



Aeneid Book VI: A New Verse Translation

Seamus Heaney

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A melancholy masterpiece from one of the greatest poets of the century

In a momentous publication, Seamus Heaney's translation of Book VI of the *Aeneid*, Virgil's epic poem composed sometime between 29 and 19 BC, follows the hero, Aeneas, on his descent into the underworld. In *Stepping Stones*, a book of interviews conducted by Dennis O'Driscoll, Heaney acknowledged the significance of the poem to his writing, noting that "there's one Virgilian journey that has indeed been a constant presence, and that is Aeneas's venture into the underworld. The motifs in Book VI have been in my head for years--the golden bough, Charon's barge, the quest to meet the shade of the father."

In this new translation, Heaney employs the same deft handling of the original combined with the immediacy of language and sophisticated poetic voice as was on show in his translation of *Beowulf*, a reimagining which, in the words of James Wood, "created something imperishable and great that is stainless--stainless, because its force as poetry makes it untouchable by the claw of literalism: it lives singly, as an English language poem."

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