**Bk VIII:183-235 Daedalus and Icarus**

    Meanwhile Daedalus, hating Crete, and his long exile, and filled with a desire to stand on his native soil, was imprisoned by the waves. ‘He may thwart our escape by land or sea’ he said ‘but the sky is surely open to us: we will go that way: Minos rules everything but he does not rule the heavens’. So saying he applied his thought to new invention and altered the natural order of things. He laid down lines of feathers, beginning with the smallest, following the shorter with longer ones, so that you might think they had grown like that, on a slant. In that way, long ago, the rustic pan-pipes were graduated, with lengthening reeds. Then he fastened them together with thread at the middle, and bees’-wax at the base, and, when he had arranged them, he flexed each one into a gentle curve, so that they imitated real bird’s wings. His son, Icarus, stood next to him, and, not realising that he was handling things that would endanger him, caught laughingly at the down that blew in the passing breeze, and softened the yellow bees’-wax with his thumb, and, in his play, hindered his father’s marvellous work.

    When he had put the last touches to what he had begun, the artificer balanced his own body between the two wings and hovered in the moving air. He instructed the boy as well, saying ‘Let me warn you,Icarus, to take the middle way, in case the moisture weighs down your wings, if you fly too low, or if you go too high, the sun scorches them. Travel between the extremes. And I order you not to aim towards Bootes, the Herdsman, or Helice, the Great Bear, or towards the drawn sword ofOrion: take the course I show you!’ At the same time as he laid down the rules of flight, he fitted the newly created wings on the boy’s shoulders. While he worked and issued his warnings the ageing man’s cheeks were wet with tears: the father’s hands trembled.

    He gave a never to be repeated kiss to his son, and lifting upwards on his wings, flew ahead, anxious for his companion, like a bird, leading her fledglings out of a nest above, into the empty air. He urged the boy to follow, and showed him the dangerous art of flying, moving his own wings, and then looking back at his son. Some angler catching fish with a quivering rod, or a shepherd leaning on his crook, or a ploughman resting on the handles of his plough, saw them, perhaps, and stood there amazed, believing them to be gods able to travel the sky.

    And now Samos, sacred to Juno, lay ahead to the left (Delos and Paros were behind them), Lebinthos, and Calymne, rich in honey, to the right, when the boy began to delight in his daring flight, and abandoning his guide, drawn by desire for the heavens, soared higher. His nearness to the devouring sun softened the fragrant wax that held the wings: and the wax melted: he flailed with bare arms, but losing his oar-like wings, could not ride the air. Even as his mouth was crying his father’s name, it vanished into the dark blue sea, the Icarian Sea, called after him. The unhappy father, now no longer a father, shouted ‘Icarus, Icarus where are you? Which way should I be looking, to see you?’ ‘Icarus’ he called again. Then he caught sight of the feathers on the waves, and cursed his inventions. He laid the body to rest, in a tomb, and the island was named Icaria after his buried child.