

Extract from Virgil, *The Aeneid*, Book 3, with reference to the Furies.

All but one. Perched on a beetling crag, Celaeno,  
prophet of doom—her shrieks erupted from her breast:  
"So war as well now? Gearing for battle, are you?  
You, sons of Laomedon, as if to atone  
for the butchery of our cattle, our young bulls?  
You'd force the innocent Harpies from their fathers' kingdom?  
Take what I say to heart and stamp it in your minds:  
this prophecy the almighty Father made to Phoebus  
and Phoebus made to me, the greatest of the Furies,  
and I reveal to you. Italy is the land you seek?  
You call on the winds to sweep you there by sea?  
To Italy you will go. Permitted to enter port  
but never granted a city girded round by ramparts,  
not before some terrible hunger and your attack on us—  
outrageous slaughter—drive you to gnaw your platters  
with your teeth!"

So Celaeno shrieked  
and taking flight, dashed back to the forest.  
The blood of my comrades froze with instant dread.  
Their morale sank, they lost all heart for war,  
pressing me now to pray, to beg for peace, whether  
our foes are goddesses, yes, or filthy, lethal birds.  
Then father Anchises, stretching his hands toward the sea,  
cries out to the Great Powers, pledging them their due rites:  
'Gods, ward off these threats. Gods, beat back disaster!  
Be gracious, guard your faithful.'"

Virgil, *The Aeneid*, translated by Robert Fagles (2006), New York: Viking. p.111-112.

Extract from Virgil, *The Aeneid*, Book 6, with reference to the Furies.

... Aeneas  
suddenly glances back and beneath a cliff to the left  
he sees an enormous fortress ringed with triple walls  
and raging around it all, a blazing flood of lava,  
Tartarus' River of Fire, whirling thunderous boulders.  
Before it rears a giant gate, its columns solid adamant,  
so no power of man, not even the gods themselves  
can root it out in war. An iron tower looms on high  
where Tisiphone, crouching with bloody shroud girt up,  
never sleeping, keeps her watch at the entrance night and day.  
Groans resound from the depths, the savage crack of the lash,  
the grating creak of iron, the clank of dragging chains.  
And Aeneas froze there, terrified, taking in the din:  
"What are the crimes, what kinds? Tell me, Sibyl,  
what are the punishments, why this scouring?  
Why such wailing echoing in the air?"

Virgil, *The Aeneid*, translated by Robert Fagles (2006),  
New York: Viking. p.200-201.

Extract from Virgil, *The Aeneid*, Book 7, with reference to the Furies.

...

the terrible goddess swooped down to the earth and stirred Allecto, mother of sorrows, up from her den where nightmare Furies lurk in hellish darkness. Allecto—a joy to her heart, the griefs of war, rage, and murderous plots, and grisly crimes. Even her father, Pluto, loathes the monster, even her own infernal sisters loathe her since she shifts into so many forms, their shapes so fierce, the black snakes of her hair that coil so thickly. Juno whips her on with a challenge like a lash: "Do me this service, virgin daughter of Night, a labor just for me! Don't let my honor, my fame be torn from its high place, or the sons of Aeneas bring Latinus round with their lures of marriage, besieging Italian soil. You can make brothers bound by love gear up for mutual slaughter, demolish a house with hatred, fill it to the roofs with scourges, funeral torches. You have a thousand names, a thousand deadly arts. Shake them out of your teeming heart, sunder their pact of peace, sow crops of murderous war! Now at a stroke make young men thirst for weapons, demand them, grasp them—now!"

In the next breath, bloated with Gorgon venom, Allecto launches out, first for Latium, King Latinus' lofty halls, and squats down at the quiet threshold of Amata seething with all a woman's anguish, fire and fury over the Trojans just arrived and Turnus' marriage lost. Allecto flings a snake from her black hair at the queen and thrusts it down her breast, the very depths of her heart, and the horror drives her mad to bring the whole house down. It glides between her robes and her smooth breasts but she feels nothing, no shudder of coils, senses nothing at all as the viper breathes its fire through the frenzied queen. The enormous snake becomes the gold choker around her throat, the raveling end of a headband braiding through her hair, writing over her body.

Virgil, *The Aeneid*, translated by Robert Fagles (2006), New York: Viking. p.224-225.

Extract from Virgil, *The Aeneid*, Book 12, with reference to the Furies.

His task accomplished,  
the Father turned his mind to another matter, set  
to dismiss Juturna from her brother's battles.  
They say there are twin Curses called the Furies . . .  
Night had born them once in the dead of darkness,  
one and the same spawn, and birthed infernal Megaera,  
wreathing all their heads with coiled serpents,  
fitting them out with wings that race the wind.  
They hover at Jove's throne, crouch at his gates  
to serve that savage king  
and whet the fears of afflicted men whenever  
the king of gods lets loose horrific deaths and plagues  
or panics towns that deserve the scourge of war.  
Jove sped one of them down the sky, commanding:  
"Cross Juturna's path as a wicked omen!"

Down she swoops, hurled to earth by a whirlwind,  
swift as a darting arrow whipped from a bowstring  
through the clouds, a shaft armed by a Parthian,  
tipped with deadly poison, shot by a Parthian  
or a Cretan archer—well past any cure—  
hissing on unseen through the rushing dark.  
So raced this daughter of Night and sped to earth.  
Soon as she spots the Trojan ranks and Turnus' lines  
she quickly shrinks into that small bird that often,  
hunched at dusk on deserted tombs and rooftops, sings o  
its ominous song in shadows late at night. Shrunken so,  
the demon flutters over and over again in Turnus' face,  
screeching, drumming his shield with its whirring wings.  
An eerie numbness unnerved him head to toe with dread,  
his hackles bristled in horror, voice choked in his throat.

Recognizing the Fury's ruffling wings at a distance,  
wretched Juturna tears her hair, nails clawing her face,  
fists beating her breast, and cries to her brother:  
"How, Turnus, how can your sister help you now?  
What's left for me now, after all I have endured?  
What skill do I have to lengthen out your life?  
How can I fight against this dreadful omen?  
At last, at last I leave the field of battle.  
Afraid as I am, now frighten me no more,  
you obscene birds of night! Too well I know  
the beat of your wings, the drumbeat of doom.  
Nor do the proud commands of Jove escape me now,  
our great, warm-hearted Jove. Are these his wages  
for taking my virginity? Why did he grant me life  
eternal—rob me of our one privilege, death?  
Then, for a fact, I now could end this agony,  
keep my brother company down among the shades.  
Doomed to live forever? Without you, my brother,  
what do I have still mine that's sweet to taste?  
If only the earth gaped deep enough to take me down,  
to plunge this goddess into the depths of hell!"

With that,  
shrouding her head with a gray-green veil and moaning low,  
down to her own stream's bed the goddess sank away.

All hot pursuit, Aeneas brandishes high his spear,  
that tree of a spear, and shouts from a savage heart:  
"More delay! Why now? Still in retreat, Turnus, why?"

This is no foot-race. It's savagery, swordplay cut-and-thrust!  
Change yourself into any shape you please, call up  
whatever courage or skill you still have left.  
Pray to wing your way to the starry sky  
or bury yourself in the earth's deep pits!"

Turnus shakes his head: "I don't fear you,  
you and your blazing threats, my fierce friend.  
It's the gods that frighten me—Jove, my mortal foe."

Virgil, *The Aeneid*, translated by Robert Fagles (2006), New York: Viking. p.383-384.

