronos...and I root in terror to think of the highborn*
*scorn of my stiffnecked opponent, Lapetos.*

*But most of all*
*I shudder at Greece, forever enceinte with the cheapest in fiction:*
*No doubt some Achaean will set up a shout of ‘Raingod Typhoon’—*
*or ‘Typhoon Who Rules On High’—or ‘Lord God Typhoon In The Highest’—*
*and roll my name in the mud.*

*Just play the good shepherd, Kadmos,*
till morning blushes again, and rescue The Shepherd Of All.
Pipe up a tune to addle the wits, to keep me from hearing
the echoing yawp of ‘Typhoon Who Accumulates Nubilous Clumps’
or the singlestick drumming thunder of one more brummagem Zeus.
His fighting with lightning, his battling with bolts has simply got
to stop. O great-great grandson [through Io, Inachos’ daughter],
display your pedigree now! Your pipes are pure panacea:
Spellbind the mind of Typhoon with a tricky tune and turn
a profit with music!
I offer a brace of blessings, bounty
unstinting for all your trouble. By my unilateral action
[1] lead Harmony back to the world;

—And now for you, O Eros, first sower of fertile wedlock:
The merest bend of your bow, and the world is no longer vagrant.
If you, as you shepherd life through love, are The Source of All,
then loose just one last shaft and preserve The Sum of Things!
Fit yourself out in your fire for Typhoon and summon back
my blazing bolts to my hand. No one is not your victim—
so burn this victim to ashes. Let fly your enchanted shaft
to bag a prey which Zeus himself could not bring down!
And may his wits twitch madly for Kadmos’ entrancing strains
as much as ever I did for Europä’s imperial lay.”

He spoke, and mounted aloft in the shape of a hithorned bull
[from which occurrence, of course, we derive the name Bull Mountain.]

—Meanwhile, his back in repose on the bole of an oak in the wooded
pasture, Kadmos twisted his reeds into fine adjustment,
tuned to a pitch of deceit. [But his clothes were authentic enough:
genuine cowherd, the best.] Then, swelling his cheeks to impel
the caressing breath, he dispatched an ensnaring air to light
on Typhoon’s right ear.

The Giant, a friend of the fine arts, jumped
to his snaky soles at the sound of this ravishing rondo. The flaming
hardware of Zeus he deposited low [¿down?] in a handy cave,
entrusting its care to his mother, Earth. Then off he glided
to track down, note by delectable note, the pipes’ seductive
theme, which seemed to live right next door.

And Kadmos saw him
reach the hedge.
This rather rattled the human, who hid in [?on?] a rocky niche[?]. However, our Monster, his heads held high—way high—perceived him skulking, and tried, with unvoiced becks and nods, to call him. [Typhoon did not perceive the hook behind the shrillness, the web of doom.] He peered the shepherd full in the eye, selected a right hand, stretched it out, and then, from his human face [the one in the very middle; ruddy as blood], he laughed and cracked the stillness with bombast:

"Hey, goatherd, why this terror? Why hide your eyes with your hand, kid? Do I resemble the sort of monster that flushes out mortals after he's bagged a Zeus, or follows up purloined lightning with poaching whistles? Oh, show some sense—there's no connection between his bolts from the blue and those stiff stalks that you blow. Don't worry. That instrument's yours; you keep it. Typhoon's got one of his own: the Olympian organ, plays by itself.

—But Zeus?

Sitting in silence, no cloud to call his own, and twiddling his thunderless thumbs, completely deprived of his natural noise—now, there's a god who could use your outfit. Give your reeds to him; they should make quite a bang.

—Those reeds, they're nothing.

To string them along with other reeds and swing them around—that's not my style. I'm more for clouds. I roll them up in a bundle with other clouds, and then let fly...and right on the beat, a fortissimo boom with echoes all over the sky.

—Look, what do you say to a friendly game? Intone a tune on your reeds; I'll render a crash on my thunder. Inflate your cheeks until they just in plumpness, and make your emouchure push; but Boreas blasts for me—my bolts rebound at the beat of his breath."
—Cowherd, why not give me your pipes? For a price:
When I take over the scepter from Zeus, and sit in the saddle
heaven’s throne, come along. Desert this earth for the sky.
I’ll settle you and your pipes in heaven . . . and even your flocks,
if you want: I refuse to break up a man and his herd. I’ll give
your goats a special spot on Capricorn’s back; a family
matter.

Or maybe down where Auriga drives his rig:
He shoves that splendid She-Goat along in the sky with a flick
of his shining wrist.

Your cows, now . . . well, there’s the Bull. A little
damp, but he’s got broad shoulders. If I made them stars, they’d rise
right there . . . or down by the turnaround rim, where the dew falls thick.
That’s where Lady Moon’s calves are mooving: windy, of course,
but a really vital sound.

Your hut? You won’t need that.
And forage? Bushes are out. Combine your flock with the Kids
that live in the sky [it’s a flashy group]. I’ll make them a stall,
a perfect match for the Asses’ Manger, just as shiny
and right next door.

If you turn star, you can stop cow-punching;
you can see we have Boötes. I’ll give you a star-studded staff;
try driving Kallisto’s Wagon.

Ever herd bear?

—Shepherd,
you are in luck! Typhoon, the son of heaven, extends you
a place at his table. Today, your tunes are earthbound; tomorrow,
Olympus rocks!

And play for pay:
Your face in lights,
your very own spot in Heaven’s Dress Circle. I can fix it.
But why play those pretty pipes a capella? The sky has a Harp—
I’ll arrange duets.
—Perhaps you’d like to get married? Leave it to me: There’s Athene . . .
A shade too holy? Don’t like gray eyes?

Take Leto, then . . .
Or Aphrodite?
Well, Artemis?
Charis?

Hebe, maybe?
But please, no request to bed Hera; she’s mine.

—Might be you’ve got a brother who follows the horses, good man with a team? The Sun’s got a four-horse outfit, and these are really firebreathers! Let him drive them.

—Seeing as you’re a goatherd . . .
Zeus has a goatskin cape, the Aegis. You want it? It’s yours, my treat. He’ll wear no armor when I reside on Olympus; that way, less worry.

Athene can keep her gear. No female’s worth the bother. What could she do?

—Hey, shepherd,

MUSIC!
A march:
The ‘HAIL-TO-THE-VICTOR-TYPHOON’-tune.
A hymn to Me, the New, Legitimate Lord of Olympus,
bearing the scepter of Zeus,

wearing his thunderbolt robes!”

He spoke, his words provoking a few terse notes from Nemesis’ pen.

And Kadmos knew: This clodpole son of the soil, smitten in mind by the exquisite sting of the rapturous reeds, sped by the suture of Fate, had willingly tripped the trap. He suppressed a smile and keened his reply in a cunning shout:
“I’m glad you enjoyed that piece from my pipes, but it’s really nothing. My proper instrument’s seven-string harp. So how would you like me to thrum you a victory anthem on that when you own the throne? I competed with Phoebus once, and, for all his heaven-made plectrums, ran rings around that god with my very own harp. But he’s an extremely bad sport: to keep his defeated son happy, his father Zeus had to launch a bolt and burn up my sweet-toned strings. Now they’re nothing but dust.

But there is a set of strings somewhere, with perfect body and tension—old sinews of Zeus’s. If I can find those hamstrings, I swear I will pluck a refrain to fascinate forests, to mesmerize mountains, to temper the temper of savage beasts. I’ll stop the very river of Ocean [old as the Earth, and set in his ways], I’ll make him reverse the course he wreathe around Earth’s edge and double his flood back in [¿on?] himself without leaving his bed. I’ll stay the stars, make planets pause, stop Sun, and freeze my Lady Moon’s axle.

One small request: When you smite Zeus and the other Gods with your fiery shaft, please spare Apollo the Archer; just him. And then, when Typhoon sits down at table to banquet, Phoebus and I will compete. We’ll find out who beats whom, when the theme is ‘TYPHOON IN ALL HIS GREATNESS’!

And please: Don’t murder the Muses. They move divinely; sing beautifully, too. They’re just the group to weave a soprano descant in concord with our [¿your?] manly bass when your humble shepherd or Phoebus leads the ensemble in dance.”

He spoke.

The Monster, glassy-eyed, nodded and quivered his curls. Each single hairstrand vomited viperous venom and sprinkled the hillpeaks. He course to his cave at a bound, reached in and lifted, extracted the sinews of Zeus, and presented canny Kadmos with a princey potlatch.
[Said hamstrings, of course, had come unstrung—sad loss—when Zeus was engaging Typhoon in lust for battle.]

The shifty shepherd tendered thanks for the gift that would keep on giving. He fondled the tendons with care, as befits prospective harpstrings, and cached them away in a rocky niche, expressly for use by Zeus the Giant-Killer.

In purposeful pucker, he tipped his lips to his pipes and breathed the slightest of sighs, squeezing the reeds to slits and sneaking the notes into being, musing a delicate strain:

\[\text{harmonc\ldots}\]

Typhoon, however, pricked up ear after ear to hear it, but knew it not: To the charmed and ecstatic Monster, the spurious shepherd beside him was piping impending confusion and rout to the deathless Gods . . . but Kadmos, in fact, was lauding in song the triumph of Zeus and crooning the doom of Typhoon to Typhoon as he sat hard by.

Æsthetics swelled into Æstrus.

\[\text{AS:}\]

An elegant, delicate youth, gone mad with passion, thrills in thrall to love’s fond wound at the side of a virgin his age, with many an amorous glance, now at the silvery grace and captivating curve of her face, now at a wanton ringlet escaped from her hair’s lush plenty, and now at a rosepetal hand, or feats his gaze on the blushing round of her breast so lusciously pressed by her bodice, or stares at her neck slipping in and out of bareness;
& AS:

he joys to send

his eye aroving over and over her lovely surface
in blind survey which knows no surfeit, and vows he never
will leave his maiden . . .

SO:

to the dulcet sweetness of Kadmos,
all consciousness, reason, and sense were yielded up by Typhoon.
NONNOY
DIONYCIAKWN
B'
nonnos of panopolis
dionysos
in his deeds

book two

In TWO, Typhoon ambles high,
Battling his way through the sky;
Fulgurant Zeus cannonades;
Olympus, in triumph, parades.
SO...

SITTING TIGHT in his site by the spinney's pasturing shank and whiffing his lips in undulant flux and reflux on the pipetips, our make-believe gaucho exhaled—Kadmos, Agenor's scion. But Zeus now, Kronos's scion, unseen and signless, in silence inserted himself in the grotto and once again armed his hands with their old, familiar fire. A mist masked Kadmos, and kept his rock under wraps:

Once detecting the cheatin' art of the underhand thunder thief, Typhoon might revise his mind and butcher that part-time shepherd.

For now, however, the Monster, twitching bewitched at Art's sweet spur, was lusting to listen to more and more of that irresistible beat.

AS WHEN:

Ein Schiffer im kleinen Schiffe gives ear to the rich Melodei
[Ach! how gewaltig!] [and Ach! how verschmitzt!] by a Siren gesungen:
At the yank of the Liebeslied's glamor, he races in premature traction to self-willed

Kismet.
No more for him the slashed wave’s splash,
no more the swathed sea’s froth, no more the combed blue’s foam
from oars unwaved and unwaving. Netted by Fate’s falsetto,
he drifts rejoicing, the rudder erased, the Pleiades’ sevenfold
warning effaced, the circular track of the Bear forgot—
and thinks [if he thinks at all] all nautical lore a lie.

SO:

The vibrant Giant, thrummed to a pitch of desire by the breath
of the tune in its cunning craft, embraced the pipes’ sweet shaft,
his guide on the road to ruin.

But Hark! A Hush!
Around
the euphonious herdsman the shadowy turban of cloud swirled closer.
It muffled the breathed-on reed and cut the Harmony short . . .

At a bound, the Monster resumed his abiding craze for combat
and tore to the grotto’s bottom. Berserk with frenzied panic,
he rummaged and groped for windwalking thunder, for grasless lightning.
He probed with a toe, he scoured with a sole in footloose search
for the scintillant spark of the purloined bolt . . .
But when he got there,
the cavern was bare.

And then too late did he wot the plot,
Kronides’ wily devices, the artful dodges of Kadmos.
Munitioned with scarps and crags, he aimed a leap at Olympus.
Trailing a rococo spoor from his foot’s reptilian sole,
he spat a venomous jet from the depths of his picador throat.
Raining cascades from the toxic locks of his high-held heads,
the Giant begat a swell and surge in the rocky arroyos.
At his gallop, Earth's foundations sank; the base beneath
the hollows of roughridged Tauros exploded in crashes, and made
Pamphylia's nearby hills go prancing in terrifieed shimmy.
Earth's chasms gave booms abysmal. The headlands shivered and shook
by the shore. The inmost recesses writhed. The coast receded
and slipped away as the sand dissolved at the earthquaking pulse
and throb of his feet.

No fields, no fauna, no thing there was
he left unhurt.

Carnivorous Bears made meal for his molars,
ground in the grisly jaws of Typhoon's ursine personas.
The tawny frames of Lions, hair and all, were a main dish
gulped down in one by the counterpart maws of his leonine heads.
A cold collation of earthfattened Snakes made dainty nosh
for viperoid gorge.

The Birds of heaven, faring on high
through air untrodden, discovered a sudden neighbor—a throat—
and furnished him dinner.

The handy Eagle, his dish of choice
(on the menu as Oiseau de Zeus), he devoured with jovial gusto . . .
and devoured the Ox at the plough, extending no whit of pity
to see its withers scored with the bloody track of the traces.

With one postprandial swig, he left the rivers dust,
and roughly rousted the Naiad brigades from their unmade beds.
Envision a Naiad:

This child of the depths now plods along
a pedestrian stream through walkable water, her limbs unmoistened,
unshod her feet . . . and comes to a stop:

The onetime Nymph
of the Damp Directions now flails and stamps her maidenly scles
at the thirsty path of the river . . . and sticks fast, knees impacted
high and dry in the prisoning mud.

An aging Shepherd
took one horrified look at the wildly ecletic visage
of the maddened Monster, discarded his Syrin, and hobbled away
at speed.

A Goatherd viewed the widespread bands of hands
and threw up his own, to the breezes entrusting his fluttery flute.
And the Laboring Ploughboy?

Now no more did he shround the seed
with soil, and now no more did he broadcast backhand the grain
on the new-scored ground, and now no more—since the managing spasm
of Typhoon’s hand had already gouged—did he gouge the glebe
with the earthshaking share . . .

But despaired, and broke up his team.

Sprayed with the Monster’s salvos, the ground split wide, denuding
the hollows beneath, and lancing their watery arteries. Up
from the opened abyss the nethermost channels bubbled and gushed
from the source in floods, long-stored water spurting in jets
from the Earth’s uncumbered nipples.
Crags were hurled on high,
to drop from the air in rocky torrents, parching the waters,
expunging the sea. [This earthy bombardment sowed itself
and rooted to shape the underpinnings of newborn islands.]

Trees—foundations and all—were fulcrumed forth from the Earth
to droop their callow fruit in the dirt; the freshleaved garden
was flattened and seared; the rose-speckled meadow dwindled to tinder;
and even the Wester Wind spun dizzy and dumb at the blows
rained up by the waterless fronds of cypresses whirling in place.

And oh! what a day for dirges:

A Whimper, molto con lamento,
indulged in by Phoebus, keening more keenly for Hyacinth’s havoc,
weaving a wail more mournful for far-off Amyclae’s debacle,
than ever he did for Daphne’s laurel felled at his feet.
A Plaint from Pan the Great in pain and pity for Pitys,
his sharply declining pin whom he, Pan, set to repotting.
A woeful Moan, as Our Lady Grey-Eyes, struck with recall of
her Olive beloved, broke into bawl at its shivered bole,
at the dole of its indwelling Attic nymph who once delivered
to her, its mistress, the city of Athens. A Threnody, throbbed
by the Peri of Paphos turned tears, Aphrodite, who melted in blubber
when her windflower rolled in the dust, spelling done for her darling Adonis,
when her bed of roses, shaved bald, shed its buds to encrust with dust,
and slashed at her soft coiffure in compassion. A Bleat from Demeter,
earth-mother diffused in demented lament at the unfinished finish
of half-grown wheat, postponing forever the Harvest Feast.
Inconsolate Sobs from the tree-nymphs, at one and the same crah-rend-rip
evicted from and de-siblinged of their ravaged cottages
and non-identical twins, mute bark of departed shades.
One madly disturbed Hamadryad sprang nude from her truncated laurel, her bushy companion since birth, while out of a lonesome pine striding forth in flight, another virgin materialized beside her neighbor and let down her hair, deciduous Nymph that she was, as follows:

"Hamadryad deaurelled, in defoliate fear
of deflowering, join me in journey; here, worse is yet to come:
Left alone, you might see Phoebus;
gone alone, I might scan Pan.

O Woodsman, Woodsman, spare these trees! Touch not with your axe
a single bough of the blighted bush that was hapless Daphne.
O Shipwright, shape no wrong!
Shiver no timbers!
Sever
no thankless planks from my frightened Pine for the flanks of a freighter
that someday may surge the swells of Aphrodite, Our Lady of Foam,
and ruffle her ripples!

O Woodsman, grant me the coup de grace:
Strike not my c-cone, but aim me your axe at m-mid-trunk,
and chop my b-breast with the virginal bronze of s-spouseless Athene,
and send me still chaste (better dead than w-wed!) to Hades—
like Pitys and Daphne, forever green with respect to Eros.

Such was the speech of the pine-nymph.

Finished, she plucked a few leaves
and devised an ersatz brassiere—oh, modest Nymph that she was!—
with whose fresh-picked enshrunding she veiled the globes of her breasts,
the while she crossed her legs, and riveted thigh to thigh.
Such depression attracted the eye of her neighbor, who shrieked out in comforting tones:

"I know what you mean. Congenital virgins like us are gifted at birth with unchastity’s check: prim, prime paranoia. Especially I, of Daphne’s stemma, now hotly traced, like Daphne’s self, on the run. The question is, Whither? Try crawling beneath a crag?

Well, no:

The lightning flung at the mountains flang at Olympus burned them to bits. And besides, these hills are the haunts of your Pan, whose lechery record is creepy! He’d caper at me in the very same way he goateed at Pitys (now, as you point out, a pinetree) or Syrinx (a roulade of reeds and wax) . . . I’d wane to nix at his sex attacks, become ex-, or shrink to a trace like Echo, a hill-ranging last retort, where never is heard a spontaneous word, and nothing besides. So, NO. No more do I dwell in blossom and leaf below the timberline. The strange device for me: EXCELSIOR!

Away aloft on the mountains; their peaks are still above water, their slopes are the happy hunting grounds of Artemis, Virgin DeLuxe . . . and yet, consider Callisto: Zeus made up as Artemis, Virgin DeCet, slipped under Callisto’s sheets, and shrank her chastity’s maiden defence to a bare minimum . . .

I guess I’ll try full fathom five: What coupling could single me out underwater?

—But hold: God Earthquake races along the briny’s bottom to grab Asteriē’s. A-bubble with lust. I’d better try air. With wings, now—oh, to have wings!—I’d lightly skim over the airways, and wend my route on the roads where goes each wind that blows—
but maybe the lightest wings
can supply only slightest safety:
Typhoon can clutch at the clouds
with his ladderless highsoaring hands . . . and that would give me pause.
But I can, should he force me to lawless and shameless embrace,

**metamorphose!**

I’ll hide as a bird among birds . . . Yes! Oh, to be fair Philomele!
That’s it!
I’ll flit as the swallow, a smallé fowlé makyng
crême of the Rose’s Romaunce, hearauntinge the flow’re-flect dewe,
eke dere to Zephirus in thatte Aprillé, whan that I voyce
my lyricke notes and chatter, sprinting in wing’d dance
thither and back to my nest on the roof, whilst sister Procne
in sadness and suffering—yeu, sweet nightingale Procne, may warble
your woe in melancholy mode for Itys your son, and I
will moan and rasp at my . . . rape!

O great god Zeus, I pray you,
keep me unswallowed, no bird—or else the vile King Tereus,
annoyed at his avian state, will fly me down . . .
like Typhoon.

The Air, the Peaks, the Deeps—no one of these affords
a place to run, much less to rest. Beneath and below
the Earth is my refuge . . .

Ain’t No Hidin’ Place Down Deah:
The lampreys
and vipers that crowd this ogre’s soles are invading the caves
that pock the underworld, spew venom wherever they squirm.
I’d really prefer to turn to water, a country fountain
as Comaetho did, when, in the first flush of her flowing, the joined
with
her
father
Cyd-
usssss . . .

actually, though, I’d rather not follow
the legend from source to debouchment . . . that would involve diluting
my virgin aqua purissima with the geysers of virginly, er, lust.

But what recourse have I left? Do I mate with the Monster TYPHOON
and bear it a manifold multiform otherly alien Monster,
taking after—no doubt—its daddy?

   On balance, NO. Let’s see:

I could stick to family trees, and shift from one to another,
maintaining a stemma that keeps its taxonomy free from any
and all suspicion of unladylike behavior. One danger:
I daren’t slip into a myrrh-tree, bedaunting myself with the sticky
residue of Myrrha’s incestuous passion.

   No, here’s my desire:
May I please become one of the Heliades, the poplars crowded
beside the banks of the plaintive Po? In diligent grief,
I will shed from my orbs a positive stream of amber tears
and spread my leafy clusters to mingle and clutch in sorrow
and sadness with those of the poplar next door—the while, of course,
I lament, not Phaethon their brother, but my longed-for chastity lost
in lament’s maneuvers . . .

   I’m sorry, laurel! I didn’t mean it!
I could never climb into another trunk after being yours.
Then what?

Niobe turned to stone; I can do that, too!
Be a stone with a groan, the object of pity to passing pilgrims . . .
But why should I pick as a pattern a rock with an acid tongue?
Forgive me, Leto. Wipe out forever the name that wars
with gods. It’s not for a Nymph who loathes fertility.”