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## The Last of Blood and Mire

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## **The Last of Blood and Mire<sup>1</sup>**

D.M. WILKINS

You are the poet, Euryalus, and I the proud guardian,  
but these words herein are engraved upon my heart.

So, now in the last as our spirits connect  
hear them and be sure of what you are to me.

You know it better than any other,  
that the heads of heroes are mounted above my mantle.  
Lionhearted behind Trojan armor, we have ravaged  
Greek fields afar as a force of one.

Listen now, My Love, as I will tell you what you  
have not known of garnered baubles  
I've carried in a tiny fabric sac beneath my breastplate  
as trinkets of good fortune with me into battle.

**LEGACY** SABRINA MENDOZA



The procured locket of a Greek officer that you vested to me,  
that day when chance first brought us to the same battlefield.

The folded piece of papyrus bearing My Warrior, Nisus,  
the first poem that ever you wrote for me.

And the lock of your braided, chestnut hair,  
lifted by my knife, while you slept upon my lap.

All these are the remnants of victory and love.  
And I relish reminiscing of the sentiment they carry.  
But the legacy of none among them outmatches  
how this final tribute will comfort my soul.

My Love, we always have known of our fate, to die as warriors do.  
Yet, as they encircle and handle you harshly, my eyes cannot withstand it.  
So, from the cover of the wooded thicket, I storm these Rutulians.  
I run, as fast and desperate as my battle proved legs will carry me.  
As it weighs me down, I tear off my breastplate and catch the fabric sac in hand.

And even as they mock me in my solitary ambush,  
I cannot be swayed by their sheer force in numbers.  
My sight is set on one, in the center of them,  
My Sweet Euryalus.

My chest bears the sharpened edges of their spearheads.  
It is no great matter, but a means to an end.  
Amid their circle, I feel their knife-blades at my back.  
But they can know no victory now. I already have won,  
as the sight of your face, Euryalus,  
is the last I want my eyes to know.

Your own eyes look on me in our waning moments of life.  
And I touch that warm blood running from your mouth.  
And as I feel your lips between my fingers,  
My Eternal Love, it is my ultimate victory!  
Now, reach out your hand for me, Sweet Euryalus  
and let us die in this field together.  
Indeed. Let us be one. Forever.

<sup>1</sup> *at the moment of their simultaneous deaths, a ballad from Nisus to Euryalus, two Trojan warrior lovers, accounted in Books 5 and 9 of Virgil's The Aeneid*