[Achilles speaks:] "Listen carefully to every word I say. Win me my honor, my glory and my honor from all the Greeks, and, as their restitution, the girl Briseis, and many other gifts. But one you've driven the Trojans from the ships, you come back, no matter how much Hera's thundering husband lets you win. Any success you have against the Trojans will be at the expense of my honor. And if you get so carried away with killing the Trojans that you press on to Troy, one of the immortals may intervene. Apollo, for one, loves them dearly. So once you have made some daylight for the ships, you come back where you belong. The others can fight it out on the plain. O Patroclus, I wish to Father Zeus and to Athena and Apollo that all of them, Greeks and Trojans alike, every last man of them on Troy's dusty plain, were dead, and only you and I were left to rip Ilion down, stone by sacred stone."
First he put on his legs the shinguards — beautiful, and linked with silver clasps to hold them on. Next in turn he fastened around his chest the corselet, starry and elaborate, of swift-footed Akhilleus. Across his shoulders he slung a sword with silver nails, a bronze one, then above it a huge and heavy shield. Over his powerful head he set the well-made helmet with its horsehair crest, and the plumes nodded dreadfully above it. And he took up a pair of strong spears that fitted his hand's grip, only he did not take the spear of blameless Aiakides — heavy, huge and thick. No one else of the Akhaians could handle it, but Akhilleus alone knew how to wield it: made of Pelian ash, which Kheiron had given his dear father from the crest of Pelion, to be death to heroes.
[Zeus speaks:]  
"Fate has it that Sarpedon, whom I love more than any man, is to be killed by Patroclus. Shall I take him out of battle while he still lives and set him down in the rich land of Lycia, or shall I let him die under Patroclus' hands?"

And Hera, his lady, her eyes soft and wide:

"Son of Cronus, what a thing to say! A mortal man, whose fate has long been fixed, and you want to save him from ratting death? Do it, but don't expect all of us to approve. Listen to me, If you send Sarpedon home alive, you will have to expect the other gods to do the same and save their own sons..."

The father of gods and men agreed reluctantly, but shed drops of blood as rain upon the earth in honor of his own dear son...
But Phoebus Apollo had taken his stand on top of Troy's wall. Three times Patroclus reached the parapet, and three times Apollo's fingers flicked against the human's shield and pushed him off. But when he came back a fourth time, like a spirit from beyond, Apollo's voice split the daylight in two: "Get back, Patroclus, back where you belong. Troy is fated to fall, but not to you, nor even to Achilles, a better man by far."

And then Patroclus unleashed himself. Three times he charged into the Trojan ranks with the raw power of Ares, yelling coldly, and on each charge he killed nine men. But when you made your fourth, demonic charge, then—did you feel it, Patroclus?—out of the mist, your death coming to meet you. It was Apollo, whom you did not see in the thick of battle, standing behind you, and the flat of his hand found the space between your shoulder blades. The sky's blue disk went spinning in your eyes as Achilles' helmet rang beneath the horses' hooves and rolled in the dust—no, that couldn't be right—those handsome horsehair plumed grimed with blood, the gods would never have let that happen to the helmet that protected the head and graceful brow of divine Achilles. But the gods did let it happen, and Zeus would now give the helmet to Hector, whose own death was not far off.

Nothing was left of Patroclus' heavy battle spear but splintered wood, his tasselled shield and baldric fell to the ground, and Apollo, Prince of the Sky, split loose his breastplate. And he stood there, naked, astounded, his silvery limbs floating away, until one of the Trojans slipped up behind him and put his spear through, a boy named Euphorbus, the best of his age with a spear, mounted or on foot.
"So, Patroclus, you thought you could ransack my city and ship our women back to Greece to be our slaves. You little fool. They are defended by me, by Hector, by my horses and my spear. I am the one, Troy's best, who keeps their doom at bay. But you, Patroclus, the vultures will eat you on this very spot. Your marvelous Achilles has done you no good at all. I can just see it, him sitting in his tent and telling you as you left: 'Don't bother coming back to the ships, Patroclus, until you have ripped Hector's heart out through his bloody shirt.' That's what he said, isn't it? And you were stupid enough to listen."

And Patroclus, barely able to shake the words out: "Brag while you can, Hector. Zeus and Apollo have given you an easy victory this time. If they hadn't knocked off my armor, I could have made mincemeat of twenty of you. It was Fate, and Leto's son, who killed me. Of men, Euphorbus. You came in third at best. And one more thing for you to think over. You're not going to live long. I see Death standing at your shoulder, and you going down under the hands of Peleus' perfect son."

... He was dead when Hector said to him: "Why prophesy my death, Patroclus? Who knows? Achilles, son of Thetis, may go down first under my spear."