

## **Dido's Last Day**

Melody Wauke, '17

I took you in, a shipwrecked stranger. I should've let you die.  
Or sent you off, straight away, to go seek your precious fate.  
How did you not see? Me, wretched, consumed by the fire,  
while you wandered through my city, ignorant of my wound.  
All this time, I've been sick, infected by your false love.  
How is it that I burned for you? You! Cold and incapable of care.  
I had long ago meant to swear off harboring care  
inside my swollen heart. I'd expected that side of me to die  
along with Sychaeus, snatched by savage fate.  
Then you appeared and I thought, perhaps, a fire  
warmed me once more. Desire? No, just a wound  
that spread silently inside me and I called "love,"  
while you devised plans to desert me. You claim that our love  
was imagined, that I possess a one-sided care.  
Tell me, when did all your compassion die?  
Was it when you abandoned your will to blind fate?  
If only, while beloved Troy burned and bled in furious fire,  
you too could have suffered some fatal wound  
and spared me from this pointless pain. Now I've wound  
up betrayed again, this time by the object of my love.  
Yet you, pitiless, but so proud in your piety, care  
so carefully about unclear prophecies, just so you can die  
with a glorious name. And truly now the gods fate  
me to die neglected, my former fame reduced by your fickle fire.  
Yes, you, reckless, have brought ruin and set fire  
to my Phoenician land. You depart, leaving a permanent wound  
on this city, once shining and cherished by the love  
of Juno. Our lofty walls now wither from neglected care  
and Carthage feels the sting of its queen, left to die  
by a coward, all too enamoured of his Italian fate.  
So this is it—now I come to learn my own fate:  
To heap up this pyre and at last, light on fire  
these vain gifts, eternal reminders of the wound  
left by an unfeeling man who defiled sacred love.  
If ever we meet in the realm of Dis, I'll be the one to care  
less about you, so careless, who let love and a lover die.

Sail away! Prove you don't care. Love  
your fate more than me. I, Dido will die by  
the fire, curing one wound with another.