

## Calliope

"Sing, O Muse!" they scream to the skies.  
They ask no questions, accept no replies.  
The Achaean ego, the Hellenic conceit!  
Hurl it to Hades to die at his feet!  
"Toss it to Tartarus!" Iphigenia weeps,  
"Like a stallion, my father runs and sleeps  
On Trojan grass with Trojan women.  
And spills the blood of eastern men."

Agamemnon! Affront to gods, daughter-slayer,  
Doth Artemis enjoy the stink of burning hair?  
Or how from the pyre her horror did ring  
—And they command me, "Sing?"  
Which daft agent told these Greek swine  
To order a Muse, that she might rhyme  
Or sing at their leisure, in awe of their deeds  
Or that she might play the lyre for their greed?  
Should I sing of their half-god warmonger—  
Son of the sea witch with his father's hunger?  
Even now he tussles, that he might devour  
A fruit which he stole from an orchard he soured.  
"Sing! Sing!" their bard throws his arms wide,  
But not of their hatred, their lust, or their pride.

These oxen of warfare forget my divinity  
These men who defile, and have no affinity  
For the honor won by the mind or the verse,  
Only that which is won by blood on the Earth.  
They throw their honor in brown Trojan mud  
And exalt only that which is taken by blood!  
I am the same as the poor sacrificed  
Iphigenia, whose life did not suffice  
To soothe the tides of the Achaean wrath  
Which floods all of Troy in a crimson bath.  
I am the same as the poor Helen stolen  
Over Paris' lust, and one apple golden.  
I am Chryseis the lovely, whom they returned  
Only after the plague of Apollo had burned  
Through them like kindling upon a great fire-  
Woe to them whom draw Phoebus' ire!  
I am Briseis, whom they scuffle to rape,  
And I am Thetis, whom Peleus did take.

"Sing! Sing! Sing!" they blast, trumpets a-roar,  
"Sing of the rage of Achilles, Achilles our lord!"  
But what of my rage? I wonder oft.

"Sing! Sing! Sing!" they shout, voices aloft,  
"Sing of the deeds of Achilles the strong!"  
But what of my strength? Does it get a song?  
"Sing of Achilles, that he may find fame!"  
I cannot but wonder: do they know *my* name?

## **Rut**

Midnight rises o'er gardens gray  
While lovers sleep and loners pray;  
Whence comes to you a warm illusion?  
Is it fate, or cruel confusion?  
One cannot know till future comes,  
Till crescendo sounds and beats the drums.  
Beyond the days of hope, you slither  
Into shadows where you wither.  
All while midnight turns to dawn,  
And with the sunlight then you yawn.  
What do you in this wilted hour,  
When dreams go dark and visions sour?  
Still, you pay the haunted tax  
As aspirations turn to wax.  
And then the daylight hits high noon  
As you wish for evening swift and soon,  
The sun then burns your vapid thoughts,  
To the ether where they rot.  
And humbly comes the evening cool,  
The daylight sets and dreamers pool  
Around their beds, to end the day:  
And midnight rises o'er gardens gray.

## **The Shoe**

Our love is the comfort of the old shoe—  
Broken in, it is molded neatly to my feet.  
I wear it contently, only here and there  
    Aware of its disrepair...  
Only sometimes remembering the threads  
    And treads run thin.  
The seams, it seems, will soon dissolve,  
And my toes, uncalloused, touch concrete.