

A Blossom of the Sea

Their vain attempts, their futile artifice.
I bade them pray for power from the gods
And wait for morn. Then, even where I sat,
I strung the sounding bow and sent a shaft
That hissing sped and passed the ports of steel
And cleft with brazen barb the door beyond.
Then leaping up I shot a bitter shaft
That pierced the throat of vaunting Antinous,
E'en as he quaffed a golden double cup:
Defiled with wine and streaming blood he fell.
Then forth broke all my long-imprisoned wrath;
I taunted them with all their shameless deeds,
And one by one, as wolves, I shot them down.
Then when the arrows failed, with sword and spear,
With loud triumphant shout, I smote them low;
I mocked the shrinking cowards in their death,
And gloated o'er their dying agonies.
Not one I spared. In heaps upon the floor
They lay like netted fish upon the beach.
Sweet is revenge to wrong-embittered soul!

"The aged matron warned Penelope,
Who, as I sat beside the brazier, came,
More stately, more divinely beautiful
Than when I brought her home a virgin bride.
In silence, now believing, doubting now,
She gazed and strove my image to recall
From misty memories of years ago,
Nor yielded hastily her cautious mind,
Suspicious of imposture and deceit.