

douglass parker

NONNOY

ΔIONYCIAKWN

Α'

nonnos of panopolis

dionysos  
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 *Pharos* 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,  
rending 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 lategotten *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 upborn 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, humpbacked, his airy passenger arid of brine,  
lightly limning his route with the splaytined fork of his flukes. . .*

## SO:

The bull carried cargo, with tensing, taughtening rumples.

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 skysown 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  
deep 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 ironshod split. Earthquake's minions sow no furrows.  
Ruminate, 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 yawp:

*"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),  
matching 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-moved 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, enclafed a springsource . . .

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

At this, from *Cilicia*, the monster

# ΤΥΦΟΟΝ!

[a.k.a. *Typho*, *Typhæus*, 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 *Boarspit*.

Locking *Zeus'* simmering missiles 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 *Oxherd*:  
 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,  
 dispatches his spraddled bands of hands on a widespread front,  
 and blankets the sky's unclouded silver blaze with his blitz—  
 the sidewinding 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 venomous cummerbunds, are belting  
*Boötes!*

—Another, espying Olympus's second *Serpent*,  
 essays 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 Moon'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 flusters 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 gouge 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:

## ZEOS Will Win.

So much for the sky.

*Typhoon* pounced down on *Corycius's* 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 *melée*.

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 glutted the sea till he strained its seams  
with his earthborn bulk and overbulk'd 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 impious  
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.

*Typhoon* 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 *Typhoon*'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 *pffft*, a *sotto voce* plop to a clapless echo. Air shriveled, and only one weazened 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  
bowman, 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 rush  
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 shing 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 longpreserved 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 halfsunken  
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, Iapetos.*

*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;  
[2] lead Harmonia off to wed.*

*—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 Europa's imperial lay."*

He spoke, and mounted aloft in the shape of a highhorned 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 mooing: 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 starstudded 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 wreathes 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 them, 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 princely 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:

harmongs . . .

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 Cēstrus.

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.*

douglass parker

NONNOY

ΔIONYCIAKWN

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 whiffling 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  
[Alch! how gewaltig!] [and Alch! 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 graspless 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 terrified 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 roused 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 soles  
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 eclectic visage  
of the maddened Monster, discarded his Syrin~~x~~, 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 shroud 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.

Craggs 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<sup>v</sup>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 delaurelled, 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 Pity's 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 enshrouding 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 DeCeit, 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 Asterië'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 Philomela!  
That's it!

I'll flit as the swallow, a smallë fowlë makyngë  
melodyë of the Rose's Romaunce, hearautinge the flow're-flect dewe,  
eke dere to Zephyrus in thatte Aprillë, whan that I voyce  
my lyrick notes and chatter, sprinting in winged dance  
thither and back to my nest on the roof, whilst sister Procne  
in sadness and suffering—you, sweet nightingale Procne, may warble  
your woe in melancholy mode for Itys your son, and I  
will moan and rasp at my . . . rape!

flect'd

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*

*fa-*

*ther*

*Cyd-*

*nussss . . .*

*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, bedaubing 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."*