Excerpt from the *Iliad*, Book 18, Lines 365-394. Attributed to Homer. Robert Fagles translation.

And now their entire army settled down to supper

but all night long the Argives raised Patroclus’ dirge.

And Achilles led them now in a throbbing chant of sorrow,

laying his man-killing hands on his great friend’s chest,

convulsed with bursts of grief. Like a bearded lion

whose pride of cubs a deer-hunter has snatched away,

out of some thick woods, and back he comes, too late,

and his heart breaks but he courses after the hunter,

hot on his tracks down glen on twisting glen—

where can he find him?—gripped by piercing rage…

so Achilles groaned, deeply, crying out to his Myrmidons,

“O my captains! How empty the promise I let fall

that day I reassured Menoetius in his house—

I promised the king I’d bring him back his son,

home to Opois, covered in glory, Troy sacked,

hauling his rightful share of plunder home, home.

But Zeus will never accomplish all our best-laid plans.

Look at us. Both doomed to stain red with our blood

the same plot of earth, a world away in Troy!

For not even *I* will voyage home again. Never.

No embrace in his halls from the old horseman Peleus

nor from mother, Thetis—this alien earth I stride

will hold me down at last.

But now, Patroclus,

since I will follow you underneath the ground,

I shall not bury you, no, not till I drag back here

the gear and head of Hector, who slaughtered you,

my friend, greathearted friend…

Here in front of your flaming pyre I’ll cut the throats

of a dozen sons of Troy in all their shining glory,

venting my rage on them for your destruction!