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BOOK I



Tell me, Muse, of the man of many ways, who was driven
far journeys, after he had sacked Troy's sacred citadel.
Many were they whose cities he saw, whose minds he learned of,
many the pains he suffered in his spirit on the wide sea,
5 struggling for his own life and the homecoming of his companions.
Even so he could not save his companions, hard though
he strove to; they were destroyed by their own wild recklessness,
fools, who devoured the oxen of Helios, the Sun God,
and he took away the day of their homecoming. From some point
10 here, goddess, daughter of Zeus, speak, and begin our story.
Then all the others, as many as fled sheer destruction,
were at home now, having escaped the sea and the fighting.
This one alone, longing for his wife and his homecoming,
was detained by the queenly nymph Kalypso, bright among goddesses,
15 in her hollowed caverns, desiring that he should be her husband.
But when in the circling of the years that very year came
in which the gods had spun for him his time of homecoming
to Ithaka, not even then was he free of his trials
nor among his own people. But all the gods pitied him
20 except Poseidon; he remained relentlessly angry
with godlike Odysseus, until his return to his own country.
But Poseidon was gone now to visit the far Aithiopians,
Aithiopians, most distant of men, who live divided,
some at the setting of Hyperion, some at his rising,

The council of the gods

- 25 to receive a hecatomb of bulls and rams. There
 he sat at the feast and took his pleasure. Meanwhile the other
 Olympian gods were gathered together in the halls of Zeus.
 First among them to speak was the father of gods and mortals,
 for he was thinking in his heart of stately Aigisthos,
 30 whom Orestes, Agamemnon's far-famed son, had murdered.
 Remembering him he spoke now before the immortals:
 'Oh for shame, how the mortals put the blame upon us
 gods, for they say evils come from us, but it is they, rather,
 who by their own recklessness win sorrow beyond what is given,
 35 as now lately, beyond what was given, Aigisthos married
 the wife of Atreus' son, and murdered him on his homecoming,
 though he knew it was sheer destruction, for we ourselves had told him,
 sending Hermes, the mighty watcher, Argeiphontes,
 not to kill the man, nor court his lady for marriage;
 40 for vengeance would come on him from Orestes, son of Atreides,
 whenever he came of age and longed for his own country.
 So Hermes told him, but for all his kind intention he could not
 persuade the mind of Aigisthos. And now he has paid for everything.'
 Then in turn the goddess gray-eyed Athene answered him:
 45 'Son of Kronos, our father, O lordliest of the mighty,
 Aigisthos indeed has been struck down in a death well merited.
 Let any other man who does thus perish as he did.
 But the heart in me is torn for the sake of wise Odysseus,
 unhappy man, who still, far from his friends, is suffering
 50 griefs, on the sea-washed island, the navel of all the waters,
 a wooded island, and there a goddess has made her dwelling place;
 she is daughter of malignant Atlas, who has discovered
 all the depths of the sea, and himself sustains the towering
 columns which bracket earth and sky and hold them together.
 55 This is his daughter; she detains the grieving, unhappy
 man, and ever with soft and flattering words she works to
 charm him to forget Ithaka; and yet Odysseus,
 straining to get sight of the very smoke uprising
 from his own country, longs to die. But you, Olympian,
 60 the heart in you is heedless of him. Did not Odysseus
 do you grace by the ships of the Argives, making sacrifice
 in wide Troy? Why, Zeus, are you now so harsh with him?'
 Then in turn Zeus who gathers the clouds made answer:

and the wrath of Poseidon

- 'My child, what sort of word escaped your teeth's barrier?
 65 How could I forget Odysseus the godlike, he who
 is beyond all other men in mind, and who beyond others
 has given sacrifice to the gods, who hold wide heaven?
 It is the Earth Encircler Poseidon who, ever relentless,
 nurses a grudge because of the Cyclops, whose eye he blinded;
 70 for Polyphemos like a god, whose power is greatest
 over all the Cyclopes. Thoösa, a nymph, was his mother,
 and she was daughter of Phorkys, lord of the barren salt water.
 She in the hollows of the caves had lain with Poseidon.
 For his sake Poseidon, shaker of the earth, although he does not
 75 kill Odysseus, yet drives him back from the land of his fathers.
 But come, let all of us who are here work out his homecoming
 and see to it that he returns. Poseidon shall put away
 his anger; for all alone and against the will of the other
 immortal gods united he can accomplish nothing.'
 80 Then in turn the goddess gray-eyed Athene answered him:
 'Son of Kronos, our father, O lordliest of the mighty,
 if in truth this is pleasing to the blessed immortals
 that Odysseus of the many designs shall return home, then
 let us dispatch Hermes, the guide, the slayer of Argos,
 85 to the island of Ogygia, so that with all speed
 he may announce to the lovely-haired nymph our absolute purpose,
 the homecoming of enduring Odysseus, that he shall come back.
 But I shall make my way to Ithaka, so that I may
 stir up his son a little, and put some confidence in him
 90 to summon into assembly the flowing-haired Achaians
 and make a statement to all the suitors, who now forever
 slaughter his crowding sheep and lumbering horn-curved cattle;
 and I will convey him into Sparta and to sandy Pylos
 to ask after his dear father's homecoming, if he can hear something,
 95 and so that among people he may win a good reputation.'
 Speaking so she bound upon her feet the fair sandals,
 golden and immortal, that carried her over the water
 as over the dry boundless earth abreast of the wind's blast.
 Then she caught up a powerful spear, edged with sharp bronze,
 100 heavy, huge, thick, wherewith she beats down the battalions of fighting
 men, against whom she of the mighty father is angered,
 and descended in a flash of speed from the peaks of Olympos,

and lighted in the land of Ithaka, at the doors of Odysseus
at the threshold of the court, and in her hand was the bronze spear.
105 She was disguised as a friend, leader of the Taphians, Mentos.
There she found the haughty suitors. They at the moment
in front of the doors were amusing their spirits with draughts games,
sitting about on skins of cattle whom they had slaughtered
themselves, and about them, of their heralds and hard-working henchmen,
110 some at the mixing bowls were combining wine and water,
while others again with porous sponges were wiping the tables
and setting them out, and others cutting meat in quantities.

Now far the first to see Athene was godlike Telemachos,
as he sat among the suitors, his heart deep grieving within him,
115 imagining in his mind his great father, how he might come back
and all throughout the house might cause the suitors to scatter,
and hold his rightful place and be lord of his own possessions.
With such thoughts, sitting among the suitors, he saw Athene
and went straight to the forecourt, the heart within him scandalized
120 that a guest should still be standing at the doors. He stood beside her
and took her by the right hand, and relieved her of the bronze spear,
and spoke to her and addressed her in winged words: 'Welcome, stranger.
You shall be entertained as a guest among us. Afterward,
when you have tasted dinner, you shall tell us what your need is.'

125 So speaking he led the way, and Pallas Athene followed him.
Now, when the two of them were inside the lofty dwelling,
he took the spear he carried and set it against a tall column
in a rack for spears, of polished wood, where indeed there were other
spears of patient-hearted Odysseus standing in numbers,
130 and he led her and seated her in a chair, with a cloth to sit on,
the chair splendid and elaborate. For her feet there was a footstool.
For himself, he drew a painted bench next her, apart from the others,
the suitors, for fear the guest, made uneasy by the uproar,
might lose his appetite there among overbearing people,
135 and so he might also ask him about his absent father.
A maidservant brought water for them and poured it from a splendid
and golden pitcher, holding it above a silver basin
for them to wash, and she pulled a polished table before them.
A grave housekeeper brought in the bread and served it to them,
140 adding many good things to it, generous with her provisions,
while a carver lifted platters of all kinds of meat and set them

in front of them, and placed beside them the golden goblets,
and a herald, going back and forth, poured the wine for them.

Then the haughty suitors came in, and all of them straightway
145 took their places in order on chairs and along the benches,
and their heralds poured water over their hands for them to wash with,
and the serving maids brought them bread heaped up in the baskets,
and the young men filled the mixing bowls with wine for their drinking.
They put their hands to the good things that lay ready before them.
150 But when they had put away their desire for eating and drinking,
the suitors found their attention turned to other matters,
the song and the dance; for these things come at the end of the feasting.
A herald put the beautifully wrought lyre in the hands
of Phemios, who sang for the suitors, because they made him.
155 He played his lyre and struck up a fine song. Meanwhile
Telemachos talked to Athene of the gray eyes, leaning
his head close to hers, so that none of the others might hear him:
'Dear stranger, would you be scandalized at what I say to you?
This is all they think of, the lyre and the singing. Easy
160 for them, since without penalty they eat up the substance
of a man whose white bones lie out in the rain and fester
somewhere on the mainland, or roll in the wash of the breakers.
If they were ever to see him coming back to Ithaka
all the prayer of them all would be to be lighter on their feet
165 instead of to be richer men for gold and clothing.
As it is, he has died by an evil fate, and there is no comfort
left for us, not even though some one among mortals
tells us he will come back. His day of homecoming has perished.
But come now, tell me this and give me an accurate answer.
170 What man are you, and whence? Where is your city? Your parents?
What kind of ship did you come here on? And how did the sailors
bring you to Ithaka? What men do they claim that they are?
For I do not think you could have traveled on foot to this country.
And tell me this too, tell me truly, so that I may know it.
175 Are you here for the first time, or are you a friend of my father's
from abroad? Since many other men too used to come and visit
our house, in the days when he used to go about among people.'
Then in turn the goddess gray-eyed Athene answered him:
'See, I will accurately answer all that you ask me.
180 I announce myself as Mentos, son of Anchialos

Athene disapproves of the suitors

- the wise, and my lordship is over the oar-loving Taphians.
 Now I have come in as you see, with my ship and companions
 sailing over the wine-blue water to men of alien language,
 to Temese, after bronze, and my cargo is gleaming iron.
- 185 And my ship stands near by, at the country, away from the city,
 at the harbor, Rheithron, underneath wooded Neion.
 Your father and I claim to be guest-friends by heredity
 from far back, as you would know if you went to the aged hero
 190 Laertes, who, they say, no longer comes to the city
 now, but away by himself on his own land leads a hard life
 with an old woman to look after him, who serves him his victuals
 and drink, at the times when the weariness has befallen his body
 from making his toilsome way on the high ground of his vineyard.
 Now I have come. They told me he was here in this country,
 195 your father, I mean. But no. The gods are impeding his passage.
 For no death on the land has befallen the great Odysseus,
 but somewhere, alive on the wide sea, he is held captive,
 on a sea-washed island, and savage men have him in their keeping,
 rough men, who somehow keep him back, though he is unwilling.
- 200 Now, I will make you a prophecy, in the way the immortals
 put it into my mind, and as I think it will come out,
 though I am no prophet, nor do I know the ways of birds clearly.
 He will not long be absent from the beloved land of his fathers,
 even if the bonds that hold him are iron, but he will be thinking
 205 of a way to come back, since he is a man of many resources.
 But come now tell me this and give me an accurate answer.
 Are you, big as you are, the very child of Odysseus?
 Indeed, you are strangely like about the head, the fine eyes,
 as I remember; we used to meet so often together
- 210 before he went away to Troy, where others beside him
 and the greatest of the Argives went in their hollow vessels.
 Since that time I have not seen Odysseus nor has he seen me.
 Then the thoughtful Telemachos said to her in answer:
 'See, I will accurately answer all that you ask me.
 215 My mother says indeed I am his. I for my part
 do not know. Nobody really knows his own father.
 But how I wish I could have been rather son to some fortunate
 man, whom old age overtook among his possessions.
 But of mortal men, that man has proved the most ill-fated

and Telemachos explains

- 220 whose son they say I am: since you question me on this matter.'
 Then in turn the goddess gray-eyed Athene answered him:
 'The gods have not made yours a birth that will go nameless
 hereafter, since Penelope bore such a son as you are.
 But come now, tell me this and give me an accurate answer.
- 225 What feast is this, what gathering? How does it concern you?
 A festival, or a wedding? Surely, no communal dinner.
 How insolently they seem to swagger about in their feasting
 all through the house. A serious man who came in among them
 could well be scandalized, seeing much disgraceful behavior.'
- 230 Then the thoughtful Telemachos said to her in answer:
 'My guest, since indeed you are asking me all these questions,
 there was a time this house was one that might be prosperous
 and above reproach, when a certain man was here in his country.
 But now the gods, with evil intention, have willed it otherwise,
 235 and they have caused him to disappear, in a way no other
 man has done. I should not have sorrowed so over his dying
 if he had gone down among his companions in the land of the Trojans,
 or in the arms of his friends, after he had wound up the fighting.
 So all the Achaians would have heaped a grave mound over him,
 240 and he would have won great fame for himself and his son hereafter.
 But now ingloriously the stormwinds have caught and carried him
 away, out of sight, out of knowledge, and he left pain and lamentation
 to me. Nor is it for him alone that I grieve in my pain now.
 No longer. For the gods have inflicted other cares on me.
- 245 For all the greatest men who have the power in the islands,
 in Doulichion and Same and in wooded Zakynthos,
 and all who in rocky Ithaka are holders of lordships,
 all these are after my mother for marriage, and wear my house out.
 And she does not refuse the hateful marriage, nor is she able
 250 to make an end of the matter; and these eating up my substance
 waste it away; and soon they will break me myself to pieces.'
- Pallas Athene answered him in great indignation:
 'Oh, for shame. How great your need is now of the absent
 Odysseus, who would lay his hands on these shameless suitors.
- 255 I wish he could come now to stand in the outer doorway
 of his house, wearing a helmet and carrying shield and two spears,
 the way he was the first time that ever I saw him
 in our own house, drinking his wine and taking his pleasure,

Telemachos is to search for news of his father

- coming in from Ephyre and from Ilos son of Mermeros.
- 260 Odysseus, you see, had gone there also in his swift ship
in search of a poison to kill men, so he might have it
to smear on his bronze-headed arrows, but Ilos would not
give him any, since he feared the gods who endure forever.
But my father did give it to him, so terribly did he love him.
- 265 I wish that such an Odysseus would come now among the suitors.
They all would find death was quick, and marriage a painful matter.
Yet all these are things that are lying upon the gods' knees:
whether he will come home to his vengeance, here in his household,
or whether he will not. Rather I will urge you to consider
- 270 some means by which you can force the suitors out of your household.
Come now, pay close attention to me and do as I tell you.
Tomorrow, summon the Achaian warriors into assembly
and publish your word to all, let the gods be your witnesses.
Tell the suitors to scatter and go back to their own holdings,
275 and as for your mother, if the spirit urges her to be married,
let her go back to the palace of her powerful father,
and they shall appoint the marriage and arrange for the wedding presents
in great amount, as ought to go with a beloved daughter.
But for yourself, I will counsel you shrewdly, and hope you will listen.
- 280 Fit out a ship with twenty oars, the best you can come by,
and go out to ask about your father who is so long absent,
on the chance some mortal man can tell you, who has listened to Rumor
sent by Zeus. She more than others spreads news among people.
First go to Pylos, and there question the great Nestor,
285 and from there go over to Sparta to see fair-haired Menelaos,
since he came home last of all the bronze-armored Achaians.
Thus if you hear your father is alive and on his way home,
then, hard pressed though you are, you should still hold out for another
year. But if you hear he has died and lives no longer,
- 290 then make your way home to the beloved land of your fathers,
and pile up a tomb in his honor, and there make sacrifices
in great amount, as is fitting. And give your mother to a husband.
Then, after you have made an end of these matters, and done them,
next you must consider well in your heart and spirit
- 295 some means by which you can kill the suitors who are in your household,
by treachery or open attack. You should not go on
clinging to your childhood. You are no longer of an age to do that.

Enter Penelope

- Or have you not heard what glory was won by great Orestes
among all mankind, when he killed the murderer of his father,
300 the treacherous Aigisthos, who had slain his famous father?
So you too, dear friend, since I can see you are big and splendid,
be bold also, so that in generations to come they will praise you.
But now it is time for me to go back down to my fast ship
and my companions, who must be very restless waiting
- 305 for me. Let all this be on your mind, and do as I tell you.'
Then the thoughtful Telemachos said to her in answer:
'My guest, your words to me are very kind and considerate,
what any father would say to his son. I shall not forget them.
But come now, stay with me, eager though you are for your journey,
310 so that you may first bathe and take your ease and, well rested
and happy in your heart, then go back to your ship with a present,
something prized, altogether fine, which will be your keepsake
from me, what loving guests and hosts bestow on each other.'
- Then in turn the goddess gray-eyed Athene answered him:
- 315 'Do not detain me longer, eager as I am for my journey;
and that gift, whatever it is your dear heart bids you give me,
save it to give when I come next time, so I can take it
home; and choose a good one, and a fair exchange will befall you.'
- So spoke the goddess gray-eyed Athene, and there she departed
320 like a bird soaring high in the air, but she left in his spirit
determination and courage, and he remembered his father
even more than he had before, and he guessed the meaning,
and his heart was full of wonder, for he thought it was a divinity.
At once he went over, a godlike man, to sit with the suitors.
- 325 The famous singer was singing to them, and they in silence
sat listening. He sang of the Achaians' bitter homecoming
from Troy, which Pallas Athene had inflicted upon them.
- The daughter of Ikarios, circumspect Penelope,
heard and heeded the magical song from her upper chamber,
330 and descended the high staircase that was built in her palace,
not all alone, since two handmaidens went to attend her.
When she, shining among women, came near the suitors,
she stood by the pillar that supported the roof with its joinery,
holding her shining veil in front of her face, to shield it,
335 and a devoted attendant was stationed on either side of her.
All in tears she spoke then to the divine singer:

'Phemios, since you know many other actions of mortals and gods, which can charm men's hearts and which the singers celebrate, sit beside them and sing one of these, and let them in silence
 340 go on drinking their wine, but leave off singing this sad song, which always afflicts the dear heart deep inside me, since the unforgettable sorrow comes to me, beyond others, so dear a head do I long for whenever I am reminded of my husband, whose fame goes wide through Hellas and midmost Argos.'

345 Then the thoughtful Telemachos said to her in answer: 'Why, my mother, do you begrudge this excellent singer his pleasing himself as the thought drives him? It is not the singers who are to blame, it must be Zeus is to blame, who gives out to men who eat bread, to each and all, the way he wills it.

350 There is nothing wrong in his singing the sad return of the Danaans. People, surely, always give more applause to that song which is the latest to circulate among the listeners.

So let your heart and let your spirit be hardened to listen. Odysseus is not the only one who lost his homecoming day at Troy. There were many others who perished, besides him.
 355 Go therefore back in the house, and take up your own work, the loom and the distaff, and see to it that your handmaidens ply their work also; but the men must see to discussion, all men, but I most of all. For mine is the power in this household.'

360 Penelope went back inside the house, in amazement, for she laid the serious words of her son deep away in her spirit, and she went back to the upper story with her attendant women, and wept for Odysseus, her beloved husband, until gray-eyed Athene cast sweet slumber over her eyelids.

365 But the suitors all through the shadowy halls were raising a tumult, and all prayed for the privilege of lying beside her, until the thoughtful Telemachos began speaking among them: 'You suitors of my mother, overbearing in your rapacity, now let us dine and take our pleasure, and let there be no shouting, since it is a splendid thing to listen to a singer
 370 who is such a singer as this man is, with a voice such as gods have. Then tomorrow let us all go to the place of assembly, and hold a session, where I will give you my forthright statement, that you go out of my palace and do your feasting elsewhere,

375 eating up your own possessions, taking turns, household by household. But if you decide it is more profitable and better to go on, eating up one man's livelihood, without payment, then spoil my house. I will cry out to the gods everlasting in the hope that Zeus might somehow grant a reversal of fortunes.

380 Then you may perish in this house, with no payment given.' So he spoke, and all of them bit their lips, in amazement at Telemachos and the daring way he had spoken to them.

It was Antinoös the son of Eupheithes who answered: 'Telemachos, surely it must be the very gods who prompt you
 385 to take the imperious line and speak so daringly to us. I hope the son of Kronos never makes you our king in seagirt Ithaka. Though to be sure that is your right by inheritance.'

Then the thoughtful Telemachos said to him in answer: 'Antinoös, in case you wonder at what I am saying,
 390 I would be willing to take that right, if Zeus should give it. Do you think that is the worst thing that could happen to anyone? It is not bad to be a king. Speedily the king's house grows prosperous, and he himself has rank beyond others.

But in fact there are many other Achaian princes, young and old, in seagirt Ithaka, any of whom might
 395 hold this position, now that the great Odysseus has perished. But I will be the absolute lord over my own household and my servants, whom the great Odysseus won by force for me.'

Then in turn Eurymachos, son of Polybos, answered:
 400 'Telemachos, these matters, and which of the Achaians will be king in seagirt Ithaka, are questions that lie on the gods' knees. But I hope you keep your possessions and stay lord in your own household. May the man never come who against your will and by force shall drive
 you

away from your holdings, while Ithaka is a place still lived in.
 405 But, best of men, I wish to ask you about this stranger, where he came from, what country he announces as being his own, where lies his parent stock, and the fields of his fathers. Has he brought some message from your father who is on his way here? Or did he arrive pursuing some matter of his own business?

410 How suddenly he started away and vanished, and did not wait to be made known. He was no mean man, by the look of him.' Then the thoughtful Telemachos said to him in answer:

'Eurymachos, there is no more hope of my father's homecoming.
I believe no messages any more, even should there be one,
415 nor pay attention to any prophecy, those times my mother
calls some diviner into the house and asks him questions.
This stranger is a friend of my father's. He comes from Taphos
and announces himself as Mentès, the son of Anchialos
the wise. And he is lord of the lovers of the oar, the Taphians.'
420 So spoke Telemachos, but in his heart he knew the immortal
goddess. The others, turning to the dance and the delightful
song, took their pleasure and awaited the coming of evening,
and the black evening came on as they were taking their pleasure.
Then they went home to go to bed, each to his own house,
425 but Telemachos went where, off the splendid courtyard, a lofty
bedchamber had been built for him, in a sheltered corner.
There he went to go to bed, his heart full of problems,
and devoted Eurykleia went with him, and carried the flaring
torches. She was the daughter of Ops the son of Peisenor,
430 and Laertes had bought her long ago with his own possessions
when she was still in her first youth, and gave twenty oxen for her,
and he favored her in his house as much as his own devoted
wife, but never slept with her, for fear of his wife's anger.
She now carried the flaring torches for him. She loved him
435 more than the other maidservants, and had nursed him when he was
little.
He opened the doors of the close-compacted bedchamber,
and sat down on the bed and took off his soft tunic
and put it into the hands of the sagacious old woman,
and she in turn folded the tunic, and took care of it for him,
440 and hung it up on a peg beside the corded bedstead.
Then she went out of the room, and pulled the door to behind her
with a silver hook, and with a strap drew home the door bolt.
There, all night long, wrapped in a soft sheepskin, he pondered
in his heart the journey that Pallas Athene had counseled.

BOOK II



Now when the young Dawn showed again with her rosy fingers,
the dear son of Odysseus stirred from where he was sleeping,
and put on his clothes, and slung a sharp sword over his shoulder.
Underneath his shining feet he bound the fair sandals
5 and went on his way from the chamber, like a god in presence.
He gave the word now to his clear-voiced heralds to summon
by proclamation to assembly the flowing-haired Achaians,
and the heralds made their cry, and the men were assembled swiftly.
Now when they were all assembled in one place together,
10 he went on his way to assembly, in his hands holding a bronze spear,
not all alone, but a pair of light-footed dogs went with him.
Athene drifted an enchantment of grace upon him,
and all the people had their eyes on him as he came forward.
He sat in his father's seat, and the elders made way before him.
15 The first now to speak to them was the hero Aigyptios,
who was bent over with age, and had seen things beyond number.
His own dear son, Antiphos the spearman, had gone off
with godlike Odysseus to Ilion, land of good horses,
in the hollow ships, and now the wild Cyclops had killed him
20 deep in his cave, and this was the last man he had eaten.
He had three other sons. One of them, Eurynomos,
went with the suitors; the other two kept the estates of their
fathers.

BOOK V



Now Dawn rose from her bed, where she lay by haughty Tithonos,
carrying light to the immortal gods and to mortals,
and the gods came and took their places in session, and among them
Zeus who thunders on high, and it is his power that is greatest,
5 and Athene spoke to them of the many cares of Odysseus,
remembering. Though he was in the nymph's house, she still thought of
him:

'Father Zeus, and all other blessed gods everlasting,
no longer now let one who is a sceptered king be eager
to be gentle and kind, be one whose thought is schooled in justice,
10 but let him always rather be harsh, and act severely,
seeing the way no one of the people he was lord over
remembers godlike Odysseus, and he was kind, like a father.
But now he lies away on an island suffering strong pains
in the palace of the nymph Kalypso, and she detains him
15 by constraint, and he cannot make his way to his country,
for he has not any ships by him, nor any companions
who can convey him back across the sea's wide ridges.
And now there are those who are determined to murder his dear son
on his way home. He went in quest of news of his father
20 to Pylos the sacrosanct and to glorious Lakedaimon.'

Then in turn Zeus who gathers the clouds made answer:
'My child, what sort of word has escaped your teeth's barrier?
For is not this your own intention, as you have counseled it,

how Odysseus shall make his way back, and punish those others?
25 Then bring Telemachos home skillfully, since you can do this,
so that all without harm he can come back to his own country
while the suitors in their ship come back with nothing accomplished.'

He spoke, and then spoke directly to his beloved son, Hermes:
'Hermes, since for other things also you are our messenger,
30 announce to the nymph with the lovely hair our absolute purpose:
the homecoming of enduring Odysseus, that he shall come back
by the convoy neither of the gods nor of mortal people,
but he shall sail on a jointed raft and, suffering hardships,
on the twentieth day make his landfall on fertile Scheria
35 at the country of the Phaiakians who are near the gods in origin,
and they will honor him in their hearts as a god, and send him
back, by ship, to the beloved land of his fathers,
bestowing bronze and gold in abundance upon him, and clothing,
more than Odysseus could ever have taken away from Troy, even
40 if he had escaped unharmed with his fair share of the plunder.
For so it is fated that he shall see his people and come back
to his house with the high roof and to the land of his fathers.'

He spoke, nor disobeyed him the courier Argeiphontes.
Immediately he bound upon his feet the fair sandals,
45 golden and immortal, that carried him over the water
as over the dry boundless earth abreast of the wind's blast.
He caught up the staff, with which he mazes the eyes of those mortals
whose eyes he would maze, or wakes again the sleepers. Holding
this in his hands, strong Argeiphontes winged his way onward.
50 He stood on Pieria and launched himself from the bright air
across the sea and sped the wave tops, like a shearwater
who along the deadly deep ways of the barren salt sea
goes hunting fish and sprays quick-beating wings in the salt brine.
In such a likeness Hermes rode over much tossing water.
55 But after he had made his way to the far-lying island,
he stepped then out of the dark blue sea, and walked on over
the dry land, till he came to the great cave, where the lovely-haired
nymph was at home, and he found that she was inside. There was
a great fire blazing on the hearth, and the smell of cedar
60 split in billets, and sweetwood burning, spread all over
the island. She was singing inside the cave with a sweet voice
as she went up and down the loom and wove with a golden shuttle.

Kalypso's island

There was a growth of grove around the cavern, flourishing,
 alder was there, and the black poplar, and fragrant cypress,
 65 and there were birds with spreading wings who made their nests in it,
 little owls, and hawks, and birds of the sea with long beaks
 who are like ravens, but all their work is on the sea water;
 and right about the hollow cavern extended a flourishing
 growth of vine that ripened with grape clusters. Next to it
 70 there were four fountains, and each of them ran shining water,
 each next to each, but turned to run in sundry directions;
 and round about there were meadows growing soft with parsley
 and violets, and even a god who came into that place
 would have admired what he saw, the heart delighted within him.
 75 There the courier Argeiphontes stood and admired it.
 But after he had admired all in his heart, he went in
 to the wide cave, nor did the shining goddess Kalypso
 fail to recognize him when she saw him come into her presence;
 for the immortal gods are not such as to go unrecognized
 80 by one another, not even if one lives in a far home.
 But Hermes did not find great-hearted Odysseus indoors,
 but he was sitting out on the beach, crying, as before now
 he had done, breaking his heart in tears, lamentation, and sorrow,
 as weeping tears he looked out over the barren water.
 85 But Kalypso, shining among goddesses, questioned Hermes
 when she had seated him on a chair that shone and glittered:
 'How is it, Hermes of the golden staff, you have come to me?
 I honor you and love you; but you have not come much before this.
 Speak what is in your mind. My heart is urgent to do it
 90 if I can, and if it is a thing that can be accomplished.
 But come in with me, so I can put entertainment before you.'
 So the goddess spoke, and she set before him a table
 which she had filled with ambrosia, and mixed red nectar for him.
 The courier, Hermes Argeiphontes, ate and drank then,
 95 but when he had dined and satisfied his hunger with eating,
 then he began to speak, answering what she had asked him:
 'You, a goddess, ask me, a god, why I came, and therefore
 I will tell you the whole truth of the tale. It is you who ask me.
 It was Zeus who told me to come here. I did not wish to.
 100 Who would willingly make the run across this endless
 salt water? And there is no city of men nearby, nor people

Hermes tells her to let Odysseus go

who offer choice hecatombs to the gods, and perform sacrifice.
 But there is no way for another god to elude the purpose
 of aegis-bearing Zeus or bring it to nothing. He says
 105 you have with you the man who is wretched beyond all the other
 men of all those who fought around the city of Priam
 for nine years, and in the tenth they sacked the city and set sail
 for home, but on the voyage home they offended Athene,
 who let loose an evil tempest and tall waves against them.
 110 Then all the rest of his excellent companions perished,
 but the wind and the current carried him here and here they drove him.
 Now Zeus tells you to send him on his way with all speed.
 It is not appointed for him to die here, away from his people.
 It is still his fate that he shall see his people and come back
 115 to his house with the high roof and to the land of his fathers.'
 So he spoke, and Kalypso, shining among divinities,
 shuddered, and answered him in winged words and addressed him:
 'You are hard-hearted, you gods, and jealous beyond all creatures
 beside, when you are resentful toward the goddesses for sleeping
 120 openly with such men as each has made her true husband.
 So when Dawn of the rosy fingers chose out Orion,
 all you gods who live at your ease were full of resentment,
 until chaste Artemis of the golden throne in Ortygia
 came with a visitation of painless arrows and killed him;
 125 and so it was when Demeter of the lovely hair, yielding
 to her desire, lay down with Iasion and loved him
 in a thrice-turned field, it was not long before this was made known
 to Zeus, who struck him down with a cast of the shining thunderbolt.
 So now, you gods, you resent it in me that I keep beside me
 130 a man, the one I saved when he clung astride of the keel board
 all alone, since Zeus with a cast of the shining thunderbolt
 had shattered his fast ship midway on the wine-blue water.
 Then all the rest of his excellent companions perished,
 but the wind and the current carried him here and here they drove him,
 135 and I gave him my love and cherished him, and I had hopes also
 that I could make him immortal and all his days to be endless.
 But since there is no way for another god to elude the purpose
 of aegis-bearing Zeus or bring it to nothing, let him go,
 let him go, if he himself is asking for this and desires it,
 140 out on the barren sea; but I will not give him conveyance,

for I have not any ships by me nor any companions
 who can convey him back across the sea's wide ridges;
 but I will freely give him my counsel and hold back nothing,
 so that all without harm he can come back to his own country.'

145 Then in turn the courier Argeiphontes answered her:

'Then send him accordingly on his way, and beware of the anger
 of Zeus, lest he hold a grudge hereafter and rage against you.'

So spoke powerful Argeiphontes, and there he left her,
 while she, the queenly nymph, when she had been given the message

150 from Zeus, set out searching after great-hearted Odysseus,
 and found him sitting on the the seashore, and his eyes were never
 wiped dry of tears, and the sweet lifetime was draining out of him,
 as he wept for a way home, since the nymph was no longer pleasing

155 in the hollow caverns, against his will, by one who was willing,
 but all the days he would sit upon the rocks, at the seaside,
 breaking his heart in tears and lamentation and sorrow

as weeping tears he looked out over the barren water.
 She, bright among divinities, stood near and spoke to him:

160 'Poor man, no longer mourn here beside me nor let your lifetime
 fade away, since now I will send you on, with a good will.

So come, cut long timbers with a bronze ax and join them
 to make a wide raft, and fashion decks that will be on the upper
 side, to carry you over the misty face of the water.

165 Then I will stow aboard her bread and water and ruddy
 wine, strength-giving goods that will keep the hunger from you,
 and put clothing on you, and send a following stern wind after,
 so that all without harm you can come back to your own country,
 if only the gods consent. It is they who hold wide heaven.

170 And they are more powerful than I to devise and accomplish.'

So she spoke to him, but long-suffering great Odysseus
 shuddered to hear, and spoke again in turn and addressed her:

'Here is some other thing you devise, O goddess; it is not
 conveyance, when you tell me to cross the sea's great open

175 space on a raft. That is dangerous and hard. Not even
 balanced ships rejoicing in a wind from Zeus cross over.
 I will not go aboard any raft without your good will,
 nor unless, goddess, you can bring yourself to swear me a great oath
 that this is not some painful trial you are planning against me.'

180 So he spoke, and Kalypso, shining among divinities,
 smiled and stroked him with her hand and spoke to him and named him:
 'You are so naughty, and you will have your own way in all things.
 See how you have spoken to me and reason with me.

185 Earth be my witness in this, and the wide heaven above us,
 and the dripping water of the Styx, which oath is the biggest
 and most formidable oath among the blessed immortals,
 that this is no other painful trial I am planning against you,
 but I am thinking and planning for you just as I would do it
 for my own self, if such needs as yours were to come upon me;
 190 for the mind in me is reasonable, and I have no spirit
 of iron inside my heart. Rather, it is compassionate.

So she spoke, a shining goddess, and led the way swiftly,
 and the man followed behind her walking in the god's footsteps.

195 They made their way, the man and the god, to the hollow cavern,
 and he seated himself upon the chair from which Hermes lately
 had risen, while the nymph set all manner of food before him
 to eat and drink, such things as mortal people feed upon.
 She herself sat across the table from godlike Odysseus,
 and her serving maids set nectar and ambrosia before her.

200 They put their hands to the good things that lay ready before them.
 But after they had taken their pleasure in eating and drinking,
 the talking was begun by the shining goddess Kalypso:

'Son of Laertes and seed of Zeus, resourceful Odysseus,
 are you still all so eager to go on back to your own house

205 and the land of your fathers? I wish you well, however you do it,
 but if you only knew in your own heart how many hardships
 you were fated to undergo before getting back to your country,
 you would stay here with me and be the lord of this household
 and be an immortal, for all your longing once more to look on
 210 that wife for whom you are pining all your days here. And yet
 I think that I can claim that I am not her inferior
 either in build or stature, since it is not likely that mortal
 women can challenge the goddesses for build and beauty.'

Then resourceful Odysseus spoke in turn and answered her:

215 'Goddess and queen, do not be angry with me. I myself know
 that all you say is true and that circumspect Penelope
 can never match the impression you make for beauty and stature.
 She is mortal after all, and you are immortal and ageless.

But even so, what I want and all my days I pine for
 220 is to go back to my house and see my day of homecoming.
 And if some god batters me far out on the wine-blue water,
 I will endure it, keeping a stubborn spirit inside me,
 for already I have suffered much and done much hard work
 on the waves and in the fighting. So let this adventure follow.
 225 So he spoke, and the sun went down and the darkness came over.
 These two, withdrawn in the inner recess of the hollowed cavern,
 enjoyed themselves in love and stayed all night by each other,
 But when the young Dawn showed again with her rosy fingers,
 Odysseus wrapped himself in an outer cloak and a tunic,
 230 while she, the nymph, mantled herself in a gleaming white robe
 fine-woven and delightful, and around her waist she fastened
 a handsome belt of gold, and on her head was a wimple.
 She set about planning the journey for great-hearted Odysseus.
 She gave him a great ax that was fitted to his palms and headed
 235 with bronze, with a double edge each way, and fitted inside it
 a very beautiful handle of olive wood, well hafted;
 then she gave him a well-finished adze, and led the way onward
 to the far end of the island where there were trees, tall grown,
 alder and black poplar and fir that towered to the heaven,
 240 but all gone dry long ago and dead, so they would float lightly.
 But when she had shown him where the tall trees grew, Kalypso,
 shining among divinities, went back to her own house
 while he turned to cutting his timbers and quickly had his work finished.
 He threw down twenty in all, and trimmed them well with his bronze ax,
 245 and planed them expertly, and trued them straight to a chalkline.
 Kalypso, the shining goddess, at that time came back, bringing him
 an auger, and he bored through them all and pinned them together
 with dowels, and then with cords he lashed his raft together.
 And as great as is the bottom of a broad cargo-carrying
 250 ship, when a man well skilled in carpentry fashions it, such was
 the size of the broad raft made for himself by Odysseus.
 Next, setting up the deck boards and fitting them to close uprights
 he worked them on, and closed in the ends with sweeping gunwales.
 Then he fashioned the mast, with an upper deck fitted to it,
 255 and made in addition a steering oar by which to direct her,
 and fenced her in down the whole length with wattles of osier
 to keep the water out, and expended much timber upon this.

Next Kalypso, the shining goddess, brought out the sail cloth
 to make the sails with, and he carefully worked these also,
 260 and attached the straps and halyards and sheets all in place aboard her,
 and then with levers worked her down to the bright salt water.
 It was the fourth day and all his work was finished. Then on
 the fifth day shining Kalypso saw him off from the island
 when she had bathed him and put fragrant clothing upon him,
 265 and the goddess put two skins aboard, one filled with dark wine
 and the other, the big one, filled with water, and put on provisions
 in a bag, and stored there many good things to keep a man's strength up,
 and sent a following wind to carry him, warm and easy.
 Glorious Odysseus, happy with the wind, spread sails
 270 and taking his seat artfully with the steering oar he held her
 on her course, nor did sleep ever descend on his eyelids
 as he kept his eye on the Pleiades and late-setting Boötes,
 and the Bear, to whom men give also the name of the Wagon,
 who turns about in a fixed place and looks at Orion,
 275 and she alone is never plunged in the wash of the Ocean.
 For so Kalypso, bright among goddesses, had told him
 to make his way over the sea, keeping the Bear on his left hand.
 Seventeen days he sailed, making his way over the water,
 and on the eighteenth day there showed the shadowy mountains
 280 of the Phaiakian land where it stood out nearest to him,
 and it looked like a shield lying on the misty face of the water.
 Coming back from the Aithiopians the strong Earthshaker
 saw him from far on the mountains of the Solymoi. He was visible
 sailing over the sea. Poseidon was the more angered
 285 with him, and shook his head, and spoke to his own spirit:
 'For shame, surely the gods have rashly changed their intentions
 about Odysseus while I was away in the Aithiopians'
 land, and he nears the Phaiakian country where it is appointed
 that he shall escape this great trial of misery that is now his.
 290 But I think I can still give him a good full portion of trouble.'
 He spoke, and pulled the clouds together, in both hands gripping
 the trident, and staggered the sea, and let loose all the stormblasts
 of all the winds together, and huddled under the cloud scuds
 land alike and the great water. Night sprang from heaven.
 295 East Wind and South Wind clashed together, and the bitter blown West
 Wind

Poseidon wrecks the raft

and the North Wind borr. in the bright air rolled up a heavy sea.
 The knees of Odysseus gave way for fear, and the heart inside him,
 and deeply troubled he spoke to his own great-hearted spirit:
 'Ah me unhappy, what in the long outcome will befall me?'
 300 I fear the goddess might have spoken the truth in all ways
 when she said that on the sea and before I came to my country
 I would go through hardships; now all this is being accomplished,
 such clouds are these, with which Zeus is cramming the wide sky
 and has staggered the sea, and stormblasts of winds from every
 305 direction are crowding in. My sheer destruction is certain.
 Three times and four times happy those Danaans were who died then
 in wide Troy land, bringing favor to the sons of Atreus,
 as I wish I too had died at that time and met my destiny
 on the day when the greatest number of Trojans threw their bronze-
 headed
 310 weapons upon me, over the body of perished Achilleus,
 and I would have had my rites and the Achaians given me glory.
 Now it is by a dismal death that I must be taken.'
 As he spoke so, a great wave drove down from above him
 with a horrible rush, and spun the raft in a circle,
 315 and he was thrown clear far from the raft and let the steering oar
 slip from his hands. A terrible gust of stormwinds whirling
 together and blowing snapped the mast tree off in the middle,
 and the sail and the upper deck were thrown far and fell in the water.
 He himself was ducked for a long time, nor was he able
 320 to come up quickly from under the great rush of the water,
 for the clothing which divine Kalypso had given weighted him
 down. At last he got to the surface, and spat the bitter
 salt sea water that drained from his head, which was filled with it.
 But he did not forget about his raft, for all his trouble,
 325 but turned and swam back through the waves, and laid hold of it,
 and huddled down in the middle of it, avoiding death's end.
 Then the waves tossed her about the current now here, now there;
 as the North Wind in autumn tumbles and tosses thistledown
 along the plain, and the bunches hold fast one on another,
 330 so the winds tossed her on the great sea, now here, now there,
 and now it would be South Wind and North that pushed her between
 them,
 and then again East Wind and West would burst in and follow.

but Leukothea rescues Odysseus

The daughter of Kadmos, sweet-stepping Ino called Leukothea,
 saw him. She had once been one who spoke as a mortal,
 335 but now in the gulfs of the sea she holds degree as a goddess.
 She took pity on Odysseus as he drifted and suffered hardship,
 and likening herself to a winged gannet she came up
 out of the water and perched on the raft and spoke a word to him:
 'Poor man, why is Poseidon the shaker of the earth so bitterly
 340 cankered against you, to give you such a harvest of evils?
 And yet he will not do away with you, for all his anger.
 But do as I say, since you seem to me not lacking in good sense.
 Take off these clothes, and leave the raft to drift at the winds' will,
 and then strike out and swim with your hands and make for a landfall
 345 on the Phaiakian country, where your escape is destined.
 And here, take this veil, it is immortal, and fasten it under
 your chest; and there is no need for you to die, nor to suffer.
 But when with both your hands you have taken hold of the mainland,
 untie the veil and throw it out in the wine-blue water
 350 far from the land; and turn your face away as you do so.'
 So spoke the goddess and handed him the veil, then herself
 in the likeness of a gannet slipped back into the heaving
 sea, and the dark and tossing water closed above her.
 Now long-suffering great Odysseus pondered two courses,
 355 and troubled he spoke then to his own great-hearted spirit:
 'Ah me, which of the immortals is weaving deception
 against me, and tells me to put off from the raft? But no,
 I will not do it yet, since I have seen with my own eyes
 that the shore, where she said I could escape, is still far from me.
 360 But here is what I will do, and this seems to me the best way.
 As long as the timbers hold together and the construction
 remains, I will stay with it and endure though suffering hardships;
 but once the heaving sea has shaken my raft to pieces,
 then I will swim. There is nothing better that I can think of.'
 365 Now as he was pondering these ways in his heart and spirit,
 Poseidon, shaker of the earth, drove on a great wave,
 that was terrible and rough, and it curled over and broke down
 upon him, and as when the wind blows hard on a dry pile
 of chaff, and scatters it abroad in every direction,
 370 so the raft's long timbers were scattered, but now Odysseus
 sat astride one beam, like a man riding on horseback,

and stripped off the clothing which the divine Kalypso had given him,
and rapidly tied the veil of Ino around his chest, then
threw himself head first in the water, and with his arms spread
375 stroked as hard as he could. The strong Earthshaker saw him
swimming, and shook his head and spoke to his own spirit:
'There, now, drift on the open sea, suffering much trouble,
until you come among certain people who are the gods' fosterlings.
Even so, I hope you will not complain that I stinted your hardships.'

380 So he spoke, and laid the lash on his fair-maned horses,
and made his way to Aigai, where he has his fabulous palace.
But now Athene, daughter of Zeus, planned what was to follow.
She fastened down the courses of all the rest of the stormwinds,
and told them all to go to sleep now and to give over,

385 but stirred a hastening North Wind, and broke down the seas before him,
until Zeus-sprung Odysseus, escaping death and the spirits
of death, might join the company of oar-loving Phaiakians.
Then he was driven two nights and two days on the heavy
seas, and many times his heart foresaw destruction,
390 but when Dawn with the lovely hair had brought the third morning,
then at last the gale went down and windless weather
came on, and now he saw the land lying very close to him
as he took a sharp look, lifted high on the top of a great wave.
And as welcome as the show of life again in a father
395 is to his children, when he has lain sick, suffering strong pains,
and wasting long away, and the hateful death spirit has brushed him,
but then, and it is welcome, the gods set him free of his sickness,
so welcome appeared land and forest now to Odysseus,
and he swam, pressing on, so as to set foot on the mainland.

400 But when he was as far away as a voice can carry
he heard the thumping of the sea on the jagged rock-teeth,
for a big surf, terribly sucked up from the main, was crashing
on the dry land, all was mantled in salt spray, and there were
no harbors to hold ships, no roadsteads for them to ride in,
405 but promontories out-thrust and ragged rock-teeth and boulders.
The knees of Odysseus gave way for fear, and the heart inside him,
and deeply troubled he spoke to his own great-hearted spirit:
'Ah me, now that Zeus has granted a sight of un hoped-for
land, and now I have made the crossing of this great distance,
410 I see no way for me to get out of the gray sea water,

for on the outer side are sharp rocks, and the surf about them
breaks and roars, and the sheer of the cliff runs up above them,
and the sea is deep close in shore so that there is no place
to stand bracing on both my feet and so avoid trouble.

415 I fear that as I climb out a great wave will catch and throw me
against the stony cliff. That will be a pitiful landing.
Yet if I try to swim on along in the hope of finding
beaches that slant against the waves or harbors for shelter
from the sea, I fear that once again the whirlwind will snatch me
420 and carry me out on the sea where the fish swarm, groaning heavily,
or else the divinity from the deep will let loose against me
a sea monster, of whom Amphitrite keeps so many;
for I know how bitterly the renowned Earthshaker hates me.'

Now as he was pondering this in his heart and spirit,
425 meanwhile a great wave carried him against the rough rock face,
and there his skin would have been taken off, his bones crushed together,
had not the gray-eyed goddess Athene sent him an inkling,
and he frantically caught hold with both hands on the rock face
and clung to it, groaning, until the great wave went over. This one
430 he so escaped, but the backwash of the same wave caught him
where he clung and threw him far out in the open water.
As when an octopus is dragged away from its shelter
the thickly-clustered pebbles stick in the cups of the tentacles,
so in contact with the rock the skin from his bold hands
435 was torn away. Now the great sea covered him over,
and Odysseus would have perished, wretched, beyond his destiny,
had not the gray-eyed goddess Athene given him forethought.
He got clear of the surf, where it sucks against the land, and swam on
along, looking always toward the shore in the hope of finding
440 beaches that slanted against the waves or harbors for shelter
from the sea, but when he came, swimming along, to the mouth of
a sweet-running river, this at last seemed to him the best place,
being bare of rocks, and there was even shelter from the wind there.
He saw where the river came out and prayed to him in his spirit:
445 'Hear me, my lord, whoever you are. I come in great need
to you, a fugitive from the sea and the curse of Poseidon;
even for immortal gods that man has a claim on their mercy
who comes to them as a wandering man, in the way that I now
come to your current and to your knees after much suffering.

450 Pity me then, my lord. I call myself your suppliant.
 He spoke, and the river stayed his current, stopped the waves breaking,
 and made all quiet in front of him and let him get safely
 into the outlet of the river. Now he flexed both knees
 and his ponderous hands; his very heart was sick with salt water,
 455 and all his flesh was swollen, and the sea water crusted stiffly
 in his mouth and nostrils, and with a terrible weariness fallen
 upon him he lay unable to breathe or speak in his weakness.
 But when he got his breath back and the spirit regathered into
 his heart, he at last unbound the veil of the goddess from him,
 460 and let it go, to drift in the seaward course of the river,
 and the great wave carried it out on the current, and presently Ino
 took it back into her hands. Odysseus staggered from the river
 and lay down again in the rushes and kissed the grain-giving soil.
 Then deeply troubled he spoke to his own great-hearted spirit:
 465 'What will happen now, and what in the long outcome will befall me?
 For if I wait out the uncomfortable night by the river,
 I fear that the female dew and the evil frost together
 will be too much for my damaged strength, I am so exhausted,
 and in the morning a chilly wind will blow from the river;
 470 but if I go up the slope and into the shadowy forest,
 and lie down to sleep among the dense bushes, even if the chill
 and weariness let me be, and a sweet sleep comes upon me,
 I fear I may become spoil and prey to the wild animals.'
 In the division of his heart this last way seemed best,
 475 and he went to look for the wood and found it close to the water
 in a conspicuous place, and stopped underneath two bushes
 that grew from the same place, one of shrub, and one of wild olive,
 and neither the force of wet-blowing winds could penetrate these
 nor could the shining sun ever strike through with his rays, nor yet
 480 could the rain pass all the way through them, so close together
 were they grown, interlacing each other; and under these now Odysseus
 entered, and with his own hands heaped him a bed to sleep on,
 making it wide, since there was great store of fallen leaves there,
 enough for two men to take cover in or even three men
 485 in the winter season, even in the very worst kind of weather.
 Seeing this, long-suffering great Odysseus was happy,
 and lay down in the middle, and made a pile of leaves over him.
 As when a man buries a burning log in a black ash heap

in a remote place in the country, where none live near as neighbors,
 490 and saves the seed of fire, having no other place to get a light
 from, so Odysseus buried himself in the leaves, and Athene
 shed a sleep on his eyes so as most quickly to quit him,
 by veiling his eyes, from the exhaustion of his hard labors.

BOOK VI



So long-suffering great Odysseus slept in that place
in an exhaustion of sleep and weariness, and now Athene
went her way to the district and city of the Phaiakian
men, who formerly lived in the spacious land, Hypereia,
5 next to the Cyclopes, who were men too overbearing,
and who had kept harrying them, being greater in strength. From here
godlike Nausithoös had removed and led a migration,
and settled in Scheria, far away from men who eat bread,
and driven a wall about the city, and built the houses,
10 and made the temples of the gods, and allotted the holdings.
But now he had submitted to his fate, and gone to Hades',
and Alkinoös, learned in designs from the gods, now ruled there.
It was to his house that the gray-eyed goddess Athene
went, devising the homecoming of great-hearted Odysseus,
15 and she went into the ornate chamber, in which a girl
was sleeping, like the immortal goddesses for stature and beauty,
Nausikaa, the daughter of great-hearted Alkinoös,
and beside her two handmaidens with beauty given from the Graces
slept on either side of the post with the shining doors closed.
20 She drifted in like a breath of wind to where the girl slept,
and came and stood above her head and spoke a word to her,
likening herself to the daughter of Dymas, famed for seafaring,
a girl of the same age, in whom her fancy delighted.
In this likeness the gray-eyed Athene spoke to her:

Nausikaa is inspired to go and wash the clothes

25 'Nausikaa, how could your mother have a child so careless?
The shining clothes are lying away uncared for, while your
marriage is not far off, when you should be in your glory
for clothes to wear, and provide too for those who attend you.
It is from such things that a good reputation among people
30 springs up, giving pleasure to your father and the lady your mother.
So let us go on a washing tomorrow when dawn shows. I too
will go along with you and help you. so you can have all
done most quickly, since you will not long stay unmarried.
For already you are being courted by all the best men
35 of the Phaiakians hereabouts, and you too are a Phaiakian.
So come, urge your famous father early in the morning
to harness the mules and wagon for you, and it shall carry
the sashes and dresses and shining coverlets for you. In this way
it will be so much more becoming than for you to go there
40 on foot, for the washing places are a long way from the city.'
So the gray-eyed Athene spoke and went away from her
to Olympos, where the abode of the gods stands firm and unmoving
forever, they say, and is not shaken with winds nor spattered
with rains, nor does snow pile ever there, but the shining bright air
45 stretches cloudless away, and the white light glances upon it.
And there, and all their days, the blessed gods take their pleasure.
There the Gray-eyed One went, when she had talked with the young girl.
And the next the Dawn came, throned in splendor, and wakened the
well-robed
girl Nausikaa, and she wondered much at her dreaming,
50 and went through the house, so as to give the word to her parents,
to her dear father and her mother. She found them within there;
the queen was sitting by the fireside with her attendant
women, turning sea-purple yarn on a distaff; her father
she met as he was going out the door to the council
55 of famed barons, where the proud Phaiakians used to summon him.
She stood very close up to her dear father and spoke to him:
'Daddy dear, will you not have them harness me the wagon,
the high one with the good wheels, so that I can take the clothing
to the river and wash it? Now it is lying about, all dirty,
60 and you yourself, when you sit among the first men in council
and share their counsels, ought to have clean clothing about you;
and also, you have five dear sons who are grown in the palace,

Odysseus awakened by Nausikaa

two of them married, and the other three are sprightly bachelors,
and they are forever wanting clean fresh clothing, to wear it
65 when they go to dance, and it is my duty to think about all this.'

So she spoke, but she was ashamed to speak of her joyful
marriage to her dear father, but he understood all and answered:
'I do not begrudge you the mules, child, nor anything
else. So go, and the serving men will harness the wagon,
70 the high one with the good wheels that has the carrying basket.'

He spoke, and gave the order to the serving men. These obeyed,
and brought the mule wagon with good wheels outside and put it
together, and led the mules under the yoke and harnessed them,
and the girl brought the bright clothing out from the inner chamber
75 and laid it in the well-polished wagon. Meanwhile her mother
put in a box all manner of food, which would preserve strength,
and put many good things to eat with it, and poured out
wine in a goatskin bottle, and her daughter put that in the wagon.
She gave her limpid olive oil in a golden oil flask
80 for her and her attendant women to use for anointing.
Nausikaa took up the whip and the shining reins, then
whipped them into a start and the mules went noisily forward
and pulled without stint, carrying the girl and the clothing.
She was not alone. The rest, her handmaidens, walked on beside her.

85 Now when they had come to the delightful stream of the river,
where there was always a washing place, and plenty of glorious
water that ran through to wash what was ever so dirty,
there they unyoked the mules and set them free from the wagon,
and chased them out along the bank of the swirling river
90 to graze on the sweet river grass, while they from the wagon
lifted the wash in their hands and carried it to the black water,
and stamped on it in the basins, making a race and game of it
until they had washed and rinsed all dirt away, then spread it
out in line along the beach of the sea, where the water
95 of the sea had washed the most big pebbles up on the dry shore.
Then they themselves, after bathing and anointing themselves with olive
oil,
ate their dinner all along by the banks of the river
and waited for the laundry to dry out in the sunshine.
But when she and her maids had taken their pleasure in eating,
100 they all threw off their veils for a game of ball, and among them

and the girls at play

it was Nausikaa of the white arms who led in the dancing;
and as Artemis, who showers arrows, moves on the mountains
either along Taygetos or on high-towering
Erymanthos, delighting in boars and deer in their running,
105 and along with her the nymphs, daughters of Zeus of the aegis,
range in the wilds and play, and the heart of Leto is gladdened,
for the head and the brows of Artemis are above all the others,
and she is easily marked among them, though all are lovely,
so this one shone among her handmaidens, a virgin unwedded.

110 But now, when she was about ready once more to harness
the mules, and fold the splendid clothing, and start on the way home,
then the gray-eyed goddess Athene thought what to do next;
how Odysseus should awake, and see the well-favored young girl,
and she should be his guide to the city of the Phaiakians.

115 Now the princess threw the ball toward one handmaiden,
and missed the girl, and the ball went into the swirling water,
and they all cried out aloud, and noble Odysseus awakened
and sat up and began pondering in his heart and his spirit:
'Ah me, what are the people whose land I have come to this time,
120 and are they violent and savage, and without justice,
or hospitable to strangers, with a godly mind? See now
how an outcry of young women echoes about me,
of nymphs, who keep the sudden and sheer high mountain places
and springs of the rivers and grass of the meadows, or am I truly
125 in the neighborhood of human people I can converse with?
But come now, I myself shall see what I can discover.'

So speaking, great Odysseus came from under his thicket,
and from the dense foliage with his heavy hand he broke off
a leafy branch to cover his body and hide the male parts,
130 and went in the confidence of his strength, like some hill-kept lion,
who advances, though he is rained on and blown by the wind, and both
eyes
kindle; he goes out after cattle or sheep, or it may be
deer in the wilderness, and his belly is urgent upon him
to get inside of a close steading and go for the sheepflocks.

135 So Odysseus was ready to face young girls with well-ordered
hair, naked though he was, for the need was on him; and yet
he appeared terrifying to them, all crusted with dry spray,
and they scattered one way and another down the jutting beaches.

Odysseus supplicates Nausikaa

Only the daughter of Alkinoös stood fast, for Athene
 140 put courage into her heart, and took the fear from her body,
 and she stood her ground and faced him, and now Odysseus debated
 whether to supplicate the well-favored girl by clasping
 her knees, or stand off where he was and in words of blandishment
 ask if she would show him the city, and lend him clothing.
 145 Then in the division of his heart this way seemed best to him,
 to stand well off and supplicate in words of blandishment,
 for fear that, if he clasped her knees, the girl might be angry.
 So blandishingly and full of craft he began to address her:
 'I am at your knees, O queen. But are you mortal or goddess?
 150 If indeed you are one of the gods who hold wide heaven,
 then I must find in you the nearest likeness to Artemis
 the daughter of great Zeus, for beauty, figure, and stature.
 But if you are one among those mortals who live in this country,
 three times blessed are your father and the lady your mother,
 155 and three times blessed your brothers too, and I know their spirits
 are warmed forever with happiness at the thought of you, seeing
 such a slip of beauty taking her place in the chorus of dancers;
 but blessed at the heart, even beyond these others, is that one
 who, after loading you down with gifts, leads you as his bride
 160 home. I have never with these eyes seen anything like you,
 neither man nor woman. Wonder takes me as I look on you.
 Yet in Delos once I saw such a thing, by Apollo's altar.
 I saw the stalk of a young palm shooting up. I had gone there
 once, and with a following of a great many people,
 165 on that journey which was to mean hard suffering for me.
 And as, when I looked upon that tree, my heart admired it
 long, since such a tree had never yet sprung from the earth, so
 now, lady, I admire you and wonder, and am terribly
 afraid to clasp you by the knees. The hard sorrow is on me.
 170 Yesterday on the twentieth day I escaped the wine-blue
 sea; until then the current and the tearing winds had swept me
 along from the island Ogygia, and my fate has landed me
 here; here too I must have evil to suffer; I do not
 think it will stop; before then the gods have much to give me.
 175 Then have pity, O queen. You are the first I have come to
 after much suffering, there is no one else that I know of
 here among the people who hold this land and this city.

who receives him kindly

Show me the way to the town and give me some rag to wrap me
 in, if you had any kind of piece of cloth when you came here,
 180 and then may the gods give you everything that your heart longs for;
 may they grant you a husband and a house and sweet agreement
 in all things, for nothing is better than this, more steadfast
 than when two people, a man and his wife, keep a harmonious
 household; a thing that brings much distress to the people who hate them
 185 and pleasure to their well-wishers, and for them the best reputation.'
 Then in turn Nausikaa of the white arms answered him:
 'My friend, since you seem not like a thoughtless man, nor a mean one,
 it is Zeus himself, the Olympian, who gives people good fortune,
 to each single man, to the good and the bad, just as he wishes;
 190 and since he must have given you yours, you must even endure it.
 But now, since it is our land and our city that you have come to,
 you shall not lack for clothing nor anything else, of those gifts
 which should befall the unhappy suppliant on his arrival;
 and I will show you our town, and tell you the name of our people.
 195 It is the Phaiakians who hold this territory and city,
 and I myself am the daughter of great-hearted Alkinoös,
 whose power and dominion are held by right, given from the Phaiakians.'
 She spoke, and to her attendants with well-ordered hair gave
 instruction:
 'Stand fast, girls. Where are you flying, just because you have looked on
 200 a man? Do you think this is some enemy coming against us?
 There is no such man living nor can there ever be one
 who can come into the land of the Phaiakians bringing
 warlike attack; we are so very dear to the immortals,
 and we live far apart by ourselves in the wash of the great sea
 205 at the utter end, nor do any other people mix with us.
 But, since this is some poor wanderer who has come to us,
 we must now take care of him, since all strangers and wanderers
 are sacred in the sight of Zeus, and the gift is a light and a dear one.
 So, my attendants, give some food and drink to the stranger,
 210 and bathe him, where there is shelter from the wind, in the river.'
 She spoke, and they stopped their flight, encouraging each other,
 and led Odysseus down to the sheltered place, as Nausikaa
 daughter of great-hearted Alkinoös had told them
 to do, and laid out for him to wear a mantle and tunic,
 215 and gave him limpid olive oil in a golden oil flask,

and told him he could bathe himself in the stream of the river.

Then the glorious Odysseus spoke to these serving maids:

'Stand as you are, girls, a little away from me, so that
I can wash the salt off my shoulders and use the olive oil

220 on them. It is long since my skin has known any ointment.

But I will not bathe in front of you, for I feel embarrassed
in the presence of lovely-haired girls to appear all naked.'

He spoke, and they went away and told it to their young mistress.

But when great Odysseus had bathed in the river and washed from his
body

225 the salt brine, which clung to his back and his broad shoulders,
he scraped from his head the scurf of brine from the barren salt sea.

But when he had bathed all, and anointed himself with olive oil,
and put on the clothing this unwedded girl had given him,

230 then Athene, daughter of Zeus, made him seem taller
for the eye to behold, and thicker, and on his head she arranged
the curling locks that hung down like hyacinthine petals.

And as when a master craftsman overlays gold on silver,
and he is one who was taught by Hephaistos and Pallas Athene

235 in art complete, and grace is on every work he finishes,
so Athene gilded with grace his head and his shoulders,
and he went a little aside and sat by himself on the seashore,
radiant in grace and good looks; and the girl admired him.

It was to her attendants with well-ordered hair that she now spoke:

'Hear me, my white-armed serving women; let me say something.'

240 It is not against the will of all the gods on Olympos
that this man is here to be made known to the godlike Phaiakians.

A while ago he seemed an unpromising man to me. Now
he even resembles one of the gods, who hold high heaven.

If only the man to be called my husband could be like this one,

245 a man living here, if only this one were pleased to stay here.

But come, my attendants, give some food and drink to the stranger.'

So she spoke, and they listened well to her and obeyed her,
and they set food and drink down beside Odysseus. He then,
noble and long-suffering Odysseus, eagerly

250 ate and drank, since he had not tasted food for a long time.

Then Nausikaa of the white arms thought what to do next.

She folded the laundry and put it away in the fine mule wagon,
and yoked the mules with powerful hooves, and herself mounted,

and urged Odysseus and spoke a word and named him by title:

255 'Rise up now, stranger, to go to the city, so I can see you
to the house of my own prudent father, where I am confident
you will be made known to all the highest Phaiakians.

Or rather, do it this way; you seem to me not to be thoughtless.

While we are still among the fields and the lands that the people

260 work, for that time follow the mules and the wagon, walking
lightly along with the maids, and I will point the way to you.

But when we come to the city, and around this is a towering
wall, and a handsome harbor either side of the city,

and a narrow causeway, and along the road there are oarswept

265 ships drawn up, for they all have slips, one for each vessel;

and there is the place of assembly, put together with quarried

stone, and built around a fine precinct of Poseidon,

and there they tend to all that gear that goes with the black ships,
the hawsers and the sails, and there they fine down their oarblades;

270 for the Phaiakians have no concern with the bow or the quiver,

but it is all masts and the oars of ships and the balanced vessels

themselves, in which they delight in crossing over the gray sea;

and it is their graceless speech I shrink from, for fear one may mock us
hereafter, since there are insolent men in our community,

275 and see how one of the worse sort might say when he met us,

"Who is this large and handsome stranger whom Nausikaa

has with her, and where did she find him? Surely, he is

to be her husband, but is he a stray from some ship of alien

men she found for herself, since there are no such whereabouts?

280 Or did some god after much entreaty come down in answer

to her prayers, out of the sky, and all his days will he have her?

Better so, if she goes out herself and finds her a husband

from elsewhere, since she pays no heed to her own Phaiakian

neighbors, although many of these and the best ones court her."

285 So they will speak, and that would be a scandal against me,

and I myself would disapprove of a girl who acted

so, that is, without the good will of her dear father

and mother making friends with a man, before being formally

married. Then, stranger, understand what I say, in order

290 soon to win escort and a voyage home from my father.

You will find a glorious grove of poplars sacred to Athene

near the road, and a spring runs there, and there is a meadow

Odysseus and Nausikaa return to the city

about it, and there is my father's estate and his flowering orchard,
 as far from the city as the shout of a man will carry.
 295 Sit down there and wait for time enough for the rest of us
 to reach the town and make our way to my father's palace.
 But when you estimate that we shall have reached the palace,
 then go to the city of the Phaiakians and inquire for
 the palace of my father, great-hearted Alkinoös. This is
 300 easily distinguished, so an innocent child could guide you
 there, for there are no other houses built for the other
 Phaiakians anything like the house of the hero Alkinoös.
 But when you have disappeared inside the house and the courtyard,
 then go on quickly across the hall until you come to
 305 my mother, and she will be sitting beside the hearth, in the firelight,
 turning sea-purple yarn on a distaff, a wonder to look at,
 and leaning against the pillar, and her maids are sitting behind her;
 and there is my father's chair of state, drawn close beside her,
 on which he sits when he drinks his wine like any immortal.
 310 Go on past him and then with your arms embrace our mother's
 knees; do this, so as to behold your day of homecoming
 with happiness and speed, even if you live very far off.
 For if she has thoughts in her mind that are friendly to you,
 then there is hope that you can see your own people, and come back
 315 to your strong-founded house, and to the land of your fathers.'
 So Nausikaa spoke and with the shining lash whipped up
 her mules, and swiftly they left the running river behind them,
 and the mules, neatly twinkling their feet, ran very strongly,
 but she drove them with care, so that those on foot, Odysseus
 320 and the serving maids, could keep up, and used the whip with discretion.
 And the sun went down and they came to the famous grove, sacred
 to Athene; and there the great Odysseus sat down
 and immediately thereafter prayed to the daughter of great Zeus:
 'Hear me, Atrytone child of Zeus of the aegis,
 325 and listen to me now, since before you did not listen
 to my stricken voice as the famous shaker of the earth battered me.
 Grant that I come, as one loved and pitied, among the Phaiakians.'
 So he spoke in prayer, and Pallas Athene heard him,
 but she did not yet show herself before him, for she respected
 330 her father's brother, Poseidon, who still nursed a sore anger
 at godlike Odysseus until his arrival in his own country.

BOOK VII



So long-suffering great Odysseus prayed, in that place,
 but the strength of the mules carried the young girl on, to the city,
 and when she had arrived at the glorious house of her father,
 she stopped in the forecourt, and there her brothers around her
 5 came and stood, men like immortal gods. They from
 the mule wagon unyoked the mules and carried the laundry
 inside, and she went into her chamber. There an old woman
 of Apeire, Eurymedousa the chamber attendant, lighted
 a fire for her. Oarswept ships once carried her over
 10 from Apeire, and they chose her out as a prize for Alkinoös
 because he ruled all the Phaiakians and the people listened, as to
 a god. She had nursed white-armed Nausikaa in the palace.
 Now she lit her a fire, and prepared her a supper, indoors.
 Then Odysseus rose to go to the city. Athene
 15 with kind thought for Odysseus drifted a deep mist about him,
 for fear some one of the great-hearted Phaiakians, meeting him,
 might speak to him in a sneering way and ask where he came from.
 But when he was about to enter the lovely city,
 there the gray-eyed goddess Athene met him, in the likeness
 20 of a young girl, a little maid, carrying a pitcher,
 and she came and stood before him and great Odysseus questioned her:
 'My child, would you not show me the way to the house of a certain
 man, Alkinoös, who is lord over all these people?
 For I am an unhappy stranger, and I have come here

to make up a bed in the porch's shelter and to lay upon it
fine underbedding of purple and spread blankets above it,
and fleecy robes to be an over-all covering. The maidservants
went forth from the main house, and in their hands held torches.

- 340 When they had set to work and presently had a firm bed made,
they came and stood beside Odysseus, and with words roused him:
'Up, stranger, so you can go to rest. Your bed is made for you.'
So they spoke, and the thought of sleeping was welcome to him.
Then long-suffering great Odysseus lay down and slept there
345 upon a corded bedstead in the echoing portico,
but Alkinoös went to bed in the inner room of the high house,
and at his side the lady his wife served as bedfellow.

BOOK VIII



- Then when the young Dawn showed again with her rosy fingers,
Alkinoös, the hallowed prince, rose up from his sleeping,
and the descendant of Zeus, Odysseus sacker of cities,
rose up, and Alkinoös, the hallowed prince, guided them
5 to the Phaiakians' place of assembly, which was built for them
by the ships. They went and took their seats on the polished
stones together, but Pallas Athene went through the city,
likening herself to the herald of wise Alkinoös,
as she was devising the return of great-hearted Odysseus.
10 She would go and stand beside each man and speak a word to him:
'Come with me, leaders of the Phaiakians and men of counsel,
to the place of assembly, there to find out about the stranger
who is new-come to the house of wise Alkinoös, after
wandering on the great sea, and in shape he is like the immortals.'
15 So she spoke, and stirred the spirit and strength in each man,
and quickly the place of assembly and seats were filled with people
who gathered there, and many wondered much as they looked on
the wise son of Laertes, and upon him Athene
drifted a magical grace about his head and his shoulders,
20 and made him taller for the eye to behold, and thicker,
so that he might be loved by all the Phaiakians, and to them
might be wonderful and respected, and might accomplish many
trials of strength by which the Phaiakians tested Odysseus.
But when they were assembled and all in one place together,

Feast in the palace

- 25 to them now Alkinoös spoke forth and addressed them:
 'Hear me, you leaders of the Phaiakians and men of counsel,
 while I speak forth what the heart within my breast urges.
 Here is this stranger, I do not know who he is, come wandering
 suppliant here to my house from the eastern or western people.
 30 He urges conveyance, and entreats us for its assurance.
 So let us, as we have done before, hasten to convey him,
 for neither has any other man who has come to my house
 stayed here grieving a long time for the matter of convoy.
 Come then, let us drag a black ship down to the bright sea,
 35 one sailing now for the first time, and have for it a selection
 from the district, fifty-two young men, who have been the finest
 before. Then, each man fastening his oar to the oarlock,
 disembark, then come to my house and make yourselves busy
 for a present feast, and I will make generous provision
 40 for all. I say this to the young men, but also, you other
 sceptered kings, come to me in my splendid dwelling,
 so we can entertain the stranger guest in our palace.
 Let none refuse; and summon also the inspired singer
 Demodokos, for to him the god gave song surpassing
 45 in power to please, whenever the spirit moves him to singing.'
 So he spoke, and led the way, and the others followed,
 as sceptered kings, but a herald went seeking the inspired singer,
 and also the fifty-two young men who had been selected
 went, as he told them, along the beach of the barren salt sea.
 50 But when they had come down to the sea, and where the ship was,
 they dragged the black ship down to the deeper part of the water,
 and in the black hull set the mast in place, and set sails,
 and made the oars fast in the leather slings of the oarlocks
 all in good order, and hoisted the white sails and set them.
 55 They anchored her deep enough in the channel, and then themselves
 made their way to the great house of wise Alkinoös,
 and the porticoes and enclosures and rooms were filled with people
 assembling, there were many men there, both old and young ones,
 and for them Alkinoös made a sacrifice, twelve sheep, eight
 60 pigs with shining tusks, and two drag-footed oxen.
 These they skinned and prepared and made the lovely feast ready.
 The herald came near, bringing with him the excellent singer
 whom the Muse had loved greatly, and gave him both good and evil.

Demodokos sings about Odysseus at Troy

- She reft him of his eyes, but she gave him the sweet singing
 65 art. Pontonoös set a silver-studded chair out for him
 in the middle of the feasters, propping it against a tall column,
 and the herald hung the clear lyre on a peg placed over
 his head, and showed him how to reach up with his hands and take it
 down, and set beside him a table and a fine basket,
 70 and beside him a cup to drink whenever his spirit desired it.
 They put forth their hands to the good things that lay ready before them.
 But when they had put away their desire for eating and drinking,
 the Muse stirred the singer to sing the famous actions
 of men on that venture, whose fame goes up into the wide heaven,
 75 the quarrel between Odysseus and Peleus' son, Achilleus,
 how these once contended, at the gods' generous festival,
 with words of violence, so that the lord of men, Agamemnon,
 was happy in his heart that the best of the Achaians were quarreling;
 for so in prophecy Phoibos Apollo had spoken to him
 80 in sacred Pytho, when he had stepped across the stone doorstep
 to consult; for now the beginning of evil rolled on, descending
 on Trojans, and on Danaans, through the designs of great Zeus.
 These things the famous singer sang for them, but Odysseus,
 taking in his ponderous hands the great mantle dyed in
 85 sea-purple, drew it over his head and veiled his fine features,
 shamed for tears running down his face before the Phaiakians;
 and every time the divine singer would pause in his singing,
 he would take the mantle away from his head, and wipe the tears off,
 and taking up a two-handled goblet would pour a libation
 90 to the gods, but every time he began again, and the greatest
 of the Phaiakians would urge him to sing, since they joyed in his stories,
 Odysseus would cover his head again, and make lamentation.
 There, shedding tears, he went unnoticed by all the others,
 but Alkinoös alone understood what he did and noticed,
 95 since he was sitting next him and heard him groaning heavily.
 At once he spoke aloud to the oar-loving Phaiakians:
 'Hear me, you leaders of the Phaiakians and men of counsel.
 By this time we have filled our desire for the equal feasting
 and for the lyre, which is the companion to the generous
 100 feast. Now let us go outside and make our endeavor
 in all contests, so that our stranger can tell his friends, after
 he reaches his home, by how much we surpass all others

in boxing, wrestling, leaping and speed of our feet for running.'

- So he spoke, and led the way, and the rest went with him,
 105 and the herald hung up the clear lyre on its peg, and taking
 Demodokos by the hand he led him out of the palace
 and set him on the start of the way, where all the other
 best men of the Phaiakians went, to gaze at the contests.
 They went to the place of assembly, with an endless multitude
 110 following, and many and excellent young men stood forth.
 Akroneos stood up, and Okyalos and Elatreus,
 Nauteus and Prymneus, Anchialos and Eretmeus,
 Panteus and Proreus, Thoön and Anabesineos,
 Amphialos, son of Polyneos, the son of Tekton,
 115 and Euryalos stood up, Naubolos' son, a man like murderous
 Ares himself, and he was best of all the Phaiakians
 in build and beauty, only except for stately Laodamas.
 Also there stood forth three sons of stately Alkinoös,
 Laodamas and Halios and godlike Klytoneos.
 120 First of all they held a contest for speed in running.
 The field strung out from the starting scratch, yet all at the same time
 flew on together, turning up the dust of the plain. Of these
 stately Klytoneos was far the best in the running,
 and was out in front by the length of a furrow for mules plowing
 125 a field, and came back first to the crowd, with the rest behind him.
 Next these tried each other out in the painful wrestling,
 and in this Euryalos surpassed all the best among them.
 In the jump it was Amphialos who outdid all others,
 while with the discus far the best of them was Elatreus,
 130 and in boxing it was Alkinoös' fine son, Laodamas.
 But after all had enjoyed their hearts with athletic contests,
 Laodamas the son of Alkinoös spoke forth among them:
 'Come, friends, let us ask the stranger if he has skill and knowledge
 for any kind of contest. In his build he is no mean man,
 135 for the lower legs and thighs he has, and both arms above them,
 for the massive neck and the great strength, nor is it that he lacks
 youth, but the crush of many misfortunes has used him hardly.
 For I say there is no other thing that is worse than the sea is
 for breaking a man, even though he may be a very strong one.'
- 140 Then in turn Euryalos spoke forth and answered:
 'Laodamas, this word you spoke was fair and orderly.

Go yourself then, and say it to him, and invite him to try it.'

- Then when the excellent son of Alkinoös heard this answer,
 he went and stood in the midst of them and spoke to Odysseus:
 145 'Come you also now, father stranger, and try these contests,
 if you have skill in any. It beseems you to know athletics,
 for there is no greater glory that can befall a man living
 than what he achieves by speed of his feet or strength of his hands. So
 come then and try it, and scatter those cares that are on your spirit.
 150 Your voyage will not be put off for long, but now already
 your ship is hauled down to the sea, and your companions are ready.'
- Then resourceful Odysseus spoke in turn and answered him:
 'Laodamas, why do you all urge me on in mockery
 to do these things? Cares are more in my mind than games are,
 155 who before this have suffered much and had many hardships,
 and sit here now in the middle of your assembly, longing
 to go home, entreating your king for this, and all of his people.'
- Euryalos answered him to his face and spoke to him roughly:
 'No, stranger, for I do not see that you are like one versed
 160 in contests, such as now are practiced much among people,
 but rather to one who plies his ways in his many-locked vessel,
 master over mariners who also are men of business,
 a man who, careful of his cargo and grasping for profits,
 goes carefully on his way. You do not resemble an athlete.'
- 165 Then looking at him darkly resourceful Odysseus answered:
 'Friend, that was not well spoken; you seem like one who is reckless.
 So it is that the gods do not bestow graces in all ways
 on men, neither in stature nor yet in brains or eloquence;
 for there is a certain kind of man, less noted for beauty,
 170 but the god puts comeliness on his words, and they who look toward him
 are filled with joy at the sight, and he speaks to them without faltering
 in winning modesty, and shines among those who are gathered,
 and people look on him as on a god when he walks in the city.
 Another again in his appearance is like the immortals,
 175 but upon his words there is no grace distilled, as in your case
 the appearance is conspicuous, and not a god even
 would make it otherwise, and yet the mind there is worthless.
 Now you have stirred up anger deep in the breast within me
 by this disorderly speaking, and I am not such a new hand
 180 at games as you say, but always, as I think, I have been

among the best when I still had trust in youth and hands' strength.
 Now I am held in evil condition and pain; for I had much
 to suffer: the wars of men; hard crossing of the big waters.
 But even so for all my troubles I will try your contests,
 185 for your word bit in the heart, and you have stirred me by speaking.
 He spoke, and with mantle still on sprang up and laid hold of a discus
 that was a bigger and thicker one, heavier not by a little
 than the one the Phaiakians had used for their sport in throwing.
 He spun, and let this fly from his ponderous hand. The stone
 190 hummed in the air, and the Phaiakians, men of long oars
 and famed for seafaring, shrank down against the ground, ducking
 under the flight of the stone which, speeding from his hand lightly,
 overflowed the marks of all others, and Athene, likening
 herself to a man, marked down the cast and spoke and addressed him:
 195 'Even a blind man, friend, would be able to distinguish your mark
 by feeling for it, since it is not mingled with the common
 lot, but far before. Have no fear over this contest.
 No one of the Phaiakians will come up to this mark or pass it.'
 She spoke, and much-enduring great Odysseus rejoiced, happy
 200 to find one friendly companion in the assembled company.
 Again he spoke to the Phaiakians, in language more blithe:
 'Now reach me that mark, young men, and then I will make another
 throw, as great as this, I think, or one even better.
 Let any of the rest, whose heart and spirit are urgent for it,
 205 come up and try me, since you have irritated me so, either
 at boxing or wrestling or in a foot race, I begrudge nothing;
 any of the Phaiakians, that is, except Laodamas
 himself, for he is my host; who would fight with his friend? Surely
 any man can be called insensate and good for nothing
 210 who in an alien community offers to challenge
 his friend and host in the games. He damages what is his. No,
 but I refuse not one of the rest, nor do I scorn him,
 but I am willing to look in his eyes and be tested against him.
 I am not bad in any of the contests where men strive.
 215 I know well how to handle the polished bow, and would be
 first to strike my man with an arrow aimed at a company
 of hostile men, even though many companions were standing
 close beside me, and all shooting with bows at the enemies.
 There was Philoktetes alone who surpassed me in archery

220 when we Achaians shot with bows in the Trojan country.
 But I will say that I stand far out ahead of all others
 such as are living mortals now and feed on the earth. Only
 I will not set myself against men of the generations
 before, not with Herakles nor Eurytos of Oichalia,
 225 who set themselves against the immortals with the bow, and therefore
 great Eurytos died suddenly nor came to an old age
 in his own mansions, since Apollo in anger against him
 killed him, because he had challenged Apollo in archery. I can
 throw with the spear as far as another casts with an arrow.
 230 Only in a foot race I fear one of the Phaiakians
 might outpass me; I have been through too much and shamefully battered
 on many rough seas, since there could be no orderly training
 on shipboard; because of this my legs have lost their condition.'
 So he spoke, and all of them stayed stricken to silence.
 235 Only Alkinoös spoke up and gave him an answer:
 'My friend, since it is not graceless for you to speak thus among us,
 but you are willing to show that excellence you are endowed with,
 angered because this man came up to you in our assembly
 and belittled you, in a way no man would properly find fault
 240 with your excellence, if he knew in his heart how to speak sensibly:
 come then, attend to what I say, so that you can tell it
 even to some other hero after this, when in your palace
 you sit at the feasting with your own wife and children beside you,
 remembering our excellence and what Zeus has established
 245 as our activities, through time, from the days of our fathers.
 For we are not perfect in our boxing, nor yet as wrestlers,
 but we do run lightly on our feet, and are excellent seamen,
 and always the feast is dear to us, and the lyre and dances
 and changes of clothing and our hot baths and beds. Come then,
 250 you who among all the Phaiakians are the best dancers,
 do your dance, so that our guest, after he comes home
 to his own people, can tell them how far we surpass all others
 in our seamanship and the speed of our feet and dancing and singing.
 Let someone go quickly and bring Demodokos his clear-voiced
 255 lyre, which must have been set down somewhere in our palace.'
 So godlike Alkinoös spoke, and the herald rose up
 to bring the hollowed lyre out of the king's house, and now
 stewards of the course stood up, nine in all of them, chosen

Ares and Aphrodite concluded

would you, caught tight in these strong fastenings, be willing to sleep in bed by the side of Aphrodite the golden?’

Then in turn the courier Argeiphontes answered:

340 ‘Lord who strike from afar, Apollo, I wish it could only be, and there could be thrice this number of endless fastenings, and all you gods could be looking on and all the goddesses, and still I would sleep by the side of Aphrodite the golden.’

He spoke, and there was laughter among the immortals, only there was no laughter for Poseidon, but he kept entreating
345 Hephaistos, the famous craftsman, asking him to set Ares free, and spoke aloud to him and addressed him in winged words: ‘Let him go, and I guarantee he will pay whatever you ask, all that is approved among the immortal deities.’

Then in turn the renowned smith of the strong arms answered:
350 ‘Shaker of the earth, Poseidon, do not urge this on me. The business of wretches is wretched even in guarantee giving. To what could I hold you among the immortal gods, if Ares were to go off, avoiding both his debt and his bondage?’

Then in turn Poseidon, shaker of the earth, answered:
355 ‘Hephaistos, if Ares goes off and escapes, not paying anything he may owe you, then I myself will pay it.’

Then in turn the renowned smith of the strong arms answered: ‘It cannot be, and it is not right, that I should deny you.’

So mighty Hephaistos spoke and undid the fastenings. Straightway
360 the two of them, when they were set free of the fastening, though it was so strong, sprang up, and Ares took his way Thraceward, while she, Aphrodite lover of laughter, went back to Paphos on Cyprus, where lies her sacred precinct and her smoky altar, and there the Graces bathed her and anointed her with ambrosial
365 oil, such as abounds for the gods who are everlasting, and put delightful clothing about her, a wonder to look on.

So the famous singer sang his song, and Odysseus enjoyed it in his heart as he listened, as did the others there, Phaiakians, men of the long oar, famed for seafaring.

370 Then Alkinoös asked Halios and Laodamas to dance all by themselves, since there was none to challenge them. These two, after they had taken up in their hands the ball, a beautiful thing, red, which Polybos the skillful craftsman had made them, one of them, bending far back, would throw it up to the shadowy

Dancing—apology from Euryalos

375 clouds, and the other, going high off the ground, would easily catch it again, before his feet came back to the ground. Then after they had played their game with the ball thrown upward, these two performed a dance on the generous earth, with rapid interchange of position, and the rest of the young men standing
380 about the field stamped out the time, and a great sound rose up. Then great Odysseus spoke a word to Alkinoös, saying:

‘O great Alkinoös, pre-eminent among all people, truly, as you boasted your people were the best dancers, so it is done before me. Wonder takes me as I look on them.’

385 He spoke, and Alkinoös the hallowed king was pleased, and at once he spoke aloud to the oar-loving Phaiakians: ‘Hear me, leaders of the Phaiakians and men of counsel.

I think this stranger is a man of discretion. Therefore come, let us give him a gift of friendship, as is becoming.

390 For here are twelve who are marked out as kings in our country with power, and they act as leaders, and I myself am the thirteenth. Then let each of you who are such contribute a well-washed robe, and a tunic, and a talent of precious gold. Then we shall assemble it all together, so that our stranger
395 may have it in his hands and be pleased as he goes in to supper. But Euryalos shall make amends to him with a spoken word and a gift, for having spoken out of due measure.’

So he spoke, and they all approved what he said and urged it, and each one sent his herald away to bring the gifts back.

400 Then Euryalos spoke in his turn and answered Alkinoös:

‘O great Alkinoös, pre-eminent among all people, certainly I will make amends to our guest, as you urge me. I will give him this sword, which is all bronze, but the handle on it is silver, and there is a scabbard of fresh-sawn ivory
405 cut in rings to hold it. He will find that it is of great value.’

So he spoke, and put the sword with the nails of silver into his hands, and spoke to him and addressed him in winged words:

‘Farewell, father and stranger, and if any word was let slip that was improper, may the stormwinds catch it away and carry it
410 off, and the gods grant you safe homecoming to your own country and wife; since here, far from your own people, you must be suffering.’

Then resourceful Odysseus spoke in turn and answered him: ‘Farewell also to you, dear friend, and may the gods grant you

Gifts for Odysseus

prosperity; may you never miss this sword you have given
 415 me now, as a gift, and made amends to me with words spoken.
 So he spoke, and slung the sword with the nails of silver
 over his shoulder. The sun went down, and the glorious presents
 came in, carried by the proud heralds of Alkinoös,
 and these, surpassingly lovely gifts, the sons of Alkinoös
 420 took over, and set them down beside their respected mother.
 Now Alkinoös the hallowed king was their leader,
 and all of them went into the house and sat on their high thrones.
 Thereupon the king Alkinoös said to Arete:
 'Come, wife, bring out a magnificent coffer, the best one you have,
 425 and in it yourself lay a robe that is newly washed, and a tunic.
 Then warm a brazen caldron over the fire, and heat water
 for this man, so he may bathe and then see, all set out in order,
 the presents which the stately Phaiakians brought here to give him,
 and rejoice in the feast and in listening to the song of the singer.
 430 I myself make him a present of this surpassingly lovely
 golden cup, so that all his days he may remember me
 as he makes libation at home to Zeus and the other immortals.'
 So he spoke, and Arete going to her maidservants told them
 to set the great caldron over the fire, as quickly as might be,
 435 and they set the tripod for the bathwater over the blazing
 fire, and poured in the water and gathered kindling and lit it.
 The fire worked on the belly of the caldron, the water heated.
 Meanwhile Arete brought from out of her chamber the splendid
 chest for the stranger, and in it laid the beautiful presents,
 440 the clothing and the gold which the Phaiakians had given,
 and she herself put in a robe, and a handsome tunic,
 and spoke to the stranger and addressed him in winged words, saying:
 'You yourself must see to the cover and nimbly fasten
 a knot, so none may break in, while on your journey
 445 you rest in a pleasant sleep as you go your ways in the black ship.'
 When long-suffering great Odysseus had heard this, straightway
 he made the covering tight upon it and fastened it nimbly
 with an intricate knot, whose knowledge the lady Circe had taught him.
 Then the housekeeper told him without delay to enter
 450 the tub for his bath, and he with joy in his heart looked on
 the hot water, for he had not been used to be so looked after
 in the time since he had left the house of fair-haired Kalypso,

Goodbye Nausikaa

though in that time he had been looked after as if he were truly
 a god. When the maids had bathed him and anointed him with oil,
 455 they put a lovely mantle and a tunic about him,
 and he stepped from the bath and went to join the men at their wine
 drinking. Then Nausikaa, with the gods' loveliness on her,
 stood beside the pillar that supported the roof with its joinery,
 and gazed upon Odysseus with all her eyes and admired him,
 460 and spoke to him aloud and addressed him in winged words, saying:
 'Goodbye, stranger, and think of me sometimes when you are
 back at home, how I was the first you owed your life to.'
 Then resourceful Odysseus spoke in turn and answered her:
 'Nausikaa, daughter of great-hearted Alkinoös,
 465 even so may Zeus, high-thundering husband of Hera,
 grant me to reach my house and see my day of homecoming.
 So even when I am there I will pray to you, as to a goddess,
 all the days of my life. For, maiden, my life was your gift.'
 He spoke, and went to sit on a chair by the king Alkinoös.
 470 And now they were serving out the portions and mixing the wine, as
 the herald came near, bringing with him the excellent singer
 Demodokos, prized among the people, and set a chair for him
 in the middle of the feasters, propping it against a tall column.
 Resourceful Odysseus called the herald over and spoke to him,
 475 but first he cut a piece from the loin of the pig with shining
 teeth, with most of the meat left on, and edged with rich fat:
 'Here, herald, take this piece of meat to Demodokos so that
 he may eat, and I, though a sorry man, embrace him.
 For with all peoples upon the earth singers are entitled
 480 to be cherished and to their share of respect, since the Muse has taught
 them
 her own way, and since she loves all the company of singers.'
 So he spoke, and the herald took the portion and placed it
 in the hands of the hero Demodokos, who received it happily.
 They put forth their hands to the good things that lay ready before them.
 485 But when they had put away their desire for eating and drinking,
 Odysseus the resourceful spoke to Demodokos, saying:
 'Demodokos, above all mortals beside I prize you.
 Surely the Muse, Zeus' daughter or else Apollo has taught you,
 for all too right following the tale you sing the Achaians'
 490 venture, all they did and had done to them, all the sufferings

Demodokos sings of the Trojan Horse

of these Achaians, as if you had been there yourself or heard it
 from one who was. Come to another part of the story, sing us
 the wooden horse, which Epeios made with Athene helping,
 the stratagem great Odysseus filled once with men and brought it
 495 to the upper city, and it was these men who sacked Ilion.
 If you can tell me the course of all these things as they happened,
 I will speak of you before all mankind, and tell them
 how freely the goddess gave you the magical gift of singing.
 He spoke, and the singer, stirred by the goddess, began, and showed
 them
 500 his song, beginning from where the Argives boarded their well-benched
 ships, and sailed away, after setting fire to their shelters;
 but already all these others who were with famous Odysseus
 were sitting hidden in the horse, in the place where the Trojans assembled,
 for the Trojans themselves had dragged it up to the height of the city,
 505 and now it was standing there, and the Trojans seated around it
 talked endlessly, and three ways of thought found favor, either
 to take the pitiless bronze to it and hack open the hollow
 horse, or drag it to the cliffs' edge and topple it over,
 or let it stand where it was as a dedication to blandish
 510 the gods, and this last way was to be the end of it, seeing
 that the city was destined to be destroyed when it had inside it
 the great horse made of wood, with all the best of Argives
 sitting within and bearing death and doom for the Trojans.
 He sang then how the sons of the Achaians left their hollow
 515 hiding place and streamed from the horse and sacked the city,
 and he sang how one and another fought through the steep citadel,
 and how in particular Odysseus went, with godlike
 Menelaos, like Ares, to find the house of Deiphobos,
 and there, he said, he endured the grimmest fighting that ever
 520 he had, but won it there too, with great-hearted Athene aiding.
 So the famous singer sang his tale, but Odysseus
 melted, and from under his eyes the tears ran down, drenching
 his cheeks. As a woman weeps, lying over the body
 of her dear husband, who fell fighting for her city and people
 525 as he tried to beat off the pitiless day from city and children;
 she sees him dying and gasping for breath, and winding her body
 about him she cries high and shrill, while the men behind her,
 hitting her with their spear butts on the back and the shoulders,

Odysseus is asked to identify himself

force her up and lead her away into slavery, to have
 530 hard work and sorrow, and her cheeks are wracked with pitiful weeping.
 Such were the pitiful tears Odysseus shed from under
 his brows, but they went unnoticed by all the others,
 but Alkinoös alone understood what he did and noticed,
 since he was sitting next him and heard him groaning heavily.
 535 At once he spoke aloud to the oar-loving Phaiakians:
 'Hear me, you leaders of the Phaiakians and men of counsel.
 Let Demodokos now give over his loud lyre playing,
 since it cannot be that he pleases all alike with this song.
 Ever since we ate our supper and the divine singer
 540 began, our guest has never ceased since then his sorry
 lament. Great sorrow must have come on his heart, surely.
 But let him hold now, so that all of us, guest receivers
 and guest alike, may enjoy ourselves. This is the better way,
 seeing that all this has been done for the sake of our honored
 545 guest, this escort, these loving gifts we give him for friendship.
 For any man whose wits have hold on the slightest achievement,
 his suppliant and guest is as good as a brother to him.
 So do not longer keep hiding now with crafty purposes
 the truth of what I ask you. It is better to speak out.
 550 Tell me the name by which your mother and father called you
 in that place, and how the rest who live in the city about you
 call you. No one among all the peoples, neither base man
 nor noble, is altogether nameless, once he has been born,
 but always his parents as soon as they bring him forth put upon him
 555 a name. Tell me your land, your neighborhood and your city,
 so that our ships, straining with their own purpose, can carry you
 there, for there are no steersmen among the Phaiakians, neither
 are there any steering oars for them, such as other ships have,
 but the ships themselves understand men's thoughts and purposes,
 560 and they know all the cities of men and all their fertile
 fields, and with greatest speed they cross the gulf of the salt sea,
 huddled under a mist and cloud, nor is there ever
 any fear that they may suffer damage or come to destruction.
 Yet this I have heard once on a time from my father, Nausithoös
 565 who said it, and told me how Poseidon would yet be angry
 with us, because we are convoy without hurt to all men.
 He said that one day, as a well-made ship of Phaiakian

Odysseus is invited to tell his life

men came back from a convoy on the misty face of the water,
 he would stun it, and pile a great mountain over our city, to hide it.
 570 So the old man spoke, and the god might either bring it
 to pass, or it might be left undone, as the god's heart pleases.
 So come now tell me this and give me an accurate answer:
 Where you were driven off your course, what countries peopled
 by men you came to, the men themselves and their strong-founded
 575 cities, and which were savage and violent, and without justice,
 and which were hospitable and with a godly mind for strangers.
 And tell me why you weep in your heart and make lamentation
 when you hear of the Argives' and the Danaans' venture, and hear
 of Ilion. The gods did this, and spun the destruction
 580 of peoples, for the sake of the singing of men hereafter.
 Was there perhaps some kinsman by marriage, wife's father or brother,
 a brave man who perished before Ilion? Such are the relatives
 who next to a man's own blood and kin come closest to him?
 Or could it then have been some companion, a brave man knowing
 585 thoughts gracious toward you, since one who is your companion, and has
 thoughts
 honorable toward you, is of no less degree than a brother?'

BOOK IX



Then resourceful Odysseus spoke in turn and answered him:
 'O great Alkinoös, pre-eminent among all people,
 surely indeed it is a good thing to listen to a singer
 such as this one before us, who is like the gods in his singing;
 5 for I think there is no occasion accomplished that is more pleasant
 than when festivity holds sway among all the populace,
 and the feasters up and down the houses are sitting in order
 and listening to the singer, and beside them the tables are loaded
 with bread and meats, and from the mixing bowl the wine steward
 10 draws the wine and carries it about and fills the cups. This
 seems to my own mind to be the best of occasions.
 But now your wish was inclined to ask me about my mournful
 sufferings, so that I must mourn and grieve even more. What then
 shall I recite to you first of all, what leave till later?
 15 Many are the sorrows the gods of the sky have given me.
 Now first I will tell you my name, so that all of you
 may know me, and I hereafter, escaping the day without pity,
 be your friend and guest, though the home where I live is far away from
 you.
 I am Odysseus son of Laertes, known before all men
 20 for the study of crafty designs, and my fame goes up to the heavens.
 I am at home in sunny Ithaka. There is a mountain
 there that stands tall, leaf-trembling Neritos, and there are islands
 settled around it, lying one very close to another.

There is Doulichion and Same, wooded Zakynthos,
 25 but my island lies low and away, last of all on the water
 toward the dark, with the rest below facing east and sunshine,
 a rugged place, but a good nurse of men; for my part
 I cannot think of any place sweeter on earth to look at.
 For in truth Kalypso, shining among divinities, kept me
 30 with her in her hollow caverns, desiring me for her husband,
 and so likewise Aiaian Circe the guileful detained me
 beside her in her halls, desiring me for her husband,
 but never could she persuade the heart within me. So it is
 that nothing is more sweet in the end than country and parents
 35 ever, even when far away one lives in a fertile
 place, when it is in alien country, far from his parents.
 But come, I will tell you of my voyage home with its many
 troubles, which Zeus inflicted on me as I came from Troy land.
 'From Ilion the wind took me and drove me ashore at Ismaros
 40 by the Kikonians. I sacked their city and killed their people,
 and out of their city taking their wives and many possessions
 we shared them out, so none might go cheated of his proper
 portion. There I was for the light foot and escaping,
 and urged it, but they were greatly foolish and would not listen,
 45 and then and there much wine was being drunk, and they slaughtered
 many sheep on the beach, and lumbering horn-curved cattle.
 But meanwhile the Kikonians went and summoned the other
 Kikonians, who were their neighbors living in the inland country,
 more numerous and better men, well skilled in fighting
 50 men with horses, but knowing too at need the battle
 on foot. They came at early morning, like flowers in season
 or leaves, and the luck that came our way from Zeus was evil,
 to make us unfortunate, so we must have hard pains to suffer.
 Both sides stood and fought their battle there by the running
 55 ships, and with bronze-headed spears they cast at each other,
 and as long as it was early and the sacred daylight increasing,
 so long we stood fast and fought them off, though there were more of
 them;
 but when the sun had gone to the time for unyoking of cattle,
 then at last the Kikonians turned the Achaians back and beat them,
 60 and out of each ship six of my strong-greaved companions
 were killed, but the rest of us fled away from death and destruction.

'From there we sailed on further along, glad to have escaped death,
 but grieving still at heart for the loss of our dear companions.
 Even then I would not suffer the flight of my oarswept vessels
 65 until a cry had been made three times for each of my wretched
 companions, who died there in the plain, killed by the Kikonians.
 Cloud-gathering Zeus drove the North Wind against our vessels
 in a supernatural storm, and huddled under the cloud scuds
 land alike and the great water. Night sprang from heaven.
 70 The ships were swept along yawing down the current; the violence
 of the wind ripped our sails into three and four pieces. These then,
 in fear of destruction, we took down and stowed in the ships' hulls,
 and rowed them on ourselves until we had made the mainland.
 There for two nights and two days together we lay up,
 75 for pain and weariness together eating our hearts out.
 But when the fair-haired Dawn in her rounds brought on the third day,
 we, setting the masts upright, and hoisting the white sails on them,
 sat still, and let the wind and the steersmen hold them steady.
 And now I would have come home unscathed to the land of my fathers,
 80 but as I turned the hook of Maleia, the sea and current
 and the North Wind beat me off course, and drove me on past Kythera.
 'Nine days then I was swept along by the force of the hostile
 winds on the fishy sea, but on the tenth day we landed
 in the country of the Lotus-Eaters, who live on a flowering
 85 food, and there we set foot on the mainland, and fetched water,
 and my companions soon took their supper there by the fast ships.
 But after we had tasted of food and drink, then I sent
 some of my companions ahead, telling them to find out
 what men, eaters of bread, might live here in this country.
 90 I chose two men, and sent a third with them, as a herald.
 My men went on and presently met the Lotus-Eaters,
 nor did these Lotus-Eaters have any thoughts of destroying
 our companions, but they only gave them lotus to taste of.
 But any of them who ate the honey-sweet fruit of lotus
 95 was unwilling to take any message back, or to go
 away, but they wanted to stay there with the lotus-eating
 people, feeding on lotus, and forget the way home. I myself
 took these men back weeping, by force, to where the ships were,
 and put them aboard under the rowing benches and tied them
 100 fast, then gave the order to the rest of my eager

Arrival at the island

companions to embark on the ships in haste, for fear
 someone else might taste of the lotus and forget the way home,
 and the men quickly went aboard and sat to the oarlocks,
 and sitting well in order dashed the oars in the gray sea.

105 'From there, grieving still at heart, we sailed on further
 along, and reached the country of the lawless outrageous
 Cyclopes who, putting all their trust in the immortal
 gods, neither plow with their hands nor plant anything,
 but all grows for them without seed planting, without cultivation,
 110 wheat and barley and also the grapevines, which yield for them
 wine of strength, and it is Zeus' rain that waters it for them.
 These people have no institutions, no meetings for counsels;
 rather they make their habitations in caverns hollowed
 among the peaks of the high mountains, and each one is the law
 115 for his own wives and children, and cares nothing about the others.

'There is a wooded island that spreads, away from the harbor,
 neither close in to the land of the Cyclopes nor far out
 from it; forested; wild goats beyond number breed there,
 for there is no coming and going of human kind to disturb them,
 120 nor are they visited by hunters, who in the forest
 suffer hardships as they haunt the peaks of the mountains,
 neither again is it held by herded flocks, nor farmers,
 but all its days, never plowed up and never planted,
 it goes without people and supports the bleating wild goats.

125 For the Cyclopes have no ships with cheeks of vermilion,
 nor have they builders of ships among them, who could have made them
 strong-benched vessels, and these if made could have run them sailings
 to all the various cities of men, in the way that people
 cross the sea by means of ships and visit each other,
 130 and they could have made this island a strong settlement for them.
 For it is not a bad place at all, it could bear all crops
 in season, and there are meadow lands near the shores of the gray sea,
 well watered and soft; there could be grapes grown there endlessly,
 and there is smooth land for plowing, men could reap a full harvest
 135 always in season, since there is very rich subsoil. Also
 there is an easy harbor, with no need for a hawser
 nor anchor stones to be thrown ashore nor cables to make fast;
 one could just run ashore and wait for the time when the sailors'
 desire stirred them to go and the right winds were blowing.

off the land of the Cyclopes

140 Also at the head of the harbor there runs bright water,
 spring beneath rock, and there are black poplars growing around it.
 There we sailed ashore, and there was some god guiding
 us in through the gloom of the night, nothing showed to look at,
 for there was a deep mist around the ships, nor was there any moon
 145 showing in the sky, but she was under the clouds and hidden.
 There was none of us there whose eyes had spied out the island,
 and we never saw any long waves rolling in and breaking
 on the shore, but the first thing was when we beached the well-benched
 vessels.

Then after we had beached the ships we took all the sails down,
 150 and we ourselves stepped out onto the break of the sea beach,
 and there we fell asleep and waited for the divine Dawn.

'But when the young Dawn showed again with her rosy fingers,
 we made a tour about the island, admiring everything
 there, and the nymphs, daughters of Zeus of the aegis, started
 155 the hill-roving goats our way for my companions to feast on.
 At once we went and took from the ships curved bows and javelins
 with long sockets, and arranging ourselves in three divisions
 cast about, and the god granted us the game we longed for.
 Now there were twelve ships that went with me, and for each one nine
 goats

160 were portioned out, but I alone had ten for my portion.
 So for the whole length of the day until the sun's setting,
 we sat there feasting on unlimited meat and sweet wine;
 for the red wine had not yet given out in the ships, there was
 some still left, for we all had taken away a great deal
 165 in storing jars when we stormed the Kikonians' sacred citadel.
 We looked across at the land of the Cyclopes, and they were
 near by, and we saw their smoke and heard sheep and goats bleating.
 But when the sun went down and the sacred darkness came over,
 then we lay down to sleep along the break of the seashore;
 170 but when the young Dawn showed again with her rosy fingers,
 then I held an assembly and spoke forth before all:
 "The rest of you, who are my eager companions, wait here,
 while I, with my own ship and companions that are in it,
 go and find out about these people, and learn what they are,
 175 whether they are savage and violent, and without justice,
 or hospitable to strangers and with minds that are godly."

'So speaking I went aboard the ship and told my companions
 also to go aboard, and to cast off the stern cables,
 and quickly they went aboard the ship and sat to the oarlocks,
 180 and sitting well in order dashed the oars in the gray sea.
 But when we had arrived at the place, which was nearby, there
 at the edge of the land we saw the cave, close to the water,
 high, and overgrown with laurels, and in it were stabled
 185 great flocks, sheep and goats alike, and there was a fenced yard
 built around it with a high wall of grubbed-out boulders
 and tall pines and oaks with lofty foliage. Inside
 there lodged a monster of a man, who now was herding
 the flocks at a distance away, alone, for he did not range with
 others, but stayed away by himself; his mind was lawless,
 190 and in truth he was a monstrous wonder made to behold, not
 like a man, an eater of bread, but more like a wooded
 peak of the high mountains seen standing away from the others.
 'At that time I told the rest of my eager companions
 to stay where they were beside the ship and guard it. Meanwhile
 195 I, choosing out the twelve best men among my companions,
 went on, but I had with me a goatskin bottle of black wine,
 sweet wine, given me by Maron, son of Euanthes
 and priest of Apollo, who bestrides Ismaros; he gave it
 because, respecting him with his wife and child, we saved them
 200 from harm. He made his dwelling among the trees of the sacred
 grove of Phoibos Apollo, and he gave me glorious presents.
 He gave me seven talents of well-wrought gold, and he gave me
 a mixing bowl made all of silver, and gave along with it
 wine, drawing it off in storing jars, twelve in all. This was
 205 a sweet wine, unmixed, a divine drink. No one of his servants
 or thralls that were in his household knew anything about it,
 but only himself and his dear wife and a single housekeeper.
 Whenever he drank this honey-sweet red wine, he would pour out
 enough to fill one cup, then twenty measures of water
 210 were added, and the mixing bowl gave off a sweet smell;
 magical; then would be no pleasure in holding off. Of this
 wine I filled a great wineskin full, and took too provisions
 in a bag, for my proud heart had an idea that presently
 I would encounter a man who was endowed with great strength,
 215 and wild, with no true knowledge of laws or any good customs.

'Lightly we made our way to the cave, but we did not find him
 there, he was off herding on the range with his fat flocks.
 We went inside the cave and admired everything inside it.
 Baskets were there, heavy with cheeses, and the pens crowded
 220 with lambs and kids. They had all been divided into separate
 groups, the firstlings in one place, and then the middle ones,
 the babies again by themselves. And all his vessels, milk pails
 and pans, that he used for milking into, were running over
 with whey. From the start my companions spoke to me and begged me
 225 to take some of the cheeses, come back again, and the next time
 to drive the lambs and kids from their pens, and get back quickly
 to the ship again, and go sailing off across the salt water;
 but I would not listen to them, it would have been better their way,
 not until I could see him, see if he would give me presents.
 230 My friends were to find the sight of him in no way lovely.
 'There we built a fire and made sacrifice, and helping
 ourselves to the cheeses we ate and sat waiting for him
 inside, until he came home from his herding. He carried a heavy
 load of dried-out wood, to make a fire for his dinner,
 235 and threw it down inside the cave, making a terrible
 crash, so in fear we scuttled away into the cave's corners.
 Next he drove into the wide cavern all from the fat flocks
 that he would milk, but he left all the male animals, billygoats
 and rams, outside in his yard with the deep fences. Next thing,
 240 he heaved up and set into position the huge door stop,
 a massive thing; no twenty-two of the best four-wheeled
 wagons could have taken that weight off the ground and carried it,
 such a piece of sky-towering cliff that was he set over
 his gateway. Next he sat down and milked his sheep and his bleating
 245 goats, each of them in order, and put lamb or kid under each one
 to suck, and then drew off half of the white milk and put it
 by in baskets made of wickerwork, stored for cheeses,
 but let the other half stand in the milk pails so as to have it
 to help himself to and drink from, and it would serve for his supper.
 250 But after he had briskly done all his chores and finished,
 at last he lit the fire, and saw us, and asked us a question:
 "Strangers, who are you? From where do you come sailing over the watery
 ways? Is it on some business, or are you recklessly roving
 as pirates do, when they sail on the salt sea and venture

In the cave of Polyphemos

255 their lives as they wander, bringing evil to alien people?"
 'So he spoke, and the inward heart in us was broken
 in terror of the deep voice and for seeing him so monstrous;
 but even so I had words for an answer, and I said to him:
 "We are Achaians coming from Troy, beaten off our true course
 260 by winds from every direction across the great gulf of the open
 sea, making for home, by the wrong way, on the wrong courses.
 So we have come. So it has pleased Zeus to arrange it.
 We claim we are of the following of the son of Atreus,
 Agamemnon, whose fame now is the greatest thing under heaven,
 265 such a city was that he sacked and destroyed so many
 people; but now in turn we come to you and are suppliants
 at your knees, if you might give us a guest present or otherwise
 some gift of grace, for such is the right of strangers. Therefore
 respect the gods, O best of men. We are your suppliants,
 270 and Zeus the guest god, who stands behind all strangers with honors
 due them, avenges any wrong toward strangers and suppliants."
 'So I spoke, but he answered me in pitiless spirit:
 "Stranger, you are a simple fool, or come from far off,
 when you tell me to avoid the wrath of the gods or fear them.
 275 The Cyclopes do not concern themselves over Zeus of the aegis,
 nor any of the rest of the blessed gods, since we are far better
 than they, and for fear of the hate of Zeus I would not spare
 you or your companions either, if the fancy took me
 otherwise. But tell me, so I may know: where did you
 280 put your well-made ship when you came? Nearby or far off?"
 'So he spoke, trying me out, but I knew too much and was not
 deceived, but answered him in turn, and my words were crafty:
 "Poseidon, Shaker of the Earth, has shattered my vessel.
 He drove it against the rocks on the outer coast of your country,
 285 cracked on a cliff, it is gone, the wind on the sea took it;
 but I, with these you see, got away from sudden destruction."
 'So I spoke, but he in pitiless spirit answered
 nothing, but sprang up and reached for my companions,
 caught up two together and slapped them, like killing puppies,
 290 against the ground, and the brains ran all over the floor, soaking
 the ground. Then he cut them up limb by limb and got supper ready,
 and like a lion reared in the hills, without leaving anything,
 ate them, entrails, flesh and the marrowy bones alike. We

The men being eaten, two at a time

cried out aloud and held our hands up to Zeus, seeing
 295 the cruelty of what he did, but our hearts were helpless.
 But when the Cyclops had filled his enormous stomach, feeding
 on human flesh and drinking down milk unmixed with water,
 he lay down to sleep in the cave sprawled out through his sheep. Then I
 took counsel with myself in my great-hearted spirit
 300 to go up close, drawing from beside my thigh the sharp sword,
 and stab him in the chest, where the midriff joins on the liver,
 feeling for the place with my hand; but the second thought stayed me;
 for there we too would have perished away in sheer destruction,
 seeing that our hands could never have pushed from the lofty
 305 gate of the cave the ponderous boulder he had propped there.
 So mourning we waited, just as we were, for the divine Dawn.
 'But when the young Dawn showed again with her rosy fingers,
 he lit his fire, and then set about milking his glorious
 flocks, each of them in order, and put lamb or kid under each one.
 310 But after he had briskly done all his chores and finished,
 again he snatched up two men, and prepared them for dinner,
 and when he had dined, drove his fat flocks out of the cavern,
 easily lifting off the great doorstone, but then he put it
 back again, like a man closing the lid on a quiver.
 315 And so the Cyclops, whistling loudly, guided his fat flocks
 to the hills, leaving me there in the cave mumbling my black thoughts
 of how I might punish him, how Athene might give me that glory.
 And as I thought, this was the plan that seemed best to me.
 The Cyclops had lying there beside the pen a great bludgeon
 320 of olive wood, still green. He had cut it so that when it dried out
 he could carry it about, and we looking at it considered
 it to be about the size for the mast of a cargo-carrying
 broad black ship of twenty oars which crosses the open
 sea; such was the length of it, such the thickness, to judge by
 325 looking. I went up and chopped a length of about a fathom,
 and handed it over to my companions and told them to shave it
 down, and they made it smooth, while I standing by them sharpened
 the point, then put it over the blaze of the fire to harden.
 Then I put it well away and hid it under the ordure
 330 which was all over the floor of the cave, much stuff lying
 about. Next I told the rest of the men to cast lots, to find out
 which of them must endure with me to take up the great beam

The blinding of the drunken Polyphemos

and spin it in Cyclops' eye when sweet sleep had come over him.
 The ones drew it whom I myself would have wanted chosen,
 335 four men, and I myself was the fifth, and allotted with them.
 With the evening he came back again, herding his fleecy
 flocks, but drove all his fat flocks inside the wide cave
 at once, and did not leave any outside in the yard with the deep fence,
 whether he had some idea, or whether a god so urged him.
 340 When he had heaved up and set in position the huge door stop,
 next he sat down and started milking his sheep and his bleating
 goats, each of them in order, and put lamb or kid under each one.
 But after he had briskly done all his chores and finished,
 again he snatched up two men and prepared them for dinner.
 345 Then at last I, holding in my hands an ivy bowl
 full of the black wine, stood close up to the Cyclops and spoke out:
 "Here, Cyclops, have a drink of wine, now you have fed on
 human flesh, and see what kind of drink our ship carried
 inside her. I brought it for you, and it would have been your libation
 350 had you taken pity and sent me home, but I cannot suffer
 your rages. Cruel, how can any man come and visit
 you ever again, now you have done what has no sanction?"
 'So I spoke, and he took it and drank it off, and was terribly
 pleased with the wine he drank and questioned me again, saying:
 355 "Give me still more, freely, and tell me your name straightway
 now, so I can give you a guest present to make you happy.
 For the grain-giving land of the Cyclopes also yields them
 wine of strength, and it is Zeus' rain that waters it for them;
 but this comes from where ambrosia and nectar flow in abundance."
 360 'So he spoke, and I gave him the gleaming wine again. Three times
 I brought it to him and gave it to him, three times he recklessly
 drained it, but when the wine had got into the brains of the Cyclops,
 then I spoke to him, and my words were full of beguilement:
 "Cyclops, you ask me for my famous name. I will tell you
 365 then, but you must give me a guest gift as you have promised.
 Nobody is my name. My father and mother call me
 Nobody, as do all the others who are my companions."
 'So I spoke, and he answered me in pitiless spirit:
 "Then I will eat Nobody after his friends, and the others
 370 I will eat first, and that shall be my guest present to you."
 'He spoke and slumped away and fell on his back, and lay there

Trick of "Nobody"

with his thick neck crooked over on one side, and sleep who subdues all
 came on and captured him, and the wine gurgled up from his gullet
 with gobs of human meat. This was his drunken vomiting.
 375 Then I shoved the beam underneath a deep bed of cinders,
 waiting for it to heat, and I spoke to all my companions
 in words of courage, so none should be in a panic, and back out;
 but when the beam of olive, green as it was, was nearly
 at the point of catching fire and glowed, terribly incandescent,
 380 then I brought it close up from the fire and my friends about me
 stood fast. Some great divinity breathed courage into us.
 They seized the beam of olive, sharp at the end, and leaned on it
 into the eye, while I from above leaning my weight on it
 twirled it, like a man with a brace-and-bit who bores into
 385 a ship timber, and his men from underneath, grasping
 the strap on either side whirl it, and it bites resolutely deeper.
 So seizing the fire-point-hardened timber we twirled it
 in his eye, and the blood boiled around the hot point, so that
 the blast and scorch of the burning ball singed all his eyebrows
 390 and eyelids, and the fire made the roots of his eye crackle.
 As when a man who works as a blacksmith plunges a screaming
 great ax blade or plane into cold water, treating it
 for temper, since this is the way steel is made strong, even
 so Cyclops' eye sizzled about the beam of the olive.
 395 He gave a giant horrible cry and the rocks rattled
 to the sound, and we scuttled away in fear. He pulled the timber
 out of his eye, and it blubbed with plenty of blood, then
 when he had frantically taken it in his hands and thrown it
 away, he cried aloud to the other Cyclopes, who live
 400 around him in their own caves along the windy pinnacles.
 They hearing him came swarming up from their various places,
 and stood around the cave and asked him what was his trouble:
 "Why, Polyphemos, what do you want with all this outcry
 through the immortal night and have made us all thus sleepless?
 405 Surely no mortal against your will can be driving your sheep off?
 Surely none can be killing you by force or treachery?"
 "Then from inside the cave strong Polyphemos answered:
 "Good friends, Nobody is killing me by force or treachery."
 'So then the others speaking in winged words gave him an answer:
 410 "If alone as you are none uses violence on you,

Escape from the cave

why, there is no avoiding the sickness sent by great Zeus;
so you had better pray to your father, the lord Poseidon."

'So they spoke as they went away, and the heart within me
laughed over how my name and my perfect planning had fooled him.

- 415 But the Cyclops, groaning aloud and in the pain of his agony,
felt with his hands, and took the boulder out of the doorway,
and sat down in the entrance himself, spreading his arms wide,
to catch anyone who tried to get out with the sheep, hoping
that I would be so guileless in my heart as to try this;
420 but I was planning so that things would come out the best way,
and trying to find some release from death, for my companions
and myself too, combining all my resource and treacheries,
as with life at stake, for the great evil was very close to us.
And as I thought, this was the plan that seemed best to me.
425 There were some male sheep, rams, well nourished, thick and fleecy,
handsome and large, with a dark depth of wool. Silently
I caught these and lashed them together with pliant willow
withes, where the monstrous Cyclops lawless of mind had used to
sleep. I had them in threes, and the one in the middle carried
430 a man, while the other two went on each side, so guarding
my friends. Three rams carried each man, but as for myself,
there was one ram, far the finest of all the flock. This one
I clasped around the back, snuggled under the wool of the belly,
and stayed there still, and with a firm twist of the hands and enduring
435 spirit clung fast to the glory of this fleece, unrelenting.
So we grieved for the time and waited for the divine Dawn.

- 'But when the young Dawn showed again with her rosy fingers,
then the male sheep hastened out of the cave, toward pasture,
but the ewes were bleating all through the pens un milked, their udders
440 ready to burst. Meanwhile their master, suffering and in
bitter pain, felt over the backs of all his sheep, standing
up as they were, but in his guilelessness did not notice
how my men were fastened under the breasts of his fleecy
sheep. Last of all the flock the ram went out of the doorway,
445 loaded with his own fleece, and with me, and my close counsels.
Then, feeling him, powerful Polyphemos spoke a word to him:
"My dear old ram, why are you thus leaving the cave last of
the sheep? Never in the old days were you left behind by
the flock, but long-striding, far ahead of the rest would pasture
450 on the tender bloom of the grass, be first at running rivers,

and rocks thrown by Polyphemos

- and be eager always to lead the way first back to the sheepfold
at evening. Now you are last of all. Perhaps you are grieving
for your master's eye, which a bad man with his wicked companions
put out, after he had made my brain helpless with wine, this
455 Nobody, who I think has not yet got clear of destruction.
If only you could think like us and only be given
a voice, to tell me where he is skulking away from my anger,
then surely he would be smashed against the floor and his brains go
spattering all over the cave to make my heart lighter
460 from the burden of all the evils this niddering Nobody gave me."
'So he spoke, and sent the ram along from him, outdoors,
and when we had got a little way from the yard and the cavern,
first I got myself loose from my ram, then set my companions
free, and rapidly then, and with many a backward glance, we
465 drove the long-striding sheep, rich with fat, until we reached
our ship, and the sight of us who had escaped death was welcome
to our companions, but they began to mourn for the others;
only I would not let them cry out, but with my brows nodded
to each man, and told them to be quick and to load the fleecy
470 sheep on board our vessel and sail out on the salt water.
Quickly they went aboard the ship and sat to the oarlocks,
and sitting well in order dashed the oars in the gray sea.
But when I was as far from the land as a voice shouting
carries, I called out aloud to the Cyclops, taunting him:
475 "Cyclops, in the end it was no weak man's companions
you were to eat by violence and force in your hollow
cave, and your evil deeds were to catch up with you, and be
too strong for you, hard one, who dared to eat your own guests
in your own house, so Zeus and the rest of the gods have punished you."
480 'So I spoke, and still more the heart in him was angered.
He broke away the peak of a great mountain and let it
fly, and threw it in front of the dark-prowed ship by only
a little, it just failed to graze the steering oar's edge,
but the sea washed up in the splash as the stone went under, the tidal
485 wave it made swept us suddenly back from the open
sea to the mainland again, and forced us on shore. Then I
caught up in my hands the very long pole and pushed her
clear again, and urged my companions with words, and nodding
with my head, to throw their weight on the oars and bring us
490 out of the threatening evil, and they leaned on and rowed hard.

The curse of Polyphemos

But when we had cut through the sea to twice the previous distance,
 again I started to call to Cyclops, but my friends about me
 checked me, first one then another speaking, trying to soothe me:
 "Hard one, why are you trying once more to stir up this savage
 495 man, who just now threw his missile in the sea, forcing
 our ship to the land again, and we thought once more we were finished;
 and if he had heard a voice or any one of us speaking,
 he would have broken all our heads and our ship's timbers
 with a cast of a great jagged stone, so strong is his throwing."
 500 'So they spoke, but could not persuade the great heart in me,
 but once again in the anger of my heart I cried to him:
 "Cyclops, if any mortal man ever asks you who it was
 that inflicted upon your eye this shameful blinding,
 tell him that you were blinded by Odysseus, sacker of cities.
 505 Laertes is his father, and he makes his home in Ithaka."
 'So I spoke, and he groaned aloud and answered me, saying:
 "Ah now, a prophecy spoken of old is come to completion.
 There used to be a man here, great and strong, and a prophet,
 Telemos, Eurymos' son, who for prophecy was pre-eminent
 510 and grew old as a prophet among the Cyclopes. This man told me
 how all this that has happened now must someday be accomplished,
 and how I must lose the sight of my eye at the hands of Odysseus.
 But always I was on the lookout for a man handsome
 and tall, with great endowment of strength on him, to come here;
 515 but now the end of it is that a little man, niddering, feeble,
 has taken away the sight of my eye, first making me helpless
 with wine. So come here, Odysseus, let me give you a guest gift
 and urge the glorious Shaker of the Earth to grant you conveyance
 home. For I am his son, he announces himself as my father.
 520 He himself will heal me, if he will, but not any other
 one of the blessed gods, nor any man who is mortal."
 'So he spoke, but I answered him again and said to him:
 "I only wish it were certain I could make you reft of spirit
 and life, and send you to the house of Hades, as it is certain
 525 that not even the Shaker of the Earth will ever heal your eye for you."
 'So I spoke, but he then called to the lord Poseidon
 in prayer, reaching both arms up toward the starry heaven:
 "Hear me, Poseidon who circle the earth, dark-haired. If truly
 I am your son, and you acknowledge yourself as my father,

and his prayer to Poseidon

530 grant that Odysseus, sacker of cities, son of Laertes,
 who makes his home in Ithaka, may never reach that home;
 but if it is decided that he shall see his own people,
 and come home to his strong-founded house and to his own country,
 let him come late, in bad case, with the loss of all his companions,
 535 in someone else's ship, and find troubles in his household."
 'So he spoke in prayer, and the dark-haired god heard him.
 Then for the second time lifting a stone far greater
 he whirled it and threw, leaning into the cast his strength beyond
 measure,
 and the stone fell behind the dark-prowed ship by only
 540 a little, it just failed to graze the steering oar's edge,
 and the sea washed up in the splash as the stone went under; the tidal
 wave drove us along forward and forced us onto the island.
 But after we had so made the island, where all the rest of
 our strong-benched ships were waiting together, and our companions
 545 were sitting about them grieving, having waited so long for us,
 making this point we ran our ship on the sand and beached her,
 and we ourselves stepped out onto the break of the sea beach,
 and from the hollow ships bringing out the flocks of the Cyclops
 we shared them out so none might go cheated of his proper
 550 portion; but for me alone my strong-greaved companions
 excepted the ram when the sheep were shared, and I sacrificed him
 on the sands to Zeus, dark-clouded son of Kronos, lord over
 all, and burned him the thighs; but he was not moved by my offerings,
 but still was pondering on a way how all my strong-benched
 555 ships should be destroyed and all my eager companions.
 So for the whole length of the day until the sun's setting,
 we sat there feasting on unlimited meat and sweet wine.
 But when the sun went down and the sacred darkness came over,
 then we lay down to sleep along the break of the seashore;
 560 but when the young Dawn showed again with her rosy fingers,
 then I urged on the rest of my companions and told them
 to go aboard their ships and to cast off the stern cables,
 and quickly they went aboard the ships and sat to the oarlocks,
 and sitting well in order dashed their oars in the gray sea.
 565 From there we sailed on further along, glad to have escaped death,
 but grieving still at heart for the loss of our dear companions.

BOOK XI



'Now when we had gone down again to the sea and our vessel,
 first of all we dragged the ship down into the bright water,
 and in the black hull set the mast in place, and set sails,
 and took the sheep and walked them aboard, and ourselves also
 5 embarked, but sorrowful, and weeping big tears. Circe
 of the lovely hair, the dread goddess who talks with mortals,
 sent us an excellent companion, a following wind, filling
 the sails, to carry from astern the ship with the dark prow.
 We ourselves, over all the ship making fast the running gear,
 10 sat still, and let the wind and the steersman hold her steady.
 All day long her sails were filled as she went through the water,
 and the sun set, and all the journeying-ways were darkened.
 'She made the limit, which is of the deep-running Ocean.
 There lie the community and city of Kimmerian people,
 15 hidden in fog and cloud, nor does Helios, the radiant
 sun, ever break through the dark, to illuminate them with his shining,
 neither when he climbs up into the starry heaven,
 nor when he wheels to return again from heaven to earth,
 but always a glum night is spread over wretched mortals.
 20 Making this point, we ran the ship ashore, and took out
 the sheep, and ourselves walked along by the stream of the Ocean
 until we came to that place of which Circe had spoken.
 'There Perimedes and Eurylochos held the victims
 fast, and I, drawing from beside my thigh my sharp sword,

25 dug a pit, of about a cubit in each direction,
 and poured it full of drink offerings for all the dead, first
 honey mixed with milk, and the second pouring was sweet wine,
 and the third, water, and over it all I sprinkled white barley.
 I promised many times to the strengthless heads of the perished
 30 dead that, returning to Ithaka, I would slaughter a barren
 cow, my best, in my palace, and pile the pyre with treasures,
 and to Teiresias apart would dedicate an all-black
 ram, the one conspicuous in all our sheep flocks.
 Now when, with sacrifices and prayers, I had so entreated
 35 the hordes of the dead, I took the sheep and cut their throats
 over the pit, and the dark-clouding blood ran in, and the souls
 of the perished dead gathered to the place, up out of Erebos,
 brides, and young unmarried men, and long-suffering elders,
 virgins, tender and with the sorrows of young hearts upon them,
 40 and many fighting men killed in battle, stabbed with brazen
 spears, still carrying their bloody armor upon them.
 These came swarming around my pit from every direction
 with inhuman clamor, and green fear took hold of me.
 Then I encouraged my companions and told them, taking
 45 the sheep that were lying by, slaughtered with the pitiless
 bronze, to skin these, and burn them, and pray to the divinities,
 to Hades the powerful, and to revered Persephone,
 while I myself, drawing from beside my thigh my sharp sword,
 crouched there, and would not let the strengthless heads of the perished
 50 dead draw nearer to the blood, until I had questioned Teiresias.
 'But first there came the soul of my companion, Elpenor,
 for he had not yet been buried under earth of the wide ways,
 since we had left his body behind in Circe's palace,
 unburied and unwept, with this other errand before us.
 55 I broke into tears at the sight of him, and my heart pitied him,
 and so I spoke aloud to him and addressed him in winged words:
 "Elpenor, how did you come here beneath the fog and the darkness?
 You have come faster on foot than I could in my black ship."
 'So I spoke, and he groaned aloud and spoke and answered:
 60 "Son of Laertes and seed of Zeus, resourceful Odysseus,
 the evil will of the spirit and the wild wine bewildered me.
 I lay down on the roof of Circe's palace, and never thought,
 when I went down, to go by way of the long ladder,

The prophecy of Elpenor

but blundered straight off the edge of the roof, so that my neck bone
 65 was broken out of its sockets, and my soul went down to Hades'.
 But now I pray you, by those you have yet to see, who are not here,
 by your wife, and by your father, who reared you when you were little,
 and by Telemachos whom you left alone in your palace;
 for I know that after you leave this place and the house of Hades
 70 you will put back with your well-made ship to the island, Aiaia;
 there at that time, my lord, I ask that you remember me,
 and do not go and leave me behind unwept, unburied,
 when you leave, for fear I might become the gods' curse upon you;
 but burn me there with all my armor that belongs to me,
 75 and heap up a grave mound beside the beach of the gray sea,
 for an unhappy man, so that those to come will know of me.
 Do this for me, and on top of the grave mound plant the oar
 with which I rowed when I was alive and among my companions."
 'So he spoke, and I in turn spoke to him in answer:
 80 "All this, my unhappy friend, I will do for you as you ask me."
 'So we two stayed there exchanging our sad words, I on
 one side holding my sword over the blood, while opposite
 me the phantom of my companion talked long with me.
 'Next there came to me the soul of my dead mother,
 85 Antikleia, daughter of great-hearted Autolykos,
 whom I had left alive when I went to sacred Iliion.
 I broke into tears at the sight of her and my heart pitied her,
 but even so, for all my thronging sorrow, I would not
 let her draw near the blood until I had questioned Teiresias.
 90 'Now came the soul of Teiresias the Theban, holding
 a staff of gold, and he knew who I was, and spoke to me:
 "Son of Laertes and seed of Zeus, resourceful Odysseus,
 how is it then, unhappy man, you have left the sunlight
 and come here, to look on dead men, and this place without pleasure?
 95 Now draw back from the pit, and hold your sharp sword away from me,
 so that I can drink of the blood and speak the truth to you."
 'So he spoke, and I, holding away the sword with the silver
 nails, pushed it back in the sheath, and the flawless prophet,
 after he had drunk the blood, began speaking to me.
 100 "Glorious Odysseus, what you are after is sweet homecoming,
 but the god will make it hard for you. I think you will not
 escape the Shaker of the Earth, who holds a grudge against you

about the last voyage of Odysseus

in his heart, and because you blinded his dear son, hates you.
 But even so and still you might come back, after much suffering,
 105 if you can contain your own desire, and contain your companions',
 at that time when you first put in your well-made vessel
 at the island Thrinakia, escaping the sea's blue water,
 and there discover pasturing the cattle and fat sheep
 of Helios, who sees all things, and listens to all things.
 110 Then, if you keep your mind on homecoming, and leave these unharmed,
 you might all make your way to Ithaka, after much suffering;
 but if you do harm them, then I testify to the destruction
 of your ship and your companions, but if you yourself get clear,
 you will come home in bad case, with the loss of all your companions,
 115 in someone else's ship, and find troubles in your household,
 insolent men, who are eating away your livelihood
 and courting your godlike wife and offering gifts to win her.
 You may punish the violences of these men, when you come home.
 But after you have killed these suitors in your own palace,
 120 either by treachery, or openly with the sharp bronze,
 then you must take up your well-shaped oar and go on a journey
 until you come where there are men living who know nothing
 of the sea, and who eat food that is not mixed with salt, who never
 have known ships whose cheeks are painted purple, who never
 125 have known well-shaped oars, which act for ships as wings do.
 And I will tell you a very clear proof, and you cannot miss it.
 When, as you walk, some other wayfarer happens to meet you,
 and says you carry a winnow-fan on your bright shoulder,
 then you must plant your well-shaped oar in the ground, and render
 130 ceremonious sacrifice to the lord Poseidon,
 one ram and one bull, and a mounter of sows, a boar pig,
 and make your way home again and render holy hecatombs
 to the immortal gods who hold the wide heaven, all
 of them in order. Death will come to you from the sea, in
 135 some altogether unwarlike way, and it will end you
 in the ebbing time of a sleek old age. Your people
 about you will be prosperous. All this is true that I tell you."
 'So he spoke, but I in turn said to him in answer:
 "All this, Teiresias, surely must be as the gods spun it.
 140 But come now, tell me this and give me an accurate answer.
 I see before me now the soul of my perished mother,

but she sits beside the blood in silence, and has not yet deigned
to look directly at her own son and speak a word to me.
Tell me, lord, what will make her know me, and know my presence?"

- 145 'So I spoke, and he at once said to me in answer:
"Easily I will tell you and put it in your understanding.
Any one of the perished dead you allow to come up
to the blood will give you a true answer, but if you begrudge this
to any one, he will return to the place where he came from."
150 'So speaking, the soul of the lord Teiresias went back into
the house of Hades, once he had uttered his prophecies, while I
waited steadily where I was standing, until my mother
came and drank the dark-clouding blood, and at once she knew me,
and full of lamentation she spoke to me in winged words:
155 "My child, how did you come here beneath the fog and the darkness
and still alive? All this is hard for the living to look on,
for in between lie the great rivers and terrible waters
that flow, Ocean first of all, which there is no means of crossing
on foot, not unless one has a well-made ship. Are you
160 come now to this place from Troy, with your ship and your companions,
after wandering a long time, and have you not yet come
to Ithaka, and there seen your wife in your palace?"

- 'So she spoke, and I in turn said to her in answer:
"Mother, a duty brought me here to the house of Hades.
165 I had to consult the soul of Teiresias the Theban.
For I have not yet been near Achaian country, nor ever
set foot on our land, but always suffering I have wandered
since the time I first went along with great Agamemnon
to Ilion, land of good horses, and the battle against the Trojans.
170 But come now, tell me this, and give me an accurate answer.
What doom of death that lays men low has been your undoing?
Was it a long sickness, or did Artemis of the arrows
come upon you with her painless shafts, and destroy you?
And tell me of my father and son whom I left behind. Is
175 my inheritance still with them, or does some other
man hold them now, and thinks I will come no more? Tell me
about the wife I married, what she wants, what she is thinking,
and whether she stays fast by my son, and guards everything,
or if she has married the best man among the Achaians."
180 'So I spoke, and my queenly mother answered me quickly:

- "All too much with enduring heart she does wait for you
there in your own palace, and always with her the wretched
nights and the days also waste her away with weeping.
No one yet holds your fine inheritance, but in freedom
185 Telemachos administers your allotted lands, and apports
the equal feasts, work that befits a man with authority
to judge, for all call him in. Your father remains, on the estate
where he is, and does not go to the city. There is no bed there
nor is there bed clothing nor blankets nor shining coverlets,
190 but in the winter time he sleeps in the house, where the thralls do,
in the dirt next to the fire, and with foul clothing upon him;
but when the summer comes and the blossoming time of harvest,
everywhere he has places to sleep on the ground, on fallen
leaves in piles along the rising ground of his orchard,
195 and there he lies, grieving, and the sorrow grows big within him
as he longs for your homecoming, and harsh old age is on him.
And so it was with me also and that was the reason I perished,
nor in my palace did the lady of arrows, well-aiming,
come upon me with her painless shafts, and destroy me,
200 nor was I visited by sickness, which beyond other
things takes the life out of the body with hateful weakness,
but, shining Odysseus, it was my longing for you, your cleverness
and your gentle ways, that took the sweet spirit of life from me."
'So she spoke, but I, pondering it in my heart, yet wished
205 to take the soul of my dead mother in my arms. Three times
I started toward her, and my heart was urgent to hold her,
and three times she fluttered out of my hands like a shadow
or a dream, and the sorrow sharpened at the heart within me,
and so I spoke to her and addressed her in winged words, saying:
210 "Mother, why will you not wait for me, when I am trying
to hold you, so that even in Hades' with our arms embracing
we can both take the satisfaction of dismal mourning?
Or are you nothing but an image that proud Persephone
sent my way, to make me grieve all the more for sorrow?"
215 'So I spoke, and my queenly mother answered me quickly:
"Oh my child, ill-fated beyond all other mortals,
this is not Persephone, daughter of Zeus, beguiling you,
but it is only what happens, when they die, to all mortals.
The sinews no longer hold the flesh and the bones together,

220 and once the spirit has left the white bones, all the rest
of the body is made subject to the fire's strong fury,
but the soul flitters out like a dream and flies away. Therefore
you must strive back toward the light again with all speed; but remember
these things for your wife, so you may tell her hereafter."

225 'So we two were conversing back and forth, and the women
came to me. They were sent my way by proud Persephone.
These were all who had been the wives and daughters of princes,
and now they gathered in swarms around the dark blood. I then
thought about a way to question them, each by herself,
230 and as I thought, this was the plan that seemed best to me;
drawing out the long-edged sword from beside my big thigh,
I would not let them all drink the dark blood at the same time.
So they waited and came to me in order, and each one
told me about her origin, and I questioned all of them.

235 "There first I saw Tyro, gloriously descended,
and she told me she was the daughter of stately Salmoneus,
but said she was the wife of Kretheus, the son of Aiolos,
and she was in love with a river, godlike Enipeus, by far
the handsomest of all those rivers whose streams cross over
240 the earth, and she used to haunt Enipeus' beautiful waters;
taking his likeness, the god who circles the earth and shakes it
lay with her where the swirling river finds its outlet,
and a sea-blue wave curved into a hill of water reared up
about the two, to hide the god and the mortal woman;
245 and he broke her virgin zone and drifted a sleep upon her.
But when the god had finished with the act of lovemaking,
he took her by the hand and spoke to her and named her, saying:
"Be happy, lady, in this love, and when the year passes
you will bear glorious children, for the couplings of the immortals
250 are not without issue. You must look after them, and raise them.
Go home now and hold your peace and tell nobody
my name, but I tell it to you; I am the Earthshaker Poseidon."

'So he spoke and dived back into the heaving water
of the sea, but she conceived and bore Pelias and Neleus,
255 and both of these grew up to be strong henchmen of mighty
Zeus; Pelias lived, rich in sheepflocks, in the wide spaces
of Iolkos, while the other was king in sandy Pylos;
but this queen among women bore the rest of her children to Kretheus,

Aison and Pheres and Amythaon delighting in horses.

260 'After her I saw Antiope, who was the daughter
of Asopos, who claimed she had also lain in the embraces
of Zeus, and borne two sons to him, Amphion and Zethos.
These first established the foundations of seven-gated
Thebes, and built the bulwarks, since without bulwarks they could not
265 have lived, for all their strength, in Thebes of the wide spaces.

'After her I saw Amphitryon's wife, Alkmene,
who, after lying in love in the embraces of great Zeus,
brought forth Herakles, lion-hearted and bold of purpose.
And I saw Megara, daughter of high-spirited Kreion,
270 whom Amphitryon's bold and weariless son had married.

'I saw the beautiful Epikaste, Oidipodes' mother,
who in the ignorance of her mind had done a monstrous
thing when she married her own son. He killed his father
and married her, but the gods soon made it all known to mortals.
275 But he, for all his sorrows, in beloved Thebes continued
to be lord over the Kadmeians, all through the bitter designing
of the gods; while she went down to Hades of the gates, the strong one,
knotting a noose and hanging sheer from the high ceiling,
in the constraint of her sorrow, but left to him who survived her
280 all the sorrows that are brought to pass by a mother's furies.

'And I saw Chloris, surpassingly lovely, the one whom Neleus
married for her beauty, giving numberless gifts to win her.
She was the youngest daughter of Iasos' son Amphion,
who once ruled strongly over Orchomenos of the Minyai.
285 So she was queen of Pylos and she bore him glorious children,
Nestor and Chromios and proud Periklymenos. Also
she bore that marvel among mortals, majestic Pero,
whom all the heroes round about courted, but Neleus would not
give her to any; unless he could drive away the broad-faced
290 horn-curved cattle of strong Iphikles out of Phylake.
It was hard to do, and only the blameless seer Melampous
undertook it, but he was bound fast by the hard destiny
of the god, and the painful fetters on him, and the loutish oxherds.
But when the months and the days had come to an end, and the year
295 had gone full circle and come back with the seasons returning,
then strong Iphikles released him, when he had told him
all prophecies he knew; and the will of Zeus was accomplished.

Interlude—Alkinoös and Arete

'And I saw Leda, who had been the wife of Tyndareos,
and she had borne to Tyndareos two sons with strong hearts,
300 Kastor, breaker of horses, and the strong boxer, Polydeukes.
The life-giving earth holds both of them, yet they are still living,
and, even underneath the earth, enjoying the honor
of Zeus, they live still every other day; on the next day
they are dead, but they are given honor even as gods are.
305 'After her I saw Iphimedeia, wife of Aloeus,
but she told me how she had been joined in love with Poseidon
and borne two sons to him, but these in the end had not lived
long, Otos like a god, and the far-famed Ephialtes;
310 and these were the tallest men the grain-giving earth has brought forth
ever, and the handsomest by far, after famous Orion.
When they were only nine years old they measured nine cubits
across, but in height they grew to nine fathoms, and even made threats
against the immortal gods on Olympos, that they would carry
the turmoil of battle with all its many sorrows against them,
315 and were minded to pile Ossa on Olympos, and above Ossa
Pelion of the trembling leaves, to climb the sky. Surely
they would have carried it out if they had come to maturity,
but the son of Zeus whom Leto with ordered hair had borne him,
Apollo, killed them both, before ever the down gathered
320 below their temples, or on their chins the beards had blossomed.
'I saw Phaidra and Prokris and Ariadne, the beautiful
daughter of malignant Minos. Theseus at one time
was bringing her from Crete to the high ground of sacred Athens,
but got no joy of her, since before that Artemis killed her
325 in sea-washed Dia, when Dionysos bore witness against her.
'I saw Maira, Klymene, and Eriphyle the hateful,
who accepted precious gold for the life of her own dear husband.
But I could not tell over the whole number of them nor name all
the women I saw who were the wives and daughters of heroes,
330 for before that the divine night would give out. It is time now
for my sleep, either joining my companions on board the fast ship,
or here; but you, and the gods, will see to my homeward journey.'
So he spoke, and all of them stayed stricken to silence,
held in thrall by the story all through the shadowy chambers.
335 Now it was white-armed Arete who began the discourse:
'Phaiakians, what do you think now of this man before you

admire Odysseus the storyteller

for beauty and stature, and for the mind well balanced within him?
And again he is my own guest, but each one of you has some part
in honoring him. Do not hurry to send him off, nor cut short
340 his gifts, when he is in such need, for you all have many
possessions, by the grace of the gods, stored up in your palaces.'
Then in turn the aged hero Echeneos spoke forth,
who was the most advanced in age of all the Phaiakians:
'Friends, our circumspect queen is not off the mark in her speaking,
345 nor short of what we expect of her. Do then as she tells us.
From now on the word and the act belong to Alkinoös.'
Then in turn Alkinoös spoke to him and answered:
'Even so this word will be mine to say, as long as
I am alive and king over the oar-loving Phaiakians.
350 But let our guest, much though he longs for the homeward journey,
still endure to wait till tomorrow, until I have raised all
the contribution; but the men shall see to his convoy
home, and I most of all; for mine is the power in this district.'
Then resourceful Odysseus spoke in turn and answered him:
355 'O great Alkinoös, pre-eminent among all people,
if you urged me to stay here even for the length of a year,
and still sped my conveyance home and gave me glorious
presents, that would be what I wished, there would be much advantage
in coming back with a fuller hand to my own dear country,
360 and I would be more respected so and be more popular
with all people who saw me make my return to Ithaka.'
Then Alkinoös answered him in turn and said to him:
'Odysseus, we as we look upon you do not imagine
that you are a deceptive or thievish man, the sort that the black earth
365 breeds in great numbers, people who wander widely, making up
lying stories, from which no one could learn anything. You have
a grace upon your words, and there is sound sense within them,
and expertly, as a singer would do, you have told the story
of the dismal sorrows befallen yourself and all of the Argives.
370 But come now, tell me this and give me an accurate answer:
Did you see any of your godlike companions, who once with you
went to Ilion and there met their destiny? Here is
a night that is very long, it is endless. It is not time yet
to sleep in the palace. But go on telling your wonderful story.
375 I myself could hold out until the bright dawn, if only

you could bear to tell me, here in the palace, of your sufferings.'

Then resourceful Odysseus spoke in turn and answered him:

'O great Alkinoös, pre-eminent among all people,

there is a time for many words, and a time for sleeping;

380 but if you insist on hearing me still, I would not begrudge you

the tale of these happenings and others yet more pitiful

to hear, the sorrows of my companions, who perished later,

who escaped onslaught and cry of battle, but perished

all for the sake of a vile woman, on the homeward journey.

385 'Now when chaste Persephone had scattered the female

souls of the women, driving them off in every direction,

there came the soul of Agamemnon, the son of Atreus,

grieving, and the souls of the other men, who died with him

and met their doom in the house of Aigisthos, were gathered around him.

390 He knew me at once, when he drank the dark blood, and fell to

lamentation loud and shrill, and the tears came springing,

and threw himself into my arms, meaning so to embrace me,

but there was no force there any longer, nor any juice left

now in his flexible limbs, as there had been in time past.

395 I broke into tears at the sight of him and my heart pitied him,

and so I spoke aloud to him and addressed him in winged words:

"Son of Atreus, most lordly and king of men, Agamemnon,

what doom of death that lays men low has been your undoing?

Was it with the ships, and did Poseidon, rousing a stormblast

400 of battering winds that none would wish for, prove your undoing?

Or was it on the dry land, did men embattled destroy you

as you tried to cut out cattle and fleecy sheep from their holdings,

or fighting against them for the sake of their city and women?"

'So I spoke, and he in turn said to me in answer:

405 "Son of Laertes and seed of Zeus, resourceful Odysseus,

not in the ships, nor did Poseidon, rousing a stormblast

of battering winds that none would wish for, prove my destruction,

nor on dry land did enemy men destroy me in battle;

Aigisthos, working out my death and destruction, invited

410 me to his house, and feasted me, and killed me there, with the help

of my sluttish wife, as one cuts down an ox at his manger.

So I died a most pitiful death, and my other companions

were killed around me without mercy, like pigs with shining

tusks, in the house of a man rich and very powerful,

415 for a wedding, or a festival, or a communal dinner.

You have been present in your time at the slaughter of many

men, killed singly, or in the strong encounters of battle;

but beyond all others you would have been sorry at heart

for this scene, how we lay sprawled by the mixing bowl and the loaded

420 tables, all over the palace, and the whole floor was steaming

with blood; and most pitiful was the voice I heard of Priam's

daughter Cassandra, killed by treacherous Klytaimestra

over me; but I lifted my hands and with them beat on

the ground as I died upon the sword, but the sluttish woman

425 turned away from me and was so hard that her hands would not

press shut my eyes and mouth though I was going to Hades'.

So there is nothing more deadly or more vile than a woman

who stores her mind with acts that are of such sort, as this one

did when she thought of this act of dishonor, and plotted

430 the murder of her lawful husband. See, I had been thinking

that I would be welcome to my children and thralls of my household

when I came home, but she with thoughts surpassingly grisly

splashed the shame on herself and the rest of her sex, on women

still to come, even on the one whose acts are virtuous."

435 'So he spoke, and I again said to him in answer:

"Shame it is, how most terribly Zeus of the wide brows

from the beginning has been hateful to the seed of Atreus

through the schemes of women. Many of us died for the sake of Helen,

and when you were far, Klytaimestra plotted treason against you."

440 'So I spoke, and he in turn said to me in answer:

"So by this, do not be too easy even with your wife,

nor give her an entire account of all you are sure of.

Tell her part of it, but let the rest be hidden in silence.

And yet you, Odysseus, will never be murdered by your wife.

445 The daughter of Ikarios, circumspect Penelope,

is all too virtuous and her mind is stored with good thoughts.

Ah well. She was only a young wife when we left her

and went off to the fighting, and she had an infant child then

at her breast. That child now must sit with the men and be counted.

450 Happy he! For his dear father will come back, and see him,

and he will fold his father in his arms, as is right. My wife

never even let me feed my eyes with the sight of

my own son, but before that I myself was killed by her.

Interview with the ghost of Achilles

And put away in your heart this other thing that I tell you.
 455 When you bring your ship in to your own dear country, do it
 secretly, not in the open. There is no trusting in women.
 But come now, tell me this and give me an accurate answer;
 tell me if you happened to hear that my son was still living,
 whether perhaps in Orchomenos, or in sandy Pylos,
 460 or perhaps with Menelaos in wide Sparta; for nowhere
 upon the earth has there been any death of noble Orestes."
 'So he spoke, and I again said to him in answer:
 "Son of Atreus, why do you ask me that? I do not know
 if he is alive or dead. It is bad to babble emptily."
 465 'So we two stood there exchanging our sad words, grieving
 both together and shedding the big tears. After this,
 there came to us the soul of Peleus' son, Achilles,
 and the soul of Patroklos and the soul of stately Antilochos,
 and the soul of Aias, who for beauty and stature was greatest
 470 of all the Danaans, next to the stately son of Peleus:
 The soul of swift-footed Achilles, scion of Aiakos, knew me,
 and full of lamentation he spoke to me in winged words:
 "Son of Laertes and seed of Zeus, resourceful Odysseus,
 hard man, what made you think of this bigger endeavor, how could you
 475 endure to come down here to Hades' place, where the senseless
 dead men dwell, mere imitations of perished mortals?"
 'So he spoke, and I again said to him in answer:
 "Son of Peleus, far the greatest of the Achaians, Achilles,
 I came for the need to consult Teiresias, if he might tell me
 480 some plan by which I might come back to rocky Ithaka;
 for I have not yet been near Achaian country, nor ever
 set foot on my land, but always I have troubles. Achilles,
 no man before has been more blessed than you, nor ever
 will be. Before, when you were alive, we Argives honored you
 485 as we did the gods, and now in this place you have great authority
 over the dead. Do not grieve, even in death, Achilles."
 'So I spoke, and he in turn said to me in answer:
 "O shining Odysseus, never try to console me for dying.
 I would rather follow the plow as thrall to another
 490 man, one with no land allotted him and not much to live on,
 than be a king over all the perished dead. But come now,
 tell me anything you have heard of my proud son, whether

Memories of Troy

or not he went along to war to fight as a champion;
 and tell me anything you have heard about stately Peleus,
 495 whether he still keeps his position among the Myrmidon
 hordes, or whether in Hellas and Phthia they have diminished
 his state, because old age constrains his hands and feet, and I
 am no longer there under the light of the sun to help him,
 not the man I used to be once, when in the wide Troad
 500 I killed the best of their people, fighting for the Argives. If only
 for a little while I could come like that to the house of my father,
 my force and my invincible hands would terrify such men
 as use force on him and keep him away from his rightful honors."
 'So he spoke, and I again said to him in answer:
 505 "I have no report to give you of stately Peleus,
 but as for your beloved son Neoptolemos, I will
 tell you, since you ask me to do it, all the true story;
 for I myself, in the hollow hull of a balanced ship, brought him
 over from Skyros, to join the strong-greaved Achaians. Whenever
 510 we, around the city of Troy, talked over our counsels,
 he would always speak first, and never blunder. In speaking
 only godlike Nestor and I were better than he was.
 And when we Achaians fought in the Trojan plain, he never
 would hang back where there were plenty of other men, nor stay with
 515 the masses, but run far out in front, giving way to no man
 for fury, and many were those he killed in the terrible fighting.
 I could not tell over the number of all nor name all
 the people he killed as he fought for the Argives, but what a great man
 was one, the son of Telephos he slew with the brazen
 520 spear, the hero Eurypylos, and many Keteian
 companions were killed about him, by reason of womanish presents.
 Next to great Memnon, this was the finest man I ever
 saw. Again, when we who were best of the Argives entered
 the horse that Epeios made, and all the command was given
 525 to me, to keep close hidden inside, or sally out from it,
 the other leaders of the Danaans and men of counsel
 were wiping their tears away and the limbs were shaking under
 each man of them; but never at any time did I see him
 losing his handsome color and going pale, or wiping
 530 the tears off his face, but rather he implored me to let him
 sally out of the horse; he kept feeling for his sword hilt

The angry ghost of Aias

and spear weighted with bronze, full of evil thoughts for the Trojans.
But after we had sacked the sheer citadel of Priam,
with his fair share and a princely prize of his own, he boarded
535 his ship, unscathed; he had not been hit by thrown and piercing
bronze, nor stabbed in close-up combat, as often happens
in fighting. The War God rages at all, and favors no man."

'So I spoke, and the soul of the swift-footed scion of Aiakos
stalked away in long strides across the meadow of asphodel,
540 happy for what I had said of his son, and how he was famous.

'Now the rest of the souls of the perished dead stood near me
grieving, and each one spoke to me and told of his sorrows.
Only the soul of Telamonian Aias stood off

at a distance from me, angry still over that decision
545 I won against him, when beside the ships we disputed
our cases for the arms of Achilles. His queenly mother
set them as prize, and the sons of the Trojans, with Pallas Athene,
judged; and I wish I had never won in a contest like this,
so high a head has gone under the ground for the sake of that armor,
550 Aias, who for beauty and for achievement surpassed
all the Danaans next to the stately son of Peleus.

So I spoke to him now in words of conciliation:

"Aias, son of stately Telamon, could you then never
even in death forget your anger against me, because of
555 that cursed armor? The gods made it to pain the Achaians,
so great a bulwark were you, who were lost to them. We Achaians
grieved for your death as incessantly as for Achilles
the son of Peleus at his death, and there is no other
to blame, but Zeus; he, in his terrible hate for the army
560 of Danaan spearmen, visited this destruction upon you.
Come nearer, my lord, so you can hear what I say and listen
to my story; suppress your anger and lordly spirit."

'So I spoke. He gave no answer, but went off after
the other souls of the perished dead men, into the darkness.

565 There, despite his anger, he might have spoken, or I might
have spoken to him, but the heart in my inward breast wanted
still to see the souls of the other perished dead men.

'There I saw Minos, the glorious son of Zeus, seated,
holding a golden scepter and issuing judgments among
570 the dead, who all around the great lord argued their cases,

Heroes in torment—Herakles

some sitting and some standing, by the wide-gated house of Hades.

'After him I was aware of gigantic Orion
in the meadow of asphodel, rounding up and driving together
wild animals he himself had killed in the lonely mountains,
575 holding in his hands a brazen club, forever unbroken.

'And I saw Tityos, Earth's glorious son, lying
in the plain, and sprawled over nine acres. Two vultures,
sitting one on either side, were tearing his liver,
plunging inside the caul. With his hands he could not beat them
580 away. He had manhandled Leto, the honored consort
of Zeus, as she went through spacious Panopeus, toward Pytho.

'And I saw Tantalos also, suffering hard pains, standing
in lake water that came up to his chin, and thirsty
as he was, he tried to drink, but could capture nothing;
585 for every time the old man, trying to drink, stooped over,
the water would drain away and disappear, and the black earth
showed at his feet, and the divinity dried it away. Over
his head trees with lofty branches had fruit like a shower descending,
pear trees and pomegranate trees and apple trees with fruit shining,
590 and figs that were sweet and olives ripened well, but each time
the old man would straighten up and reach with his hands for them,
the wind would toss them away toward the clouds overhanging.

'Also I saw Sisyphos. He was suffering strong pains,
and with both arms embracing the monstrous stone, struggling
595 with hands and feet alike, he would try to push the stone upward
to the crest of the hill, but when it was on the point of going
over the top, the force of gravity turned it backward,
and the pitiless stone rolled back down to the level. He then
tried once more to push it up, straining hard, and sweat ran
600 all down his body, and over his head a cloud of dust rose.

'After him I was aware of powerful Herakles;
his image, that is, but he himself among the immortal
gods enjoys their festivals, married to sweet-stepping
Hebe, child of great Zeus and Hera of the golden sandals.
605 All around him was a clamor of the dead as of birds scattering
scared in every direction; but he came on, like dark night,
holding his bow bare with an arrow laid on the bowstring,
and forever looking, as one who shot, with terrible glances.
There was a terrible belt crossed over his chest, and a golden

Return to Circe's island

610 baldrick, with marvelous works of art that figured upon it,
bears, and lions with glaring eyes, and boars of the forests,
the battles and the quarrels, the murders and the manslaughters.
May he who artfully designed them, and artfully put them
upon that baldrick, never again do any designing.

615 He recognized me at once as soon as his eyes had seen me,
and full of lamentation he spoke to me in winged words:
"Son of Laertes and seed of Zeus, resourceful Odysseus,
unhappy man, are you too leading some wretched destiny
such as I too pursued when I went still in the sunlight?

620 For I was son of Kronian Zeus, but I had an endless
spell of misery. I was made bondman to one who was far worse
than I, and he loaded my difficult labors on me. One time
he sent me here to fetch the dog back, and thought there could be
no other labor to be devised more difficult than that

625 one, but I brought the dog up and led him from the realm of Hades,
and Hermes saw me on my way, with Pallas Athene."
So he spoke, and went back into the realm of Hades,
but I stayed fast in place where I was, to see if some other
one of the generation of heroes who died before me

630 would come; and I might have seen men earlier still, whom I wanted
to see, Perithoös and Theseus, gods' glorious children;
but before that the hordes of the dead men gathered about me
with inhuman clamor, and green fear took hold of me
with the thought that proud Persephone might send up against me

635 some gorgonish head of a terrible monster up out of Hades'.
So, going back on board my ship, I told my companions
also to go aboard, and to cast off the stern cables;
and quickly they went aboard the ship and sat to the oarlocks,
and the swell of the current carried her down the Ocean river

640 with rowing at first, but after that on a fair wind following.

BOOK XII



'Now when our ship had left the stream of the Ocean river,
and come back to the wide crossing of the sea's waves, and to the island
of Aiaia, where lies the house of the early Dawn, her dancing
spaces, and where Helios, the sun, makes his uprising,

5 making this point we ran our ship on the sand and beached her,
and we ourselves stepped out onto the break of the sea beach,
and there we fell asleep and waited for the divine Dawn.

'But when the young Dawn showed again with her rosy fingers,
then I sent my companions away to the house of Circe

10 to bring back the body of Elpenor, who had died there.
Then we cut logs, and where the extreme of the foreland jutted
out, we buried him, sorrowful, shedding warm tears for him.
But when the dead man had burned and the dead man's armor, piling
the grave mound and pulling the gravestone to stand above it,

15 we planted the well-shaped oar in the very top of the grave mound.
'So we were busy each with our various work, nor was Circe
unaware that we had come back from Hades'. Presently
she came, attired, and her attendants following carried
bread at her will and many meats and the shining red wine.

20 Bright among goddesses she stood in our midst and addressed us:
'Unhappy men, who went alive to the house of Hades,
so dying twice, when all the rest of mankind die only
once, come then eat what is there and drink your wine, staying
here all the rest of the day, and then tomorrow, when dawn shows,

Warning about the cattle of Helios

for they lie close together, you could even cast with an arrow across. There is a great fig tree grows there, dense with foliage, and under this shining Charybdis sucks down the black water.

105 For three times a day she flows it up, and three times she sucks it terribly down; may you not be there when she sucks down water, for not even the Earthshaker could rescue you out of that evil. But sailing your ship swiftly drive her past and avoid her, and make for Skylla's rock instead, since it is far better

110 to mourn six friends lost out of your ship than the whole company." So she spoke, but I in turn said to her in answer: "Come then, goddess, answer me truthfully this: is there some way for me to escape away from deadly Charybdis, but yet fight the other one off, when she attacks my companions?"

115 "So I spoke, and she, shining among goddesses, answered: "Hardy man, your mind is full forever of fighting and battle work. Will you not give way even to the immortals? She is no mortal thing but a mischief immortal, dangerous difficult and bloodthirsty, and there is no fighting against her,

120 nor any force of defense. It is best to run away from her. For if you arm for battle beside her rock and waste time there, I fear she will make another outrush and catch you with all her heads, and snatch away once more the same number of men. Drive by as hard as you can, but invoke Krataiis.

125 She is the mother of Skylla and bore this mischief for mortals, and she will stay her from making another sally against you. "Then you will reach the island Thrinakia, where are pastured the cattle and the fat sheep of the sun god, Helios, seven herds of oxen, and as many beautiful sheepflocks,

130 and fifty to each herd. There is no giving birth among them, nor do they ever die away, and their shepherdesses are gods, nymphs with sweet hair, Lampetia and Phaethousa, whom shining Neaira bore to Hyperion the sun god. These, when their queenly mother had given them birth and reared them,

135 she settled in the island Thrinakia, far away, to live there and guard their father's sheep and his horn-curved cattle. Then, if you keep your mind on homecoming and leave these unharmed, you might all make your way to Ithaka, after much suffering; but if you do harm them, then I testify to the destruction

140 of your ship and your companions, but if you yourself get clear,

Departure—the Sirens

you will come home in bad case with the loss of all your companions." So she spoke, and Dawn of the golden throne came on us. She, shining among goddesses, went away, up the island. Then, going back on board my ship, I told my companions

145 also to go aboard, and to cast off the stern cables, and quickly they went aboard the ship and sat to the oarlocks, and sitting well in order dashed the oars in the gray sea; but fair-haired Circe, the dread goddess who talks with mortals, sent us an excellent companion, a following wind, filling the sails, to carry from astern the ship with the dark prow.

150 We ourselves, over all the ship making fast the running gear, sat there, and let the wind and the steersman hold her steady. Then, sorrowful as I was, I spoke and told my companions: "Friends, since it is not right for one or two of us only

155 to know the divinations that Circe, bright among goddesses, gave me, so I will tell you, and knowing all we may either die, or turn aside from death and escape destruction. First of all she tells us to keep away from the magical Sirens and their singing and their flowery meadow, but only

160 I, she said, was to listen to them, but you must tie me hard in hurtful bonds, to hold me fast in position upright against the mast, with the ropes' ends fastened around it; but if I supplicate you and implore you to set me free, then you must tie me fast with even more lashings."

165 "So as I was telling all the details to my companions, meanwhile the well-made ship was coming rapidly closer to the Sirens' isle, for the harmless wind was driving her onward; but immediately then the breeze dropped, and a windless calm fell there, and some divinity stilled the tossing

170 waters. My companions stood up, and took the sails down, and stowed them away in the hollow hull, and took their places for rowing, and with their planed oarblades whitened the water. Then I, taking a great wheel of wax, with the sharp bronze cut a little piece off, and rubbed it together in my heavy

175 hands, and soon the wax grew softer, under the powerful stress of the sun, and the heat and light of Hyperion's lordling. One after another, I stopped the ears of all my companions, and they then bound me hand and foot in the fast ship, standing upright against the mast with the ropes' ends lashed around it,

Passage by Skylla

180 and sitting then to row they dashed their oars in the gray sea.
 But when we were as far from the land as a voice shouting
 carries, lightly plying, the swift ship as it drew nearer
 was seen by the Sirens, and they directed their sweet song toward us:
 "Come this way, honored Odysseus, great glory of the Achaians,
 185 and stay your ship, so that you can listen here to our singing;
 for no one else has ever sailed past this place in his black ship
 until he has listened to the honey-sweet voice that issues
 from our lips; then goes on, well pleased, knowing more than ever
 he did; for we know everything that the Argives and Trojans
 190 did and suffered in wide Troy through the gods' despite.
 "Over all the generous earth we know everything that happens."
 'So they sang, in sweet utterance, and the heart within me
 desired to listen, and I signaled my companions to set me
 free, nodding with my brows, but they leaned on and rowed hard,
 195 and Perimedes and Eurylochos, rising up, straightway
 fastened me with even more lashings and squeezed me tighter.
 But when they had rowed on past the Sirens, and we could no longer
 hear their voices and lost the sound of their singing, presently
 my eager companions took away from their ears the beeswax
 200 with which I had stopped them. Then they set me free from my lashings.
 'But after we had left the island behind, the next thing
 we saw was smoke, and a heavy surf, and we heard it thundering.
 The men were terrified, and they let the oars fall out of
 their hands, and these banged all about in the wash. The ship stopped
 205 still, with the men no longer rowing to keep way on her.
 Then I going up and down the ship urged on my companions,
 standing beside each man and speaking to him in kind words:
 "Dear friends, surely we are not unlearned in evils.
 This is no greater evil now than it was when the Cyclops
 210 had us cooped in his hollow cave by force and violence,
 but even there, by my courage and counsel and my intelligence,
 we escaped away. I think that all this will be remembered
 some day too. Then do as I say, let us all be won over.
 Sit well, all of you, to your oarlocks, and dash your oars deep
 215 into the breaking surf of the water, so in that way Zeus
 might grant that we get clear of this danger and flee away from it.
 For you, steersman, I have this order; so store it deeply
 in your mind, as you control the steering oar of this hollow

with the loss of six men

ship; you must keep her clear from where the smoke and the breakers
 220 are, and make hard for the sea rock lest, without your knowing,
 she might drift that way, and you bring all of us into disaster."
 'So I spoke, and they quickly obeyed my words. I had not
 spoken yet of Skylla, a plague that could not be dealt with,
 for fear my companions might be terrified and give over
 225 their rowing, and take cover inside the ship. For my part,
 I let go from my mind the difficult instruction that Circe
 had given me, for she told me not to be armed for combat;
 but I put on my glorious armor and, taking up two long
 spears in my hands, I stood bestriding the vessel's foredeck
 230 at the prow, for I expected Skylla of the rocks to appear first
 from that direction, she who brought pain to my companions.
 I could not make her out anywhere, and my eyes grew weary
 from looking everywhere on the misty face of the sea rock.
 'So we sailed up the narrow strait lamenting. On one side
 235 was Skylla, and on the other side was shining Charybdis,
 who made her terrible ebb and flow of the sea's water.
 When she vomited it up, like a caldron over a strong fire,
 the whole sea would boil up in turbulence, and the foam flying
 spattered the pinnacles of the rocks in either direction;
 240 but when in turn again she sucked down the sea's salt water,
 the turbulence showed all the inner sea, and the rock around it
 groaned terribly, and the ground showed at the sea's bottom,
 black with sand; and green fear seized upon my companions.
 We in fear of destruction kept our eyes on Charybdis,
 245 but meanwhile Skylla out of the hollow vessel snatched six
 of my companions, the best of them for strength and hands' work,
 and when I turned to look at the ship, with my other companions,
 I saw their feet and hands from below, already lifted
 high above me, and they cried out to me and called me
 250 by name, the last time they ever did it, in heart's sorrow:
 And as a fisherman with a very long rod, on a jutting
 rock, will cast his treacherous bait for the little fishes,
 and sinks the horn of a field-ranging ox into the water,
 then hauls them up and throws them on the dry land, gasping
 255 and struggling, so they gasped and struggled as they were hoisted
 up the cliff. Right in her doorway she ate them up. They were screaming
 and reaching out their hands to me in this horrid encounter.

That was the most pitiful scene that these eyes have looked on
in my sufferings as I explored the routes over the water.

260 'Now when we had fled away from the rocks and dreaded Charybdis
and Skylla, next we made our way to the excellent island
of the god, where ranged the handsome wide-browed oxen, and many
fat flocks of sheep, belonging to the Sun God, Hyperion.

265 While I was on the black ship, still out on the open water,
I heard the lowing of the cattle as they were driven
home, and the bleating of sheep, and my mind was struck by the saying
of the blind prophet, Teiresias the Theban, and also
Aiaian Circe. Both had told me many times over
to avoid the island of Helios who brings joy to mortals.

270 Then sorrowful as I was I spoke and told my companions:
"Listen to what I say, my companions, though you are suffering
evils, while I tell you the prophecies of Teiresias
and Aiaian Circe. Both have told me many times over
to avoid the island of Helios who brings joy to mortals,
275 for there they spoke of the most dreadful disaster that waited
for us. So drive the black ship onward, and pass the island."

'So I spoke, and the inward heart in them was broken.

At once Eurylochos answered me with a bitter saying:

280 "You are a hard man, Odysseus. Your force is greater,
your limbs never wear out. You must be made all of iron,
when you will not let your companions, worn with hard work and
wanting

sleep, set foot on this land, where if we did, on the seagirt
island we could once more make ready a greedy dinner;
but you force us to blunder along just as we are through the running
285 night, driven from the island over the misty face of the water.

In the nights the hard stormwinds arise, and they bring damage
to ships. How could any of us escape sheer destruction,
if suddenly there rises the blast of a storm from the bitter
blowing of the South Wind or the West Wind, who beyond others
290 hammer a ship apart, in despite of the gods, our masters?
But now let us give way to black night's persuasion; let us
make ready our evening meal, remaining close by our fast ship,
and at dawn we will go aboard and put forth onto the wide sea."

'So spoke Eurylochos, and my other companions assented.

295 I saw then what evil the divinity had in mind for us,

and so I spoke aloud to him and addressed him in winged words:
"Eurylochos, I am only one man. You force me to it.

300 But come then all of you, swear a strong oath to me, that if
we come upon some herd of cattle or on some great flock
of sheep, no one of you in evil and reckless action
will slaughter any ox or sheep. No, rather than this, eat
at your pleasure of the food immortal Circe provided."

'So I spoke, and they all swore me the oath that I asked them.

305 But after they had sworn me the oath and made an end of it,
we beached the well-made ship inside of the hollow harbor,
close to sweet water, and my companions disembarked also
from the ship, and expertly made the evening meal ready.
But when they had put away their desire for eating and drinking,
they remembered and they cried for their beloved companions
310 whom Skylla had caught out of the hollow ship and eaten,
and on their crying a quiet sleep descended; but after
the third part of the night had come, and the star changes,
Zeus the cloud gatherer let loose on us a gale that blustered
in a supernatural storm, and huddled under the cloud scuds
315 land alike and the great water. Night sprang from heaven.

But when the young Dawn showed again with her rosy fingers,
we berthed our ship, dragging her into a hollow sea cave
where the nymphs had their beautiful dancing places and sessions.

320 Then I held an assembly and spoke my opinion before them:
"Friends, since there is food and drink stored in the fast ship,
let us then keep our hands off the cattle, for fear that something
may befall us. These are the cattle and fat sheep of a dreaded
god, Helios, who sees all things and listens to all things."

'So I spoke, and the proud heart in them was persuaded.

325 But the South Wind blew for a whole month long, nor did any other
wind befall after that, but only the South and the East Wind.
As long as they still had food to eat and red wine, the men kept
their hands off the cattle, striving as they were for sustenance. Then,
when

330 all the provisions that had been in the ship had given
out, they turned to hunting, forced to it, and went ranging
after fish and birds, anything that they could lay hands on,
and with curved hooks, for the hunger was exhausting their stomachs.
Then I went away along the island in order

The cattle eaten

to pray to the gods, if any of them might show me some course
 335 to sail on, but when, crossing the isle, I had left my companions
 behind, I washed my hands, where there was a place sheltered
 from the wind, and prayed to all the gods whose hold is Olympos;
 but what they did was to shed a sweet sleep on my eyelids,
 and Eurylochos put an evil counsel before his companions:
 340 "Listen to what I say, my companions, though you are suffering
 evils. All deaths are detestable for wretched mortals,
 but hunger is the sorriest way to die and encounter
 fate. Come then, let us cut out the best of Helios' cattle,
 and sacrifice them to the immortals who hold wide heaven,
 345 and if we ever come back to Ithaka, land of our fathers,
 presently we will build a rich temple to the Sun God Helios
 Hyperion, and store it with dedications, many
 and good. But if, in anger over his high-horned cattle,
 he wishes to wreck our ship, and the rest of the gods stand by him,
 350 I would far rather gulp the waves and lose my life in them
 once for all, than be pinched to death on this desolate island."
 'So spoke Eurylochos, and the other companions assented.
 At once, cutting out from near at hand the best of Helios'
 cattle; for the handsome broad-faced horn-curved oxen
 355 were pasturing there, not far from the dark-prowed ship; driving
 these, they stationed themselves around them, and made their prayers
 to the gods, pulling tender leaves from a deep-leaved oak tree;
 for they had no white barley left on the strong-benched vessel.
 When they had made their prayer and slaughtered the oxen and skinned
 them,
 360 they cut away the meat from the thighs and wrapped them in fat,
 making a double fold, and laid shreds of flesh upon them;
 and since they had no wine to pour on the burning offerings,
 they made a libation of water, and roasted all of the entrails;
 but when they had burned the thigh pieces and tasted the vitals,
 365 they cut all the remainder into pieces and spitted them.
 'At that time the quiet sleep was lost from my eyelids,
 and I went back down to my fast ship and the sand of the seashore,
 but on my way, as I was close to the oar-swept vessel,
 the pleasant savor of cooking meat came drifting around me,
 370 and I cried out my grief aloud to the gods immortal:
 "Father Zeus, and you other everlasting and blessed

Portents—departure from Thrinakia

gods, with a pitiless sleep you lulled me, to my confusion,
 and my companions staying here dared a deed that was monstrous."
 'Lampetia of the light robes ran swift with the message
 375 to Hyperion the Sun God, that we had killed his cattle,
 and angered at the heart he spoke forth among the immortals:
 "Father Zeus, and you other everlasting and blessed
 gods, punish the companions of Odysseus, son of Laertes;
 for they outrageously killed my cattle, in whom I always
 380 delighted, on my way up into the starry heaven,
 or when I turned back again from heaven toward earth. Unless
 these are made to give me just recompense for my cattle,
 I will go down to Hades' and give my light to the dead men."
 'Then in turn Zeus who gathers the clouds answered him:
 385 "Helios, shine on as you do, among the immortals
 and mortal men, all over the grain-giving earth. For my part
 I will strike these men's fast ship midway on the open
 wine-blue sea with a shining bolt and dash it to pieces."
 'All this I heard afterward from fair-haired Kalypso,
 390 and she told me she herself had heard it from the guide, Hermes.
 'But when I came back again to the ship and the seashore,
 they all stood about and blamed each other, but we were not able
 to find any remedy, for the oxen were already dead. The next thing
 was that the gods began to show forth portents before us.
 395 The skins crawled, and the meat that was stuck on the spits bellowed,
 both roast and raw, and the noise was like the lowing of cattle.
 'Six days thereafter my own eager companions feasted
 on the cattle of Helios the Sun God, cutting the best ones
 out; but when Zeus the son of Kronos established the seventh
 400 day, then at last the wind ceased from its stormy blowing,
 and presently we went aboard and put forth on the wide sea,
 and set the mast upright and hoisted the white sails on it.
 'But after we had left the island and there was no more
 land in sight, but only the sky and the sea, then Kronian
 405 Zeus drew on a blue-black cloud, and settled it over
 the hollow ship, and the open sea was darkened beneath it;
 and she ran on, but not for a very long time, as suddenly
 a screaming West Wind came upon us, stormily blowing,
 and the blast of the stormwind snapped both the forestays that were
 holding

Loss of the ship and crew

- 410 the mast, and the mast went over backwards, and all the running gear
collapsed in the wash; and at the stern of the ship the mast pole
crashed down on the steersman's head and pounded to pieces
all the bones of his head, so that he like a diver
dropped from the high deck, and the proud life left his bones there.
- 415 Zeus with thunder and lightning together crashed on our vessel,
and, struck by the thunderbolt of Zeus, she spun in a circle,
and all was full of brimstone. My men were thrown in the water,
and bobbing like sea crows they were washed away on the running
waves all around the black ship, and the god took away their
homecoming.
- 420 'But I went on my way through the vessel, to where the high seas
had worked the keel free out of the hull, and the bare keel floated
on the swell, which had broken the mast off at the keel; yet
still there was a backstay made out of oxhide fastened
to it. With this I lashed together both keel and mast, then
- 425 rode the two of them, while the deadly stormwinds carried me.
'After this the West Wind ceased from its stormy blowing,
and the South Wind came swiftly on, bringing to my spirit
grief that I must measure the whole way back to Charybdis.
All that night I was carried along, and with the sun rising
- 430 I came to the sea rock of Skylla, and dreaded Charybdis.
At this time Charybdis sucked down the sea's salt water,
but I reached high in the air above me, to where the tall fig tree
grew, and caught hold of it and clung like a bat; there was no
place where I could firmly brace my feet, or climb up it,
- 435 for the roots of it were far from me, and the branches hung out
far, big and long branches that overshadowed Charybdis.
Inexorably I hung on, waiting for her to vomit
the keel and mast back up again. I longed for them, and they came
late; at the time when a man leaves the law court, for dinner,
- 440 after judging the many disputes brought him by litigious young men;
that was the time it took the timbers to appear from Charybdis.
Then I let go my hold with hands and feet, and dropped off,
and came crashing down between and missing the two long timbers,
but I mounted these, and with both hands I paddled my way out.
- 445 But the Father of Gods and men did not let Skylla see me
again, or I could not have escaped from sheer destruction.
'From there I was carried along nine days, and on the tenth night

Odysseus escapes to Kalypto's island

- the gods brought me to the island Ogygia, home of Kalypto
with the lovely hair, a dreaded goddess who talks with mortals.
- 450 She befriended me and took care of me. Why tell the rest of
this story again, since yesterday in your house I told it
to you and your majestic wife? It is hateful to me
to tell a story over again, when it has been well told.'

BOOK XIII



So he spoke, and all of them stayed stricken to silence,
held in thrall by the story all through the shadowy chambers.
Then Alkinoös answered him in turn and said to him:
'Odysseus, now that you have come to my house, bronze-founded
5 with the high roof, I think you will not lose your homecoming,
nor be driven back from it again, for all your sufferings.
Now I lay this charge upon each man of you, such as
here in my palace drink the gleaming wine of the princes
always at my side, and hear the song of the singer.
10 Clothing for our guest is stored away in the polished
chest, and intricately wrought gold, and all those other
gifts the Phaiakian men of counsel brought here to give him.
Come, let us man by man each one of us give a great tripod
and a caldron, and we will make it good to us by a collection
15 among the people. It is hard for a single man to be generous.'
So Alkinoös spoke, and his word pleased all the rest of them.
They all went home to go to bed, each one to his own house.
But when the young Dawn showed again with her rosy fingers,
they came in haste to the ship, and brought the lavish bronze with them,
20 and Alkinoös, the hallowed prince, himself going on board,
stowed it well away under the thwarts, so it would not hamper
any of the crew as they rowed with their oars and sent the ship speedily
on. Then all went to Alkinoös' house and made the feast ready.
Alkinoös, the hallowed prince, sacrificed an ox for them

25 to Zeus, dark-clouded son of Kronos, lord over all men.
They burned the thigh pieces and enjoyed feasting on the glorious
banquet, and among them Demodokos, the divine singer,
sang his songs and was prized by the people. But now Odysseus
turned his head again and again to look at the shining
30 sun, to hasten its going down, since he was now eager
to go; and as a man makes for his dinner, when all day
long his wine-colored oxen have dragged the compact plow for him
across the field, and the sun's setting is welcome for bringing
the time to go to his dinner, and as he goes his knees fail him;
35 thus welcome to Odysseus now was the sun going under.
Now he spoke aloud to the oar-loving Phaiakians,
addressing his words to Alkinoös beyond all others:
'O great Alkinoös, pre-eminent among all people,
make libation and send me upon my way untroubled;
40 and yourselves fare well, for all my heart desired is now made
good, conveyance and loving gifts. May the sky gods make these
prosper for me. May I return to my house and find there
a blameless wife, and all who are dear to me unharmed. May you
in turn, remaining here, bring comfort and cheer to your wedded
45 wives and your children, and may the gods grant success in every
endeavor, and no unhappiness be found in your people.'
So he spoke, and they all approved his word and encouraged
convoy for the guest, for what he said was fair and orderly;
then the hallowed prince Alkinoös spoke to his herald:
50 'Pontonoös, now mix a bowl of wine and serve it
to all in the palace, so that, with a prayer to our father
Zeus, we may send our guest on his way, back to his own country.'
So he spoke, and Pontonoös mixed the sweet wine and served it
to all, standing beside each person. They poured a libation
55 to all the blessed immortal gods who hold wide heaven
from the chairs where they were sitting, but great Odysseus stood up
and put the handled goblet into the hand of Arete,
and spoke to her aloud and addressed her in winged words, saying:
'Farewell to you, O queen, and for all time, until old age
60 comes to you, and death, which befall all human creatures.
Now I am on my way; but have joy here in your household,
in your children and your people, and in your king, Alkinoös.'
So spoke great Odysseus, and strode out over the door sill,

The Phaiakians carry Odysseus to Ithaka

65 and great Alkinoös sent his herald to go along with him
 and show him the way to the fast ship and the sand of the seashore.
 Also Arete sent her serving women with him. One
 carried a mantle, washed and clean, and a tunic. Another
 one she sent along with him to carry the well-made
 chest, and a third went along with them bearing food and red wine.
 70 But when they had come down to the sea, and where the ship was,
 the proud escorts promptly took over the gifts, and stowed them
 away in the hollow hull, and all the food and the drink, then
 spread out a coverlet for Odysseus, and linen, out on
 the deck, at the stern of the ship's hull, so that he could sleep there
 75 undisturbed, and he himself went aboard and lay down
 silently. They sat down each in his place at the oarlocks
 in order, and slipped the cable free from its hole in the stone post.
 They bent to their rowing, and with their oars tossed up the sea spray,
 and upon the eyes of Odysseus there fell a sleep, gentle,
 80 the sweetest kind of sleep with no awakening, most like
 death; while the ship, as in a field four stallions drawing
 a chariot all break together at the stroke of the whiplash,
 and lifting high their feet lightly beat out their path, so
 the stern of this ship would lift and the creaming wave behind her
 85 boiled amain in the thunderous crash of the sea. She ran on
 very steady and never wavering; even the falcon,
 that hawk that flies lightest of winged creatures, could not have paced
 her,
 so lightly did she run on her way and cut through the sea's waves.
 She carried a man with a mind like the gods for counsel, one whose
 90 spirit up to this time had endured much, suffering many
 pains: the wars of men, hard crossing of the big waters;
 but now he slept still, oblivious of all he had suffered.
 At the time when shines that brightest star, which beyond others
 comes with announcement of the light of the young Dawn goddess,
 95 then was the time the sea-faring ship put in to the island.
 There is a harbor of the Old Man of the Sea, Phorkys,
 in the countryside of Ithaka. There two precipitous
 promontories opposed jut out, to close in the harbor
 and shelter it from the big waves made by the winds blowing
 100 so hard on the outside; inside, the well-benched vessels
 can lie without being tied up, once they have found their anchorage.

and leave him there asleep

At the head of the harbor, there is an olive tree with spreading
 leaves, and nearby is a cave that is shaded, and pleasant,
 and sacred to the nymphs who are called the Nymphs of the Wellsprings,
 105 Naiads. There are mixing bowls and handled jars inside it,
 all of stone, and there the bees deposit their honey.
 And therein also are looms that are made of stone, very long, where
 the nymphs weave their sea-purple webs, a wonder to look on;
 and there is water forever flowing. It has two entrances,
 110 one of them facing the North Wind, where people can enter,
 but the one toward the South Wind has more divinity. That is
 the way of the immortals, and no men enter by that way.
 It was into this bay they rowed their ship. They knew of it beforehand.
 The ship, hard-driven, ran up onto the beach for as much as
 115 half her length, such was the force the hands of the oarsmen
 gave her. They stepped from the strong-benched ship out onto the dry
 land,
 and first they lifted and carried Odysseus out of the hollow
 hull, along with his bed linen and shining coverlet,
 and set him down on the sand. He was still bound fast in sleep. Then
 120 they lifted and carried out the possessions, those which the haughty
 Phaiakians, urged by great-hearted Athene, had given him, as he
 set out for home, and laid them next to the trunk of the olive,
 all in a pile and away from the road, lest some wayfarer
 might come before Odysseus awoke, and spoil his possessions.
 125 Then they themselves turned back toward home. But the Earthshaker
 had not forgotten those threats he had once uttered at godlike
 Odysseus in the beginning, and he asked Zeus for counsel:
 'Father Zeus, no longer among the gods immortal
 shall I be honored, when there are mortals who do me no honor,
 130 the Phaiakians, and yet these are of my own blood. See now,
 I had said to myself Odysseus would come home only after
 much suffering. I had not indeed taken his homecoming
 altogether away, since first you nodded your head and assented
 to it. But they carried him, asleep in the fast ship, over
 135 the sea, and set him down in Ithaka, and gave him numberless
 gifts, as bronze, and gold abundant, and woven clothing,
 more than Odysseus could ever have taken from Troy, even
 if he had come home ungrieved and with his fair share of the plunder.'
 Then in turn Zeus who gathers the clouds made answer:

Poseidon turns their ship to stone

- 140 'What a thing to have said, Earthshaker of the wide strength.
The gods do not hold you in dishonor. It would be a hard thing
if we were to put any slight on the eldest and best among us.
But if there is any man who, giving way to the violence
and force in him, slights you, it will be yours to punish him.
- 145 Now and always. Do as you will and as it pleases you.'
- Then in turn Poseidon shaker of the earth made answer:
'I would act quickly, dark-clouded one, as you advise me,
but always I have respect for your anger, and keep out of
its way. This time, I wish to stun that beautiful vessel
- 150 of the Phaiakians out on the misty sea as it comes back
from its journey, so that they may stop, and give over conveying
people. And I would hide their city under a mountain.'
- Then in turn Zeus who gathers the clouds made answer:
'Good brother, here is the way it seems to my mind best
to do. When all the people are watching her from the city
- 155 as she comes in, then turn her into a rock that looks like
a fast ship, close off shore, so that all people may wonder
at her. But do not hide their city under a mountain.'
- When the shaker of the earth Poseidon heard him, he went off
striding to Scheria, where the Phaiakians are born and live. There
- 160 he waited, and the sea-going ship came close in, lightly
pursuing her way, and the Earthshaker came close up to her,
and turned her into stone and rooted her there to the bottom
with a flat stroke of his hand. And then he went away from her.
- 165 The Phaiakians of the long oars, the sea-famed people,
now began talking to each other and spoke in winged words;
and thus they would speak, each looking at the man next to him:
'Ah me, who was it fastened our swift ship in the water
as she came rowing in for home? Just now she could be seen plainly.'
- 170 Thus one or another spoke but they did not know what had happened.
To them now Alkinoös spoke forth and addressed them:
'Ah now, the prophecy of old is come to completion,
that my father spoke, when he said Poseidon someday would be angry
with us, because we are convoy without hurt to all men.
- 175 He said that one day, as a well-made ship of Phaiakian
men came back from a convoy on the misty face of the water,
he would stun it, and pile a great mountain over our city, to hide it.
So the old man spoke. Now all is being accomplished.

Odysseus' waking

- Come then, let us do as I say, let us all be won over.
- 180 Stop our conveying of every mortal who makes his arrival
here at our city. We must dedicate also to Poseidon
twelve bulls, chosen out of the herds. Then he might take pity
on us, and not pile up a high mountain over our city.'
- So he spoke, and they were afraid and made the bulls ready.
- 185 So these leaders of the Phaiakians and men of counsel
among their people made their prayer to the lord Poseidon,
standing around the altar. But now great Odysseus awakened
from sleep in his own fatherland, and he did not know it,
having been long away, for the goddess, Pallas Athene,
- 190 daughter of Zeus, poured a mist over all, so she could make him
unrecognizable and explain all the details to him,
to have his wife not recognize him, nor his townspeople
and friends, till he punished the suitors for their overbearing oppression.
Therefore to the lord Odysseus she made everything look otherwise
- 195 than it was, the penetrating roads, the harbors where all could
anchor, the rocks going straight up, and the trees tall growing.
He sprang and stood upright and looked about at his native
country, and groaned aloud and struck himself on both thighs
with the flats of his hands, and spoke a word of lamentation:
- 200 'Ah me, what are the people whose land I have come to this time,
and are they savage and violent, and without justice,
or hospitable to strangers and with minds that are godly?
And where shall I take all these many goods? Where shall I
myself be driven? I wish I had stayed among the Phaiakians,
- 205 just where I was, and I would have visited some other powerful
king, who then would have been my friend and seen to my journey.
Now I do not know where to put all this, and I cannot
leave it here, for fear it may become spoil for others.
Shame on the leaders of the Phaiakians and their men of counsel,
- 210 for they were not altogether thoughtful, nor were they righteous,
when they took me away here to another land; but they told me
they would bring me to sunny Ithaka, and they did not do it.
May Zeus of the suppliants punish them, for he oversees other
men besides, and punishes anyone who transgresses.
- 215 But come, let me count my goods and find out whether they might not
have gone taking some of it with them in the hollow vessel.'
- So speaking, he counted up the surpassingly beautiful tripods

Athene disguised tells him where he is

and caldrons, and the gold and all the fine woven clothing.
 There was nothing gone from all of this; but he in great sorrow
 220 crept over the beach of his own country beside the resounding
 sea, with much lamentation; but now Athene came near him,
 likening herself in form to a young man, a herdsman
 of sheep, a delicate boy, such as the children of kings are,
 and wearing a well-wrought shawl in a double fold over her shoulders.
 225 Under her shining feet she had sandals, and in her hand carried
 a spear. Odysseus, in joy at the sight, came up to meet her,
 and spoke aloud to her and addressed her in winged words, saying:
 'Dear friend, since you are the first I have met with in this country,
 I give you greeting. Do not cross me with evil purpose,
 230 but rescue these possessions and me. I make my prayer to you
 as to a god, and come to your dear knees as a suppliant.
 And tell me this and tell me truly, so that I may know it.
 What land is this, what neighborhood is it, what people live here?
 Is it some one of the sunny islands, or is it some foreland
 235 slanted out from the generous mainland into the salt sea?'
 Then in turn the gray-eyed goddess Athene answered:
 'You are some innocent, O stranger, or else you have come from
 far away, if you ask about this land, for it is not
 so nameless as all that. There are indeed many who know it,
 240 whether among those who live toward the east and the sunrise,
 or those who live up and away toward the mist and darkness. See now,
 this is a rugged country and not for the driving of horses,
 but neither is it so unpleasant, though not widely shapen;
 for there is abundant grain for bread grown here, it produces
 245 wine, and there is always rain and the dew to make it
 fertile; it is good to feed goats and cattle; and timber
 is there of all sorts, and watering places good through the seasons;
 so that, stranger, the name of Ithaka has gone even
 to Troy, though they say that is very far from Achaian country.'
 250 So she spoke, and resourceful great Odysseus was happy,
 rejoicing in the land of his fathers when Pallas Athene
 daughter of Zeus of the aegis told him the truth of it,
 and so he answered her again and addressed her in winged words;
 but he did not tell her the truth, but checked that word from the outset,
 255 forever using to every advantage the mind that was in him:
 'I heard the name of Ithaka when I was in wide Crete,

He lies to her

far away, across the sea; now I myself have come here
 with these goods that you see, but leaving as much again to my children.
 I have fled, an exile, because I killed the son of Idomeneus,
 160 Orsilochos, a man swift of foot, who in wide Crete surpassed
 all other mortal men for speed of his feet. I killed him
 because he tried to deprive me of all my share of the plunder
 from Troy, and for the sake of it my heart suffered many
 pains: the wars of men; hard crossing of the big waters;
 265 for I would not do his father favor, and serve as his henchman
 in the land of Troy, but I led others, of my own following.
 I lay in wait for him with a friend by the road, and struck him
 with the bronze-headed spear as he came back from the fields. There was
 a very dark night spread over all the sky, nor did anyone
 270 see me, nor did anyone know of it when I stripped the life
 from him. But then, when I had cut him down with the sharp bronze,
 I went at once to a ship, and supplicated the lordly
 Phoenician men, and gave them spoil, to stay their eagerness,
 and asked them to carry me and to set me down in Pylos
 275 or shining Elis where the Epeians are lords; but it happened
 that the force of the wind beat them away from those places, greatly
 against their will; it was not as if they wished to deceive me.
 So, driven off those courses, we came in here, by night,
 and rowed her hastily into the harbor, nor was there any
 280 thought in us of the evening meal, much though we wanted it,
 but all of us came off the ship as we were, and lay down;
 then, weary as I was, the sweetness of sleep came upon me,
 while they, taking all the possessions out of the hollow hull, set them
 ashore on the sand, and close to the place where I was lying,
 285 and they, embarking, went on their way to strongly settled
 Sidon; but I, grieving at the heart, was left behind here.'
 So he spoke. The goddess, gray-eyed Athene, smiled on him,
 and stroked him with her hand, and took on the shape of a woman
 both beautiful and tall, and well versed in glorious handiworks,
 290 and spoke aloud to him and addressed him in winged words, saying:
 'It would be a sharp one, and a stealthy one, who would ever get past you
 in any contriving; even if it were a god against you.
 You wretch, so devious, never weary of tricks, then you would not
 even in your own country give over your ways of deceiving
 295 and your thievish tales. They are near to you in your very nature.

Athene reveals herself

But come, let us talk no more of this, for you and I both know sharp practice, since you are far the best of all mortal men for counsel and stories, and I among all the divinities am famous for wit and sharpness; and yet you never recognized
 300 Pallas Athene, daughter of Zeus, the one who is always standing beside you and guarding you in every endeavor. And it was I who made you loved by all the Phaiakians. And now again I am here, to help you in your devising of schemes, and to hide the possessions which the haughty Phaiakians bestowed—it was by my thought and counsel—on you, as you started
 305 for home, and tell you all the troubles you are destined to suffer in your well-wrought house; but you must, of necessity, endure all, and tell no one out of all the men and the women that you have come back from your wanderings, but you must endure
 310 much grief in silence, standing and facing men in their violence.'

Then in turn resourceful Odysseus spoke to her in answer: 'It is hard, O goddess, for even a man of good understanding to recognize you on meeting, for you take every shape upon you. But this I know well: there was a time when you were kind to me
 315 in the days when we sons of the Achaians were fighting in Troy land. But after we had sacked the sheer citadel of Priam, and went away in our ships, and the god scattered the Achaians, I never saw you, daughter of Zeus, after that, nor did I know of your visiting my ship, to beat off some trouble
 320 from me, but always with my heart torn inside its coverings I wandered, until the gods set me free from unhappiness, until in the rich territory of the Phaiakian men you cheered me with words, then led me, yourself in person, into their city. And now I entreat you in the name of your father; for I do not think
 325 I have really come into sunny Ithaka, but have been driven off course to another country, and I think you are teasing me when you tell me I am, and saying it to beguile me; tell me if it is true that I have come back to my own dear country.'

Then in turn the goddess gray-eyed Athene answered him:
 330 'Always you are the same, and such is the mind within you, and so I cannot abandon you when you are unhappy, because you are fluent, and reason closely, and keep your head always. Anyone else come home from wandering would have run happily off to see his children and wife in his halls; but it is not

and explains her absences

335 your pleasure to investigate and ask questions, not till you have made trial of your wife; yet she, as always, sits there in your palace, and always with her the wretched nights, and the days also, waste her away with weeping. And I never did have any doubt, but in my heart always
 340 knew how you would come home, having lost all of your companions. But, you see, I did not want to fight with my father's brother, Poseidon, who was holding a grudge against you in his heart, and because you blinded his dear son, hated you. Come, I will show you settled Ithaka, so you will believe me.
 345 This is the harbor of the Old Man of the Sea, Phorkys, and here at the head of the harbor is the olive tree with spreading leaves, and nearby is the cave that is shaded, and pleasant, and sacred to the nymphs who are called the Nymphs of the
 Wellsprings,

Naiads. That is the wide over-arching cave, where often
 350 you used to accomplish for the nymphs their complete hecatombs; and there is the mountain, Neritos, all covered with forest.'

So speaking the goddess scattered the mist, and the land was visible. Long-suffering great Odysseus was gladdened then, rejoicing in the sight of his country, and kissed the grain-giving ground, then
 355 raised his hands in the air and spoke to the nymphs, praying: 'Naiad nymphs, O daughters of Zeus, I never suspected that I would see you again. Be welcome now to my gentle prayers, but I will also give you gifts, as I used to before, if Athene the Spoiler, Zeus' daughter, freely grants me
 360 to go on living here myself, and sustains my dear son.'

Then in turn the goddess gray-eyed Athene said to him: 'Never fear, let none of these matters trouble your mind. Rather let us hide these possessions without delay, deep in the inward part of the wonderful cave, so they will be kept safe for you.
 365 Then we shall make our plans how all may come out best for us.'

So the goddess spoke, and went inside the shadowy cave, looking through it for hiding places. Meanwhile, Odysseus brought everything close up, gold, tireless bronze, clothing that had been made with care, given him by the Phaiakians, and stowed it well away inside; and Pallas Athene,
 370 daughter of Zeus of the aegis, set a stone against the doorway.

The two sat down against the trunk of the hallowed olive,

and plotted out the destruction of the overmastering suitors.

Their discourse was begun by the goddess gray-eyed Athene:

375 'Son of Laertes and seed of Zeus, resourceful Odysseus,
consider how you can lay your hands on these shameless suitors,
who for three years now have been as lords in your palace,
and courting your godlike wife, and offering gifts to win her.
And she, though her heart forever grieves over your homecoming,
380 holds out some hope for all, and makes promises to each man,
sending them messages, but her mind has other intentions.'

Then resourceful Odysseus spoke in turn and answered her:

385 'Surely I was on the point of perishing by an evil
fate in my palace, like Atreus' son Agamemnon, unless
you had told me, goddess, the very truth of all that has happened.
Come then, weave the design, the way I shall take my vengeance
upon them; stand beside me, inspire me with strength and courage,
as when together we brought down Troy's shining coronal.
For if in your fury, O gray-eyed goddess, you stood beside me,
390 I would fight, lady and goddess, with your help against three hundred
men if you, freely and in full heart, would help me.'

Then in turn the goddess gray-eyed Athene answered:

395 'I will indeed be at your side, you will not be forgotten
at the time when we two go to this work, and I look for endless
ground to be splattered by the blood and brains of the suitors,
these men who are eating all your substance away. But come now,
let me make you so that no mortal can recognize you.
For I will wither the handsome flesh that is on your flexible
limbs, and ruin the brown hair on your head, and about you
400 put on such a clout of cloth any man will loathe when he sees you
wearing it; I will dim those eyes, that have been so handsome,
so you will be unprepossessing to all the suitors
and your wife and child, those whom you left behind in your palace.
First of all, you are to make your way to the swineherd
405 who is in charge of your pigs, but always his thoughts are kindly,
and he is a friend to your son and to circumspect Penelope.
You will find him posted beside his pigs, and these are herded
near the Rock of the Raven and beside the spring Arethousa,
to eat the acorns that stay their strength, and drink of the darkling
410 water, for these are nourishing for pigs, and fatten them.
There you shall wait, and stay with him, and ask him all questions,

while I go over to Sparta, the country of lovely women,
and call back Telemachos, your own dear son, Odysseus,
who went into spacious Lakedaimon to see Menelaos
415 and ask him for news of you, and whether you were still living.'

Then resourceful Odysseus spoke in turn and answered her:

'Why then did you not tell him, since in your mind you know all things?
Was it so that he too wandering over the barren
sea should suffer pains, while others ate up his substance?'

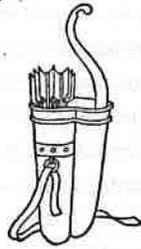
420 Then in turn the goddess gray-eyed Athene answered:

'Let him not be too much on your mind. It was I myself
who saw him along on that journey, so he would win reputation
by going there, and he has no hardship, but now is staying
at his ease with the son of Atreus, and all abundance is by him.
425 It is true that the young men with their black ship are lying
in wait for him to kill him before he reaches his country;
but I think this will not happen, but that sooner the earth will cover
some one of those suitors, who now are eating away your substance.'

So spoke Athene, and with her wand she tapped Odysseus,
430 and withered the handsome flesh that was upon his flexible
limbs, and ruined the brown hair on his head, and about him,
to cover all his body, she put the skin of an ancient
old man, and then she dimmed those eyes that had been so handsome.
Then she put another vile rag on him, and a tunic,
435 tattered, squalid, blackened with the foul smoke, and over it
gave him the big hide of a fast-running deer, with the hairs rubbed
off, to wear, and she gave him a staff, and an ugly wallet
that was full of holes, with a twist of rope attached, to dangle it.

So they two consulted and went their ways. The goddess
440 went to bright Lakedaimon to fetch the son of Odysseus.

BOOK XIV



But Odysseus himself left the harbor and ascended a rugged path, through wooded country along the heights, where Athene had indicated the noble swineherd, who beyond others cared for the house properties acquired by noble Odysseus.

- 5 He found him sitting in front, on the porch, where the lofty enclosure had been built, in a place with a view on all sides, both large and handsome, cleared all about, and it was the swineherd himself who had built it, to hold the pigs of his absent master, far from his mistress and from aged Laertes. He made it
- 10 with stones from the field, and topped it off with shrubbery. Outside he had driven posts in a full circle, to close it on all sides, set close together and thick, the dark of the oak, split out from the logs. Inside the enclosure he made twelve pig pens next to each other, for his sows to sleep in, and in each of them
- 15 fifty pigs who sleep on the ground were confined. These were the breeding females, but the males lay outside, and these were fewer by far, for the godlike suitors kept diminishing their numbers by eating them, since the swineherd kept having to send them in the best of all the well-fattened porkers
- 20 at any time. Now, they numbered three hundred and sixty, and four dogs, who were like wild beasts, forever were lying by them. These the swineherd, leader of men, had raised up himself. Now he was fitting sandals to his feet, cutting out a well-colored piece of oxhide. Meanwhile, the other

- 25 swineherds were out with the herded pigs one place or another, three of them, but the fourth he had sent off to the city to take a pig to the insolent suitors, since they so forced him, so they could sacrifice it and glut their appetites on it.

Suddenly the wild-baying dogs caught sight of Odysseus.

- 30 They ran at him with a great outcry, and Odysseus prudently sat down on the ground, and the staff fell out of his hand. But there, beside his own steading, he might have endured a shameful mauling, but the swineherd, quick and light on his feet, came hurrying to him across the porch, and let fall from his hand the shoe he was holding.

- 35 He shouted at the dogs and scared them in every direction with volleyed showers of stones, and spoke then to his own master: 'Old sir, the dogs were suddenly on you and would have savaged you badly; so you would have covered me with shame, but already there are other pains and sorrows the gods have bestowed upon me.

- 40 For here I sit, mourning and grieving away for a godlike master, and carefully raise his fattened pigs for others to eat, while he, in need of finding some sustenance, wanders some city or countryside of alien-speaking people; if he still is alive somewhere and looks on the sunlight.

- 45 Come, old sir, along to my shelter, so that you also first may be filled to contentment with food and wine, then tell me where you come from, and about the sorrows you have been suffering.'

- So spoke the noble swineherd and led the way to the shelter, and brought him in, and seated him on brushwood piled up
- 50 beneath, and spread over this the hide of a hairy wild goat from his own bed. This was great and thick, and Odysseus was happy at how he received him, and spoke a word and named him, saying: 'May Zeus, stranger, and the other gods everlasting grant you all you desire the most, for you have received me heartily.'

- 55 Then, O swineherd Eumaios, you said to him in answer: 'Stranger, I have no right to deny the stranger, not even if one came to me who was meaner than you. All vagabonds and strangers are under Zeus, and the gift is a light and a dear one that comes from us, for that is the way of us who are servants
- 60 and forever filled with fear when they come under power of masters who are new. The gods have stopped the homeward voyage of that one who cared greatly for me, and granted me such possessions as a good-natured lord grants to the thrall of his house; a home

Hospitality of Eumaios

of his own, and a plot of land, and a wife much sought after,
 65 when the man accomplishes much work and god speeds the labor
 as he has sped for me this labor to which I am given.
 So my lord would have done much for me if he had grown old here,
 but he perished, as I wish Helen's seed could all have perished,
 pitched away, for she has unstrung the knees of so many
 70 men; for in Agamemnon's cause my master went also
 to Ilion, land of good horses, there to fight with the Trojans.'

He spoke, and pulled his tunic to with his belt, and went out
 swiftly to his pig pens where his herds of swine were penned in,
 and picked out a pair and brought them in and sacrificed them,
 75 and singed them, and cut them into little pieces, and spitted them,
 then roasted all and brought and set it before Odysseus
 hot on the spits as it was, and sprinkled white barley over it,
 and mixed the wine, as sweet as honey, in a bowl of ivy,
 and himself sat down facing him, and urged him on, saying:
 80 'Eat now, stranger, what we serving men are permitted
 to eat: young pigs, but the fattened swine are devoured by the suitors,
 who have no regard for anyone in their minds, no pity.
 The blessed gods have no love for a pitiless action,
 but rather they reward justice and what men do that is lawful;
 85 and though those are hateful and lawless men who land on an alien
 shore, and Zeus grants them spoil and plunder, when they have loaded
 their ships with it they set sail away for home, for even
 in the minds of these there is stored some fear, which is stronger than
 on these there falls strong fear of how they may be regarded.
 But the suitors, you see, have heard some god-sent rumor, and they know
 90 about the dismal death of our man, and they will not decently
 make their suit, nor go home to their own houses, but at their
 ease they forcibly eat up his property, and spare nothing.
 For as many as are the nights and the days from Zeus, on not one
 of these do they dedicate only a single victim, nor only
 95 two, and they violently draw the wine and waste it. See now,
 he had an endlessly abundant livelihood. Not one
 of the heroes over on the black mainland had so much, no one
 here on Ithaka, no twenty men together had such
 quantity of substance as he. I will count it for you.
 100 Twelve herds of cattle on the mainland. As many sheepflocks.
 As many troops of pigs and again as many wide goatflocks,

and his loyalty to Odysseus

and friends over there, and his own herdsmen, pasture them for him.
 And here again, at the end of the island, eleven wide flocks
 of goats in all are pastured, good men have these in their keeping.
 105 And day by day each of these people brings in for the suitors
 a sheep, and each brings in the fatted goat that seems finest,
 and I myself keep watch on these pigs and guard them, and I too
 choose with care the best of the pigs, and send it off to them.'

He spoke, and the other ate his meat and drank his wine, quietly,
 110 greedily and without speaking, and devised evils for the suitors;
 but when he had dined, and filled his desire with food, the other
 filled the cup in which he was drinking and handed it to him,
 all filled with wine, and he received it, and his heart was cheered
 and he spoke to him then and addressed him in winged words, saying:
 115 'Dear friend, who is the man who bought you with his possessions
 and is so rich and powerful as you tell me? You say
 he was one who perished in Agamemnon's cause. Then tell me,
 and perhaps I might know him if he was such a man, for Zeus knows
 as do the other immortal gods, if I might have seen him
 120 and have some report to give you. I have wandered to many places.'

Then the swineherd, leader of men, said to him in answer:
 'Old sir, there is none who could come here, bringing a report
 of him, and persuade his wife and his dear son; and yet
 there are vain and vagabond men in need of sustenance
 125 who tell lies, and are unwilling to give a true story;
 and any vagrant who makes his way to the land of Ithaka
 goes to my mistress and babbles his lies to her, and she then
 receives him well and entertains him and asks him everything,
 and as she mourns him the tears run down from her eyes, since this is
 130 the right way for a wife when her husband is far and perished.
 So you too, old sir, might spin out a well-made story,
 if someone would give you a cloak or tunic to wear for it. But, for
 him, the dogs and the flying birds must by now have worried
 the skin away from his bones, and the soul has left them; or else
 135 the fish have eaten him, out in the great sea, and his bones lie
 now on the mainland shore with the sand piled deeply upon them.
 So he has perished there, and sorrows are made for his dear ones
 all hereafter, and me most of all, for never again now
 will I find again a lord as kind as he, wherever
 140 I go; even if I could come back to my father and mother's

house, where first I was born, and they raised me when I was little.
 But I do not so much mourn for this, much though my longing
 is to behold them with these eyes and in my own country,
 but the longing is on me for Odysseus, and he is gone from me;
 145 and even when he is not here, my friend, I feel some modesty
 about naming him, for in his heart he cared for me greatly
 and loved me. So I call him my master, though he is absent.'

Then long-suffering great Odysseus spoke to him in answer:
 'Dear friend, since you are altogether full of denial,
 150 you do not think he will come, and your heart is ever untrusting;
 but I will not speak in the same manner, but on my oath tell you
 Odysseus is on his way home. Let me have my reward for good news
 then, as soon as he is come back and enters his own house.
 Give me fine clothing, a cloak and tunic to wear. Before that,
 155 much as I stand in need of these, I will not accept them.
 For as I detest the doorways of Death I detest that man who
 under constraint of poverty babbles beguiling falsehoods.
 Zeus be my witness, first of the gods, and the table of friendship,
 and the hearth of blameless Odysseus, to which I come as a suppliant,
 160 all these things are being accomplished in the way I tell them.
 Sometime within this very year Odysseus will be here.
 Either at the waning of the moon, or at its onset,
 he will come home and take his vengeance here upon any
 who deprives his wife and his glorious son of their due honor.'

Then, O swineherd Eumaios, you said to him in answer:
 'Old sir, I will never pay you that gift for good news,
 nor will Odysseus come to this house again. Be easy
 and drink your wine. We will think of other matters. Do not then
 keep on reminding me of this, for the heart within me
 170 grieves whenever anyone speaks of my gracious master.
 So we will let your oath alone, but I hope that Odysseus
 will come back, as I wish, and as Penelope wishes,
 and Laertes the old man too, and godlike Telemachos.
 But now I grieve unforgettingly for Telemachos, the son
 175 born to Odysseus. The gods made him grow like a young tree,
 and I thought he would be among the men one not inferior
 to his dear father, admirable for build and beauty;
 but some immortal upset the balanced mind within him,
 or else it was some man. He went after news of his father

180 to Pylos the sacrosanct, and the haughty suitors are lying
 in wait for him as he comes home, to make Arkeisios'
 stock and seed perish all away and be nameless in Ithaka.
 Now we will let him be, however, whether they catch him
 or whether he escapes and the son of Kronos protects him.
 185 But come now, aged sir, recite me the tale of your sorrows,
 and tell me this too, tell me truly, so that I may know it:
 What man are you and whence? Where is your city? Your parents?
 What kind of ship did you come here on? And how did the sailors
 bring you to Ithaka? What men do they claim that they are?
 190 For I do not think you could have traveled on foot to this country.'

Then resourceful Odysseus spoke in turn and answered him:
 'See, I will accurately answer all that you ask me.
 I only wish there were food enough for the time, for us two,
 and sweet wine for us here inside of the shelter, so that
 195 we could feast quietly while others tended the work; then
 easily I could go on for the whole of a year, and still not
 finish the story of my heart's tribulations, all that
 hard work I have done in my time, because the gods willed it.
 I announce that my origin is from Crete, a spacious
 200 land; I am son of a rich man, and there were many other
 sons who were born to him and reared in his palace. These were
 lawful sons by his wife, but a bought woman, a concubine,
 was my mother, yet I was favored with the legitimate
 sons by Kastor, Hylakos' son, whom I claim as father,
 205 honored among the Cretans in the countryside as a god is,
 in those days, for wealth and power and glorious children.
 But then, you see, the death spirits caught and carried him from us
 to the house of Hades, and his overbearing sons divided
 the livelihood among them and cast lots for it. Little
 210 enough, however, was what they gave me in goods and houses.
 But I took for myself a wife from people with many possessions,
 because of my courage, for I was no contemptible man, not
 one who fled from the fighting; but now all that has gone from me,
 but still, I think, if you look at the stubble you see what the corn was
 215 like when it grew, but since then hardship enough has had me.
 Ares and Athene endowed me with courage, that power
 that breaks men in battle. Whenever I detailed the best fighters
 to go into ambush, planning evil things for the enemy,

Odysseus claims to be a veteran of Troy

the proud heart in me had no image of death before it,
 220 but far the first I would leap out and with my spear bring down
 that enemy man whose speed of foot failed him against me.
 Such was I in the fighting; but labor was never dear to me,
 nor care for my house, though that is what raises glorious children;
 but ships that are driven on by oars were dear to me always,
 225 and the wars, and throwing spears with polished hafts, and the arrows,
 gloomy things, which to other men are terrible, and yet
 those things were dear to me which surely some god had put there
 in my heart, for different men take joy in different actions.
 Before the sons of the Achaians embarked for Troy, I was
 230 nine times a leader of men and went in fast-faring vessels
 against outland men, and much substance came my way, and from this
 I took out an abundance of things, but much I allotted
 again, and soon my house grew greater, and from that time on
 I went among the Cretans as one feared and respected.
 235 But when Zeus of the wide brows devised for us that hateful
 expedition, which unstrung the knees of so many
 men, they were urgent upon me and renowned Idomeneus
 to lead with the ships to Ilion, and there was no remedy,
 nor any refusing, for the hard speech of the people constrained us.
 240 Then for nine years we sons of the Achaians fought there,
 and in the tenth we sacked the city of Priam, and went back
 homeward with our ships, and the god scattered the Achaians.
 But for wretched me Zeus of the counsels devised more hardships;
 one month only I stayed, taking pleasure in my children
 245 and my wedded wife and my possessions, but then the spirit
 within me urged me to make an expedition to Egypt
 with ships well appointed and with my godlike companions.
 I appointed nine ships, and rapidly the people were gathered,
 and for six days then my eager companions continued
 250 feasting, but I provided them with abundant victims
 for sacrifice to the gods, and for themselves to make ready
 their feast. On the seventh day we went aboard and from wide Crete
 sailed on a North Wind that was favorable and fair. It was
 easy, like sailing downstream, so that never a single
 255 one of my ships was hurt, and we, unharmed, without sickness,
 sat still, and let the wind and the steersmen hold them steady.
 On the fifth day we reached the abundant stream Aigyptos,

who came to grief in Egypt

and I stayed my oarswept ships inside the Aigyptos River.
 Then I urged my eager companions to stay where they were, there
 260 close to the fleet, and to guard the ships, and was urgent with them
 to send look-outs to the watching places; but they, following
 their own impulse, and giving way to marauding violence,
 suddenly began plundering the Egyptians' beautiful
 fields, and carried off the women and innocent children,
 265 and killed the men, and soon the outcry came to the city.
 They heard the shouting, and at the time when dawn shows, they came
 on us, and all the plain was filled with horses and infantry
 and the glare of bronze, and Zeus who delights in thunder flung down
 a foul panic among my companions, and none was so hardy
 270 as to stand and fight, for the evils stood in a circle around them.
 There they killed many of us with the sharp bronze, and others
 they led away alive, to work for them in forced labor;
 but Zeus himself put this thought into my mind, as I will
 tell you, but how I wish I had died and met my destiny
 275 there in Egypt, for there was still more sorrow awaiting me.
 At once I put the well-wrought helm from my head, the great shield
 off my shoulders, and from my hand I let the spear drop,
 and went out into the way of the king and up to his chariot,
 and kissed his knees and clasped them; he rescued me and took pity
 280 and seated me in his chariot and took me, weeping, homeward
 with him; and indeed many swept in on me with ash spears
 straining to kill me, for they were all too angered, but the king
 held them off from me, and honored the anger of Zeus Protector
 of Strangers, who beyond others is outraged at evil dealings.
 285 There for seven years I stayed and gathered together
 much substance from the men of Egypt, for all gave to me;
 but when in the turning of time the eighth year had befallen me,
 then there came a Phoenician man, well skilled in beguilements,
 a gnawer at others' goods, and many were the hurts he inflicted
 290 on men, and by his wits talked me over, so I went with him
 to Phoenicia, where lay this man's house and possessions.
 There for the fulfillment of a year I stayed with him,
 but when the months and when the days had come to completion,
 with the circling back of the year again, and the seasons came on,
 295 then he took me on his seafaring ship to Libya,
 with lying advices, that with him we could win a cargo, but in fact

so he could sell me there and take the immense price for me.
 I went with him on his ship, forced to, although I suspected
 all, on a North Wind that was favorable and fair, above
 300 the middle of Crete, but Zeus was plotting these men's destruction.
 But after we had left Crete behind us, and there was no more
 land in sight, but only the sky and the sea, then Kronian
 Zeus drew on a blue-black cloud, and settled it over
 the hollow ship, and the open sea was darkened beneath it.
 305 Zeus with thunder and lightning together crashed on our vessel,
 and, struck by the thunderbolt of Zeus, she spun in a circle,
 and all was full of brimstone. The men were thrown in the water,
 and bobbing like sea crows they were washed away on the running
 waves all around the black ship, and the god took away their homecoming.
 310 But Zeus himself, though I had pain in my heart, then put
 into my hands the giant mast of the ship with dark prows,
 so that I still could escape the evil, and I embracing
 this was swept along before the destructive stormwinds.
 Nine days I was swept along, and on the tenth, in black night,
 315 the great wave rolling washed me up on the shore of Thesprotia.
 There the king of the Thesprotians, the hero Pheidon,
 looked after me without price, for his own dear son had come on me
 when I was beaten by weariness and cold air, and lifted me
 up by the hands, and led me home to the house of his father,
 320 and put a mantle and tunic about me to wear as clothing.
 It was there I had word of Odysseus, for this king told me
 he had feasted and friended him on his way back to his own country;
 and he showed me all the possessions gathered in by Odysseus,
 bronze and gold and difficultly wrought iron. Truly,
 325 that would feed a succession of heirs to the tenth generation,
 such are the treasures stored for him in the house of the great king.
 But he said Odysseus had gone to Dodona, to listen
 to the will of Zeus, out of the holy deep-leaved oak tree,
 for how he could come back to the rich countryside of Ithaka,
 330 in secret or openly, having been by now long absent.
 And he swore to me in my presence, as he poured out a libation
 in his house, that the ship was drawn down to the sea and the crew were
 ready
 to carry Odysseus back again to his own dear country;
 but before that he sent me off, for a ship of Thesprotian

335 men happened then to be sailing for Doulichion, rich in wheatfields;
 so he urged them to convey me there to the king Akastos,
 in a proper way, but their hearts were taken with a bad counsel
 concerning me, so I still should have the pain of affliction.
 So when the seafaring ship had gone far out from the mainland,
 340 they presently devised the day of slavery for me.
 They took off me the mantle and tunic I wore as clothing,
 and then they put another vile rag on me, and a tunic,
 tattered, the one you yourself see with your eyes. At evening
 time they made their way off the fields of sunny Ithaka,
 345 and there they tied me fast in the strong-benched ship, with a rope's end
 twisted and tightly about me, and themselves disembarking
 speedily took their evening meal on the sand of the seashore.
 But the very gods themselves untied the knots that were on me
 easily, and I, wrapping my head in a rag, climbed down
 350 the polished plank that was there for loading, and let my chest into
 the sea, then struck out with both my arms, and thus swimming
 I very soon was out of the water and close to where they were.
 Then I went up, where there was a growth of flowering thicket,
 and lay there, cowering; they with outcry great and sorrowful
 355 came back to search, but then it seemed there was no more profit
 in looking for me any longer, and so they went back, boarding
 their hollow ship again; but it was the gods who concealed me
 easily, and it was they who brought me here to the steading
 of an understanding man. So now, life is still my portion.
 360 Then, O swineherd Eumaios, you said to him in answer:
 'O sorrowful stranger, truly you troubled the spirit in me,
 by telling me all these details, how you suffered and wandered;
 yet I think some part is in no true order, and you will not persuade me
 in your talk about Odysseus. Why should such a man as you are
 365 lie recklessly to me? But I myself know the whole truth
 of what my lord's homecoming is, how all the gods hated him
 so much that they did not make him go down in the land of the Trojans,
 nor in the arms of his friends, after he had wound up the fighting.
 So all the Achaians would have heaped a grave mound over him,
 and he would have won great fame for himself and his son hereafter.
 370 But now ingloriously the stormwinds have caught and carried him.
 But I keep away and with my pigs, and I do not go now
 to the city, unless circumspect Penelope for some reason

asks me to go, when word comes in from one place or another;
 375 and there are those who sit beside me and question me over
 particulars, whether they are grieving for a lord long absent,
 or are happy at eating up his substance without recompense.
 But I have no liking for this inquiry and asking of questions,
 since that time an Aitolian man beguiled me by telling
 380 a story. This one had killed a man and wandered over
 much country. He came to my house and I entertained him fondly.
 He said he had seen him with Idomeneus, among the Cretan
 men, repairing his ships, for the stormwinds had smashed them,
 and he said he would be coming back, in the summer or autumn,
 385 bringing in many possessions, and with his godlike companions.
 You too, old man of many sorrows, since the spirit brought you
 here to me, do not try to please me nor spell me with lying
 words. It is not for that I will entertain and befriend you,
 but for fear of Zeus, the god of guests, and for my own pity.
 390 Then resourceful Odysseus spoke in turn and answered him:
 'Truly, the mind in you is something very suspicious.
 Not even with an oath can I bring you round, nor persuade you.
 Come now, we two shall make an agreement, and for the future
 the gods who hold Olympos shall be witnesses to both sides.
 395 As your lord makes his homecoming into his palace
 here, you shall give me a tunic and mantle to wear, and send me
 on my way to Doulichion, where my heart has been desiring
 to go; but if your lord never comes in the way I tell you
 he will, set your serving men on me, and throw me over a high cliff,
 400 so the next vagabond will be careful, and not lie to you.'
 Then in turn the glorious swineherd spoke to him in answer:
 'That would be virtuous of me, my friend, and good reputation
 would be mine among men, for present time alike and hereafter,
 if first I led you into my shelter, there entertained you
 405 as guest, then murdered you and ravished the dear life from you.
 Then cheerfully I could go and pray to Zeus, son of Kronos.
 But now it is time for our dinner, and I hope my companions come in
 soon, so we can prepare a good dinner here in my shelter.'
 So these two remained conversing this way together,
 410 and the sows came up, and with them came the men who were
 swineherds,
 and they penned the sows for the night inside their accustomed places,

and an endless clamor went up from the crowding swine. Thereafter
 the glorious swineherd gave the word to his own companions:
 'Bring in the best of the pigs, to sacrifice for our stranger
 415 guest from afar, and we ourselves shall enjoy it, we who
 long have endured this wretched work for the pigs with shining
 teeth, while others at no cost eat up what we have worked on.'
 So he spoke, and with the pitiless bronze split kindling,
 and the men brought in a pig, five years old and a very fat one,
 420 and made it stand in front of the fireplace, nor did the swineherd
 forget the immortal gods, for he had the uses of virtue;
 but he cut off hairs from the head of the white-toothed pig, and threw
 them
 into the fire as dedication, and prayed to all the gods
 that Odysseus of the many designs should have his homecoming.
 425 He hit the beast with a split of oak that he had lying by him.
 The breath went out of the pig; then they slaughtered him and singed
 him,
 then jointed the carcass, and the swineherd laid pieces of raw meat
 with offerings from all over the body upon the thick fat,
 and sprinkled these with meal of barley and threw them in the fire, then
 430 they cut all the remainder into pieces and spitted them,
 and roasted all carefully and took off the pieces,
 and laid it all together on platters. The swineherd
 stood up to divide the portions, for he was fair minded,
 and separated all the meat into seven portions.
 435 One he set aside, with a prayer, for the nymphs and Hermes,
 the son of Maia, and the rest he distributed to each man,
 but gave Odysseus in honor the long cuts of the chine's portion
 of the white-toothed pig, and so exalted the heart of his master.
 Then resourceful Odysseus spoke to him and addressed him:
 440 'I wish, Eumaios, you could be as dear to our father
 Zeus as to me, when I am so poor, but you grace me with good things.'
 Then, O swineherd Eumaios, you said to him in answer:
 'Eat, my guest, strange man that you are, and take your pleasure
 of what is here now; the god will give you such, or will let it
 445 be, as in his own mind he may wish. He can do anything.'
 He spoke, and sacrificed first-offerings to the immortal
 gods, then poured bright wine for Odysseus, sacker of cities,
 and put the cup in his hands, and sat down to his own portion.

Odysseus hints for a mantle

Mesaulios served the bread to them, a man whom the swineherd
 450 owned himself by himself and apart from his absent master,
 and independently of his mistress and aged Laertes,
 having bought him from the Taphians with his own possessions.
 They put forth their hands to the good things that lay ready before them.
 But when they had put away their desire for eating and drinking,
 455 Mesaulios took the food away again, and they made haste
 to go to bed, filled with bread and meat to repletion.
 A bad night came on, the dark of the moon, and Zeus rained
 all night long, and the West Wind blew big, always watery.
 Odysseus spoke among them. He was trying it out on the swineherd,
 460 to see if he might take off his mantle and give it him, or tell
 one of his men to do it, since he cared for him so greatly:
 'Hear me now, Eumaios and all you other companions.
 What I say will be a bit of boasting. The mad wine tells me
 to do it. Wine sets even a thoughtful man to singing,
 465 or sets him into softly laughing, sets him to dancing.
 Sometimes it tosses out a word that was better unspoken.
 But now I have broken into loud speech I will not suppress it.
 I wish I were young again and the strength still steady within me,
 as when, under Troy, we formed an ambush detail and led it.
 470 The leaders were Odysseus and Atreus' son, Menelaos,
 and I made a third leader with them, since they themselves asked me.
 But when we had come underneath the city and the steep wall,
 we, all about the city in marshy ground and the dense growth
 of swamp grass and the reeds, and huddling under our armor,
 475 lay there, and a bad night came on with a rush of the North Wind
 freezing, and from above came a fall of snow, chilling
 like frost, and on the shields' edges the ice formed, rimming them.
 There all the other men were wearing both mantles and tunics,
 and they slept at ease, pulling their great shields over their shoulders,
 480 but I, in my carelessness when I started with my companions,
 had left my mantle; I never thought I would be so cold,
 but went along with only my shield and my shining waist guard.
 But when it was the third time of the night and after the star change,
 then I spoke to Odysseus, for he was lying next me,
 485 nudging him with my elbow, and he listened at once. I said:
 "Son of Laertes and seed of Zeus, resourceful Odysseus,
 I shall no longer be left among the living. The weather

by telling a yarn about Troy

is too much for me. I have no mantle. The spirit made me
 silly, to go half-dressed, and now there is no escape for me."
 490 So I spoke, and he immediately had an idea
 in his mind, such a man he was for counseling, as for fighting.
 He spoke to me in a little voice and said a word to me:
 "Be quiet now, let no other of the Achaians hear you."
 Then he propped his head on his elbow and spoke a word, out loud:
 495 "Hear me, friends. In my sleep a divine dream came to me.
 We have come too far away from the ships. Now, would there be
 someone
 to tell Agamemnon, Atreus' son, shepherd of the people,
 so he might send more of the men by the ships to come here to us?"
 So he spoke, and Thoas sprang up, the son of Andraimon,
 500 quickly, and took off and laid aside his red mantle,
 and went on the run for the ships, and I lay down in his clothes,
 happily, and rested until Dawn of the golden throne came.
 I wish I were young like that and the strength still steady within me.
 Some one of the swineherds in this house would give me a mantle,
 505 both for love and out of respect for a strong warrior.
 Now they slight me because I wear vile clothing upon me.'
 Then, O swineherd Eumaios, you said to him in answer:
 'Old sir, that was a blameless fable the way you told it;
 and you have made no unprofitable speech, nor one that
 510 missed the point, so you shall not lack for clothes, nor anything
 rightfully due the unhappy suppliant who approaches us.
 For now, that is. You must flaunt your rags again in the morning.
 There are not many extra mantles and extra tunics
 here to change into. There is only one set for each man.
 515 When, however, the dear son of Odysseus comes back,
 he will give you a mantle and tunic to wear as clothing,
 and send you wherever your heart and spirit desire to be sent.'
 So he spoke, and sprang up, and laid a bed for him next to
 the fire, and threw the fleeces of sheep and goats over it.
 520 There Odysseus lay down, and he threw over him a mantle
 that was great and thick, which he kept by him as an extra covering
 to wrap in when winter weather came on and was too rigorous.
 So there Odysseus went to bed and the young men beside him
 lay down also to go to sleep. Only the swineherd
 525 did not please to leave his pigs, and go to bed indoors,

Eumaios sleeps with the pigs

but made preparations as he went out; and Odysseus was happy
that his livelihood was so well cared for while he was absent.
First the swineherd slung his sharp sword on his heavy shoulders,
and put a very thick mantle about him, to keep the wind out,
530 and took up also the hairy skin of a great, well-conditioned
goat, and took up a sharp javelin as a protection
against men and dogs, and went to sleep where his pigs, with shining
teeth, lay in the hollow of a rock, sheltered from the North Wind.

BOOK XV



At this time, Pallas Athene made her way into wide-spaced
Lakedaimon, to remind the shining son of great-hearted
Odysseus of his journey home, and speed his homecoming.
She found Telemachos there with the glorious son of Nestor,
5 sleeping in the forecourt of worshipful Menelaos.
Indeed, the son of Nestor was held fast in the softening
sleep, but the sweet sleep was not on Telemachos, wakeful
through the immortal night, with anxious thoughts of his father.
Gray-eyed Athene stood close by his head and addressed him:
10 "Telemachos, it no longer becomes you to stray off so far
from home, leaving your possessions behind and men in your palace
who are so overbearing. You must not let them divide up
and eat up all your substance, and make your journey a vain one.
So urge Menelaos of the great war cry with all speed to give you
15 conveyance, so you will find your stately mother is still there
at home, since now her father and her brothers are urgent with her
to marry Eurymachos. He is outdoing the rest of suitors
in the giving of gifts, and has been piling up presents to win her.
No property must go out of the house, unless you consent to it.
20 For you know what the mind is like in the breast of a woman.
She wants to build up the household of the man who marries her,
and of former children, and of her beloved and wedded husband,
she has no remembrance, when he is dead, nor does she think of him.
For yourself, when you come back, you should turn over everything

BOOK XVI



These two in the shelter, Odysseus and the noble swineherd, stirred the fire at dawn, and arranged their breakfast, and sent the herdsmen out with the pasturing pigs. At this time the clamorous dogs came fawning around Telemachos, nor did they bark at him as he came, and great Odysseus noticed that the dogs were fawning; above them he heard the loud noise of footsteps.

Immediately he spoke in winged words to Eumaios: 'Eumaios, someone is on his way here who is truly one of yours, or else well known, since the dogs are not barking but fawning about him, and I can hear the thud of his footsteps.'

His whole word had not been spoken when his beloved son stood in the forecourt. Amazed, the swineherd started up, and the vessels, where he had been busily mixing the bright wine, fell from his hand. He came up to meet his master, and kissed his head, and kissed too his beautiful shining eyes, and both his hands, and the swelling tear fell from him. And as a father, with heart full of love, welcomes his only and grown son, for whose sake he has undergone many hardships when he comes back in the tenth year from a distant country, so now the noble swineherd, clinging fast to godlike Telemachos, kissed him even as if he had escaped dying, and in a burst of weeping he spoke to him in winged words: 'You have come, Telemachos, sweet light; I thought I would never

see you again, when you had gone in the ship to Pylos. But come now into the house, dear child; so that I can pleasure my heart with looking at you again when you are inside; for you do not come very often to the estate and the herdsmen, but you stay in town, since now it seems you are even minded to face the deadly company of the lordly suitors.'

Then the thoughtful Telemachos said to him in answer: 'So it shall be, my father; but it was for your sake I came here, to look upon you with my eyes, and to hear a word from you, whether my mother endures still in the halls, or whether some other man has married her, and the bed of Odysseus lies forlorn of sleepers with spider webs grown upon it.'

Then in turn the swineherd, leader of men, said to him: 'All too much with enduring heart she does wait for him there in your own palace, and always with her the wretched nights and the days also waste her away with weeping.'

So he spoke, and took the bronze spear from him. Telemachos then went inside and stepped over the sill of stone, and his father Odysseus rose from his seat and yielded him place as he entered, but Telemachos from the other side checked him and said to him: 'No, sit, my friend, and we shall find us another seat, here in our own shelter; the man is here who will lay it for us.'

He spoke, and Odysseus went back again and sat down. The swineherd strewed green brushwood and fleeces on the ground for him. There the beloved son of Odysseus seated himself, and for them the swineherd brought and set beside them platters of roasted meat, which they had left over when they were eating earlier; and hastily set bread by them, piling it in baskets, and mixed the wine, as sweet as honey, in a bowl of ivy.

He himself sat down across from godlike Odysseus. They put forth their hands to the good things that lay ready before them. But when they had put away their desire for eating and drinking, then at last Telemachos questioned the noble swineherd:

'Father, where did this stranger come from? How did the sailors bring him to Ithaka? What men do they claim that they are? For I do not think he could have traveled on foot to this country.'

Then, O swineherd Eumaios, you said to him in answer: 'So, my child, I will relate you the whole true story. He announces himself by birth to be one from spacious

Crete, but his wanderings have wheeled him through many cities
of mortal men, for so the divinity spun his thread for him,
65 and now this time he has fled away off a ship of Thesprotian
men, and come to my steading. I put him into your hands now.
Do with him as you will. He names himself your suppliant.'

Then the thoughtful Telemachos said to him in answer:
'Eumaios, this word you spoke hurt my heart deeply. For how
70 shall I take and entertain a stranger guest in my house?
I myself am young and have no faith in my hands' strength
to defend a man, if anyone else picks a quarrel with him;
and my mother's heart is divided in her, and ponders two ways,
whether to remain here with me, and look after the household,
75 keep faith with her husband's bed, and regard the voice of the people,
or go away at last with the best man of the Achaians
who pays her court in her palace, and brings her the most presents.
But as for this stranger, since it is your house he has come to,
I will give him a mantle and tunic to wear, fine clothing,
80 and give him sandals for his feet, a sword with two edges,
and send him wherever his heart and spirit desire to be sent.
Or if you will, keep him here in your steading and look after him,
and I will send the clothes out here, and all provisions
to eat, so he will not be hard on you, nor on your companions;
85 but I will not let him go down there and be where the suitors
are, for their outrageousness is too strong, and I fear
they may insult him, and that will be a hard sorrow upon me
and a difficult one for even a strong man to deal with
among too many of them, since they will be far the stronger.'

90 Then long-suffering great Odysseus spoke to him in answer:
'Dear friend, since in truth I am privileged to speak of this,
you eat away the dear heart in me, as I listen
to what you tell of the suitors and their reckless contrivings
inside your palace, against your will, when you are such a one
95 as you are. Tell me, are you willingly oppressed by them? Do the people
hate you throughout this place, swayed by some impulse given
from the gods? Do you find your brothers wanting? A man trusts
help from these in the fighting when a great quarrel arises.
I wish that I were truly as young as I am in spirit,
100 or a son of stately Odysseus were here, or he himself might
come in from his wandering. There is time still for hope. If such

things could be, another could strike my head from my shoulders
if I did not come as an evil thing to all those people
as I entered the palace of Odysseus, the son of Laertes.
105 And if I, fighting alone, were subdued by all their number,
then I would rather die, cut down in my own palace,
than have to go on watching forever these shameful activities,
guests being battered about, or to see them rudely mishandling
the serving women all about the beautiful palace,
110 to see them drawing the wine and eating up food in this utterly
reckless way, without end, forever and always at it.'

Then the thoughtful Telemachos said to him in answer:
'So, my friend, I will tell you plainly the whole truth of it.
It is not that all the people hate me, nor are they angry,
115 nor is it that I find brothers wanting, whom a man trusts for
help in the fighting, whenever a great quarrel arises.
For so it is that the son of Kronos made ours a single
line. Arkeisios had only a single son, Laertes,
and Laertes had only one son, Odysseus; Odysseus in turn
120 left only one son, myself, in the halls, and got no profit
of me, and my enemies are here in my house, beyond numbering.
For all the greatest men who have the power in the islands,
in Doulichion and Same and in wooded Zakyntos,
and all who in rocky Ithaka are holders of lordships,
125 all these are after my mother for marriage, and wear my house out.
And she does not refuse the hateful marriage, nor is she able
to make an end of the matter; and these eating up my substance
waste it away; and soon they will break me myself to pieces.
Yet all these are things that are lying upon the gods' knees.
130 Father Eumaios, go quickly now, and tell the circumspect
Penelope that I am safe and have come from Pylos.
I myself will stay here. You go there quickly, and give this
message to her alone, and let no other Achaian
hear it; for there are many there who are plotting against me.'

135 Then, O swineherd Eumaios, you said to him in answer:
'I see, I understand; you speak to one who follows you.
But come now, tell me this and give me an accurate answer.
Shall I on the same errand go with the news to wretched
Laertes, who while he so greatly grieved for Odysseus
140 yet would look after his farm and with the thralls in his household

Odysseus reveals himself

would eat and drink, whenever the spirit was urgent with him;
but now, since you went away in the ship to Pylos,
they say he has not eaten in this way, nor drunk anything,
nor looked to his farm, but always in lamentation and mourning
145 sits grieving, and the flesh on his bones is wasting from him.'

Then the thoughtful Telemachos said to him in answer:

'Though it hurts the more, we shall let him be, for all our sorrow.
For if it were somehow given to mortals to have their choosing
in all things, we should choose my father's day of homecoming.

150 But you, when you have given your message, come back and do not
go off to the estate to see him, but tell my mother
to tell the servant who is housekeeper to go there swiftly
and secretly, and she can give the news to the old man.'

He spoke, and started the swineherd, who in his hands took up
155 his sandals and tied them on his feet to start for the city.
Nor was Athene unaware that Eumaios the swineherd
had left the steading, but she came near, likened to a woman
beautiful and tall, and skilled in glorious handiwork,
and stood in the forecourt of the shelter, seen by Odysseus.

160 But Telemachos did not look her way nor did he perceive her;
for the gods do not show themselves in this way to everyone;
but Odysseus saw her and the dogs did; they were not barking,
but cowered away, whimpering, to the other side of the shelter.
She nodded to him with her brows, and noble Odysseus

165 saw her, and came from the house, outside the great wall of the courtyard,
and stood in her presence. Then Athene spoke to him, saying:

'Son of Laertes and seed of Zeus, resourceful Odysseus,
it is time now to tell your son the story; no longer
hide it, so that, contriving death and doom for the suitors,

170 you two may go to the glorious city. I myself shall not
be long absent from you in my eagerness for the fighting.'

So spoke Athene, and with her golden wand she tapped him.

First she made the mantle and the tunic that covered
his chest turn bright and clean; she increased his strength and stature.

175 His dark color came back to him again, his jaws firmed,
and the beard that grew about his chin turned black. Athene
went away once more, having done her work, but Odysseus
went back into the shelter. His beloved son was astonished
and turned his eyes in the other direction, fearing this must be

to Telemachos

180 a god, and spoke aloud to him and addressed him in winged words:
'Suddenly you have changed, my friend, from what you were formerly;
your skin is no longer as it was, you have other clothing.
Surely you are one of the gods who hold the high heaven.
Be gracious, then: so we shall give you favored offerings
185 and golden gifts that have been well wrought. Only be merciful.'

Then in turn long-suffering great Odysseus answered him:

'No, I am not a god. Why liken me to the immortals?
But I am your father, for whose sake you are always grieving
as you look for violence from others, and endure hardships.'

190 So he spoke, and kissed his son, and the tears running
down his cheeks splashed on the ground. Until now, he was always
unyielding.

But Telemachos, for he did not yet believe that this was
his father, spoke to him once again in answer, saying:

195 'No, you are not Odysseus my father, but some divinity
beguiles me, so that I must grieve the more, and be sorry.
For no man who was mortal could ever have so contrived it
by his own mind alone, not unless some immortal, descending
on him in person, were lightly to make him a young or an old man.
For even now you were an old man in unseemly clothing,
200 but now you resemble one of the gods who hold wide heaven.'

Then resourceful Odysseus spoke in turn and answered him:

'Telemachos, it does not become you to wonder too much
at your own father when he is here, nor doubt him. No other
Odysseus than I will ever come back to you. But here I am,
205 and I am as you see me, and after hardships and suffering
much I have come, in the twentieth year, back to my own country.
But here you see the work of Athene, the giver of plunder,
who turns me into whatever she pleases, since she can do this;
and now she will make me look like a beggar, but then the next time
210 like a young man, and wearing splendid clothes on my body;
and it is a light thing for the gods who hold wide heaven
to glorify any mortal man, or else to degrade him.'

So he spoke, and sat down again, but now Telemachos
folded his great father in his arms and lamented,

215 shedding tears, and desire for mourning rose in both of them;
and they cried shrill in a pulsing voice, even more than the outcry
of birds, ospreys or vultures with hooked claws, whose children

They make their plans

were stolen away by the men of the fields, before their wings grew strong; such was their pitiful cry and the tears their eyes wept.
 220 And now the light of the sun would have set on their crying, had not Telemachos spoken a quick word to his father:
 'What kind of ship was it, father dear, in which the sailors brought you to Ithaka? What men do they claim that they are? For I do not think you could have traveled on foot to this country.'
 225 Then long-suffering great Odysseus said to him in answer:
 'So, my child, I will tell you all the truth. The Phaiakians famed for seafaring brought me here, and they carry other people as well, whoever may come into their country. They brought me sleeping in their fast ship over the open
 230 sea, and set me down in Ithaka, and gave me glorious gifts, abundant bronze and gold and woven apparel. All this, by the gods' grace, is lying stored in the caverns. But now I have come to this place by the advice by Athene, so we together can make our plans to slaughter our enemies.
 235 Come then, tell me the number of suitors, and tell me about them, so I can know how many there are, and which men are of them; and then, when I have pondered it in my faultless mind, I can decide whether we two alone will be able to face them without any help, or whether we must go looking for others.'
 240 Then the thoughtful Telemachos said to him in answer:
 'Oh, father, I have always heard of your great fame, and how you were a fighting man with your hands, and prudent in counsel; but what you have spoken of is too big; I am awed; for it could not be that two men could fight against strong men in these numbers.
 245 The suitors are no simple number of ten, nor twice that, but far more than that. Even now you shall hear the number of those that are here. From Doulichion there are two and fifty young men, choice men, and there are six thralls of their following; the number of men come from Same is four and twenty,
 250 and from Zakynthos there are twenty sons of the Achaians. From Ithaka itself there are twelve, and all of their best men, and Medon the herald is with them, and the divine singer, and there are two henchmen with them, both skilled in carving. If we set ourselves to fight against all who are in the palace,
 255 I fear your revenge on their violence may be grim and bitter for us. Then, if you can think of anyone to stand by us

to deal with the suitors

and with forthright spirit be our protector, speak of him to me.'
 Then in turn long-suffering great Odysseus answered him:
 'So, then, I will tell you. Hear me and understand me
 260 and consider whether Athene with Zeus father helping will be enough for us, or whether I must think of some other helper.'
 Then the thoughtful Telemachos said to him in answer:
 'Those indeed are two excellent helpers you name to me, even though they sit high away in the clouds, for they have power
 265 over others besides, over mortal men and the gods immortal.'
 Then in turn long-suffering great Odysseus answered him:
 'These are two who will not for a long time stay far off from the strong battle, at that time when the War God's decision is fought out in our halls between ourselves and the suitors.
 270 But now, as for you, you must make your way, when dawn shows, back to our house, and be with the group of insolent suitors. At a later time the swineherd shall take me to the city, and I shall look like a dismal vagabond, and an old man. But if they maltreat me within the house, then let the dear heart
 275 in you even endure it, though I suffer outrage, even if they drag me by the feet through the palace to throw me out of it, or pelt me with missiles; you must still look on and endure it; though indeed you may speak to them with soft words and entreat them to give over their mad behavior, but still they will never
 280 listen to you, for the day of their destiny stands near them. And put away in your heart this other thing that I tell you. When Athene, lady of many counsels, puts it into my mind, I will nod my head to you, and when you perceive it, take all the warlike weapons which are stored in the great hall,
 285 and carry them off and store them away in the inward corner of the high chamber; and when the suitors miss them and ask you about them, answer and beguile them with soft words, saying:
 "I stored them away out of the smoke, since they are no longer like what Odysseus left behind when he went to Troy land,
 290 but are made foul, with all the smoke of the fire upon them. Also, the son of Kronos put into my head this even greater thought, that with the wine in you, you might stand up and fight, and wound each other, and spoil the feast and the courting, since iron all of itself works on a man and attracts him."
 295 But leave behind, for you and me alone, a pair each

of swords and spears, and a pair of oxhide shields, to take up
in our hands, and wield them, and kill these men; and Zeus of the
counsels

and Pallas Athene will be there to maze the wits in them.

And put away in your heart this other thing that I tell you.

300 If truly you are my own son, and born of our own blood,
then let nobody hear that Odysseus is in the palace;
let not Laertes hear of it, neither let the swineherd;
let no one in the household know, not even Penelope
herself; you and I alone will judge the faith of the women,
305 and, besides these, we can make trial of the serving men, to see
whether any of them is true to us and full of humility,
or whether one cares nothing for you, and denies your greatness.'

Then in answer again his glorious son said to him:

'Father, I think you will learn what my spirit is like, when the time
comes,

310 for the mood that is in my mind shows no slackening; only
I think in what you propose there will be no profit for either
of us, and I urge you to think well about it. You would
be going about our holdings, testing and learning the nature
of man after man, while they at their ease in the palace
315 overbearingly consume our goods, and spare nothing.
And yet I do urge you to find out about the women,
which of them care nothing for you, and which are innocent;
but I myself would not wish that we should go out to the steadings
to test the men, but this is a task to be left for later,
320 if truly you have been given some sign from Zeus of the aegis.'

Now as these two were conversing thus with each other,
the well-made vessel which had carried Telemachos, together
with his companions, from Pylos, now came in to Ithaka.

325 They, when they were inside the many-hollowed harbor,
hauled the black-hulled ship onto the dry land, high up,
and their high-hearted henchmen carried their armor for them,
and took the beautiful presents to the house of Klytios.
But they sent a herald on his way to the house of Odysseus
to take a message to circumspect Penelope, saying

330 Telemachos was in the country now, but had told them to sail
the ship back to the city, so the magnificent queen would not
be terrified within her heart, and shed the soft tears.

The two of them met, the herald and noble swineherd, going
by reason of the same message, to report to the lady.

335 But when they had come to the house of the sacred king, the herald
stood in the midst of the serving maids and delivered his message:
'Now, O queen, your beloved son is back in this country.'

But the swineherd stood very close to Penelope and told her
all the message that her beloved son had entrusted

340 to him to tell, but when he had given her all the message,
he went back to his pigs, leaving the palace and courtyard.

But the hearts of the suitors were disturbed and discouraged. They
went

out of the palace and stood by the great wall of the courtyard,
and there in front of the palace gates they held an assembly.

345 First of them to speak was Eurymachos, son of Polybos:

'Friends, this is a monstrous thing, this voyage made by Telemachos
and insolently put through. We thought he would never achieve it.

But come, let us drag a black ship, our best one, down to the water,
and assemble sailors to row it, who can with all speed carry

350 the message to give to our others and tell them to come home quickly.'

He had not yet said all before Amphinomos, turning
from his place, saw the ship inside the depths of the harbor,
and they had the oars now in their hands and were taking the sails down.

He laughed out sweetly and spoke a word then to his companions:

355 'We need send them no message now. Here they are, inside.

Either some god told it to them, or they themselves saw
the other ship pass by, and they were not able to catch her.'

He spoke, and they stood up and went down to the sand of the
seashore,

and others hauled their black-hulled ship up onto the dry land,
360 and their high-hearted henchmen carried their armor for them.

They went in a throng to the assembly, nor did they suffer
any of the young men or any of the elders to sit with them.

Thereupon Antinoös, son of Eupheithes, addressed them:

'It is shameful how the gods got this man clear of misfortune.

365 In the daytime we sat watchful along the windy headlands,
always succeeding each other, but when the sun set, we never
lay through the night on the dry land, but always on the open
water, cruising in a fast ship, we waited for the divine dawn,
watching to ambush Telemachos, so that we could cut him

Antinoös' proposal to murder Telemachos

370 off; but all the time some divinity brought him home. Therefore,
we who are here must make our plans for the grim destruction
of Telemachos, so he cannot escape us; since I have no thought
we can get our present purpose accomplished while he is living.
For he himself is understanding in thought and counsel,
375 and the people here no longer show us their entire favor.
But come now, before he can gather the Achaians and bring them
to assembly; for I think he will not let us go, but work out
his anger, and stand up before them all and tell them
how we designed his sudden murder, but we could not catch him;
380 and they will have no praise for us when they hear of our evil
deeds, and I fear they will work some evil on us, and drive us
from our own country, so we must make for another community;
then let us surprise him and kill him, in the fields away from the city,
or in the road, and ourselves seize his goods and possessions,
385 dividing them among ourselves fairly, but give his palace
to his mother to keep and to the man who marries her. Or else,
if what I say is not pleasing to you, but you are determined
to have him go on living and keep his father's inheritance,
then we must not go on gathering here and abundantly eating
390 away his fine substance, but from his own palace each man
must strive to win her with gifts of courtship; she will then marry
the man she is fated to have, and who brings her the greatest presents.'

So he spoke, and all of them stayed stricken to silence.

395 Now Amphinomos spoke forth and addressed them. He was
the shining son of Nisos, son of the lord Aretiades,
and led those suitors who had come over from the abundant
grasslands and grainlands of Doulichion, and pleased Penelope
more than the others in talk, for he had good sense and discretion.
He in kind intention toward all spoke forth and addressed them:
400 'Dear friends, I for my part would not be willing to murder
Telemachos; it is terrible to kill one of royal
blood; we should first have to ask the gods for their counsel.
Then, if the ordinances of great Zeus approve of it,
I myself would kill him and tell all others to do so;
405 but I say we must give it up, if the gods deny us.'

So Amphinomos spoke, and his word was acceptable to them.
Then they stood up at once and went into the house of Odysseus,
and entering they found their polished chairs, and were seated.

vetoed by Amphinomos

But now circumspect Penelope thought of her next move,
410 to show herself to her overbearing violent suitors;
for she had heard how they had planned her son's death in the palace.
The herald, Medon, who overheard their planning, had told her.
She went with her attendant women into the great hall.
But when she, shining among women, came to the suitors,
415 she stood by the pillar that supported the roof with its joinery,
holding her shining veil in front of her face to shield it,
and spoke a word of reproach to Antinoös, naming him:
'Antinoös, violent man, deviser of evil: in Ithaka
the common account says you are the best man among your age mates
420 for speech and counsel. But you have never been such. Oh, boisterous
creature, why do you weave a design of death and destruction
for Telemachos, and take no heed of suppliants, over whom
Zeus stands witness? It is not right to plan harm for each other.
Do you not know how your father came here once, a fugitive
425 in fear of the people? These were terribly angered with him,
because he had thrown in his lot with the pirate Taphians
and harried the Thesprotians, and these were friends of our people.
They wanted to waste him away, to break the dear heart in him,
to eat up his substance and abundant livelihood. Only
430 Odysseus stayed their hand and held them, for all their fury.
Now you eat up his house without payment, pay court to his wedded
wife, try to murder his son, and do me great indignity.
I tell you to stop it, and ask the others to do so likewise.'

Eurymachos the son of Polybos spoke then answering:

435 'Daughter of Ikarios, circumspect Penelope,
do not fear. Never let your heart be troubled for these things.
The man is not living, nor will there be one, nor can there ever
be one, who shall lay hands upon your son, Telemachos,
as long as I am alive on earth and look on the daylight.
440 For I tell you this straight out, and it will be a thing accomplished:
instantly his own black blood will stain my spear point.
My own spear; since often Odysseus, sacker of cities,
would seat me also upon his knees, and put pieces of roasted
meat in my hands, and hold the red wine out to me. Therefore,
445 of all men Telemachos is the dearest to me
by far, and I tell him to go in no fear of destruction
from the suitors. But if it comes from the gods, there is no escaping it.'

So he spoke, encouraging her, but himself was planning
the murder. She went back to the shining upper chamber
450 and wept for Odysseus, her dear husband, until the gray-eyed
goddess Athene drifted a sweet sleep over her eyelids.

With the evening, the noble swineherd came back to Odysseus
and his son. Then they stood over the evening meal to prepare it,
455 and dedicated a year-old sow; but meanwhile Athene
had come and stood close by Odysseus, son of Laertes,
and tapped him with her wand and made him once more an old man,
and put foul clothing upon his skin, for fear the swineherd
might recognize him, face to face, and go with the message
to circumspect Penelope, and not keep fast the secret.

460 Now Telemachos was the first who spokc a word to him:
'So, noble Eumaios, you have come. And what was the rumor
in the town? Are the haughty suitors now back from their ambush,
or are they still lying in wait for me on my homeward journey?'

Then, O swineherd Eumaios, you said to him in answer:
465 'It was not on my mind to go down through the city, nor to ask,
nor try to find out; rather the will was urgent within me
to speak my message with all speed and be on my way back here.
But one of your fellows as a swift messenger joined my company,
the herald; he was the first who told the word to your mother.

470 But here is another thing I know; with my eyes I saw it.
I was above the city, where the Hill of Hermes is, making
my way along, when I saw a fast vessel coming into
our harbor, making inshore, and many men were aboard her,
and she was loaded with shields and leaf-headed spears. Then I thought
475 that these would be the men we mean, but I do not know it.'

So he spoke, and Telemachos, the hallowed prince, smiled
as he caught his father's eye, but avoided the eyes of the swineherd.

They, when they had finished their work and got their feast ready,
feasted, nor was any man's hunger denied a fair portion.
480 But when they had put away their desire for eating and drinking,
they thought of going to bed, and accepted the gift of slumber.

BOOK XVII



But when the young Dawn showed again with her rosy fingers,
Telemachos, beloved son of godlike Odysseus,
then bound underneath his feet the beautiful sandals,
and took up a powerful spear which fitted his hand's grip,
5 on his way to the city, and going he spoke to his swineherd:
'Father, I am going to the city, so that my mother
will see me, since as I suppose she will never give over
that bitter lamentation of hers and her tearful crying
until she sees me myself. But here is what I will tell you
10 to do; take this unhappy stranger to the city, so that
there he can beg his dinner, and any who will can give him
his bit of bread and his cupful; it is not for me to put up with
everybody, now when I have troubles on my mind. Therefore,
even if the stranger is terribly angry, it will be only
15 the worse for him. Speaking the truth is the way I like best.'
Then resourceful Odysseus spoke in turn and answered him:
'Dear friend, neither do I desire that he should detain me
here; a beggar is better begging his dinner in the city
than in the country. Whoever wants to will give me something;
20 for I am no longer the right age to stay on the farms, the right age
to carry out any task the foreman imposes on me.
Go on then. This man, the one you have asked, will take me,
as soon as I have warmed myself by the fire and there is some
sunlight; these clothes are very poor, and I hope no morning

BOOK XIX



Now great Odysseus still remained in the hall, pondering how, with the help of Athene, he would murder the suitors. Presently he spoke in winged words to Telemachos:

5 Telemachos, we must have the weapons stored away inside the high chamber; and when the suitors miss them and ask you about them, answer and beguile them with soft words, saying: "I stored them away out of the smoke, since they are no longer like what Odysseus left behind when he went to Troy land, but are made foul, with all the smoke of the fire upon them.
10 Also, some divinity put into my head this even greater thought, that with the wine in you, you might stand up and fight, and wound each other, and spoil the feast and the courting; since iron all of itself works on a man and attracts him."

15 So he spoke, and Telemachos obeyed his dear father, and summoned out Eurykleia his nurse, and said to her: 'Come, nurse, please detain the women inside the palace, while I put away my father's beautiful armor in the inner room; it is carelessly laid in the house, and darkened with smoke, in my father's absence, and I was a child all that time.
20 Now I would put it away, where smoke from the fire will not reach it.'

Then in turn Eurykleia his dear nurse said to him: 'I only hope, my child, that you will assume such foresight in taking care of the house and protecting all our possessions. But tell me, who is it will go with you and hold the light for you?

25 The maids would have given you light, but you would not let them come out.

Then the thoughtful Telemachos said to her in answer: 'This stranger will. I will not suffer a man who feeds from our stores, and does not work, even though he comes from far off.'

So he spoke, and she had no winged words for an answer.

30 Eurykleia barred the doors of the strong-built great hall. The two men, Odysseus and his glorious son, sprang up and began carrying helmets, shields massive in the middle, and pointed spears, and before them Pallas Athene, holding a golden lamp, gave them splendid illumination.

35 Suddenly Telemachos spoke a word to his father: 'Father, here is a great wonder that my eyes look on. Always it seems that the chamber walls, the handsome bases and roof timbers of fit and tall columns sustaining them, shine in my eyes as if a fire were blazing. There must be
40 surely a god here, one of those who hold the high heaven.'

Then resourceful Odysseus spoke in turn and answered him: 'Hush, and keep it in your own mind, and do not ask questions. For this is the very way of the gods, who hold Olympos.

45 You should now go to bed, and I shall remain behind here, so that I can continue to stir up the maids, and also your mother; and she in her sorrow will question me about everything.'

So he spoke, and Telemachos went out of the great hall to his own chamber to go to bed, with torches to light him to his bed, where he always lay when sweet sleep came on him.

50 There he lay this time also and waited for the divine Dawn, while great Odysseus still remained in the hall, pondering how, with the help of Athene, he would murder the suitors.

But now circumspect Penelope came down from her chamber, looking like Artemis or like golden Aphrodite.

55 They set a chair for her to sit on close by the fireplace. The chair was inlaid with ivory and silver; the craftsman Ikmalios had made it, and for the feet he had joined on a footstool, all of one piece with it; a great fleece was spread out over the chair, and upon it circumspect Penelope
60 took her place. Her white-armed handmaidens came from the palace. They cleared and carried away a great deal of food, with the tables and goblets, where the men in high spirits had been drinking, and shook the ash from the cressets onto the ground, then piled them

- again with pieces of wood, to give them light, and to warm them.
- 65 Again for the second time Melanthe scolded Odysseus:
 'Stranger, do you mean to stay here all night and bother us
 by poking all over the house and spying upon the women?
 Take yourself out of the door, you wretch, and be well satisfied
 with your feast, or you may be forced to get out, with a torch thrown
 at you.'
- 70 Then looking darkly at her resourceful Odysseus said to her:
 'I wonder, why do you hold such an angry grudge against me?
 Is it because I am dirty, and wear foul clothing upon me,
 and go about as a public beggar? The need is on me,
 for such is the lot of vagabonds and men who are homeless.
- 75 I too was one who lived in my own house among people,
 prospering in wealth, and often I gave to a wanderer
 according to what he was and wanted when he came to me;
 and I had serving men by thousands, and many another
 good thing, by which men live well and are called prosperous, only
- 80 Zeus, son of Kronos, spoiled it all—somehow he wished to.
 So, woman, you should now beware lest you lose all of
 that glorious look with which you shine among the handmaidens.
 Beware of your mistress, who may grow angry with you and hate you.
 Or Odysseus may come back. There is still time for hope there.
- 85 And even if he has perished and will no longer come back,
 here is Telemachos, his son, by grace of Apollo
 grown such a man, and in his palace none of the women
 will be sinful and escape, since he is a child no longer.'
- So he spoke, and circumspect Penelope heard him,
 90 and spoke to her maidservant by name and gave her a scolding:
 'Always I know well what monstrous thing you are doing,
 you bold and shameless bitch; you will wipe it off on your own head.
 You understood all this very well, because you had heard it
 from me, how in my halls I intended to question the stranger
 95 about my husband; since I am troubled for him incessantly.'
- So she spoke and addressed her housekeeper, Eurynome:
 'Eurynome, bring up a chair and put a fleece on it,
 so that the stranger can be seated, and tell me his story,
 and listen also to what I say. I wish to question him.'
- 100 So she spoke, and the servant quickly brought up and set down
 a well-polished chair, and laid a fleece across to cover it.

- On this, much-enduring great Odysseus was seated,
 and their discourse was begun by circumspect Penelope:
 'Stranger, I myself first have a question to ask you.
- 105 What man are you and whence? Where is your city? Your parents?'
 Then resourceful Odysseus spoke in turn and answered her:
 'Lady, no mortal man on the endless earth could have cause
 to find fault with you; your fame goes up into the wide heaven,
 as of some king who, as a blameless man and god-fearing,
- 110 and ruling as lord over many powerful people,
 upholds the way of good government, and the black earth yields him
 barley and wheat, his trees are heavy with fruit, his sheepflocks
 continue to bear young, the sea gives him fish, because of
 his good leadership, and his people prosper under him.
- 115 Question me now here in your house about all other
 matters, but do not ask who I am, the name of my country,
 for fear you may increase in my heart its burden of sorrow
 as I think back; I am very full of grief, and I should not
 sit in the house of somebody else with my lamentation
- 120 and wailing. It is not good to go on mourning forever.
 Some one of your maids, or you yourself, might find fault with me
 and say I swam in tears because my brain drowned in liquor.'
- Circumspect Penelope said to him in answer:
 'Stranger, all of my excellence, my beauty and figure,
- 125 were ruined by the immortals at that time when the Argives took ship
 for Ilion, and with them went my husband, Odysseus.
 If he were to come back to me and take care of my life, then
 my reputation would be more great and splendid. As it is
 now, I grieve; such evils the god has let loose upon me.
- 130 For all the greatest men who have the power in the islands,
 in Doulichion and Same and in wooded Zakynthos,
 and all who in rocky Ithaka are holders of lordships,
 all these are my suitors against my will, and they wear my house out.
 Therefore, I pay no attention to strangers, nor to suppliants,
 nor yet to heralds, who are in the public service, but always
- 135 I waste away at the inward heart, longing for Odysseus.
 These men try to hasten the marriage. I weave my own wiles.
 First the divinity put the idea of the web in my mind,
 to set up a great loom in my palace, and set to weaving
- 140 a web of threads, long and fine. Then I said to them:

Odysseus pretends

"Young men, my suitors now that the great Odysseus has perished,
 wait, though you are eager to marry me, until I finish
 this web, so that my weaving will not be useless and wasted.
 This is a shroud for the hero Laertes, for when the destructive
 145 doom of death which lays men low shall take him, lest any
 Achaian woman in this neighborhood hold it against me
 that a man of many conquests lies with no sheet to wind him."
 So I spoke, and the proud heart in them was persuaded.
 Thereafter in the daytime I would weave at my great loom,
 150 but in the night I would have torches set by, and undo it.
 So for three years I was secret in my designs, convincing
 the Achaians, but when the fourth year came with the seasons returning,
 and the months faded, and many days had been brought to completion,
 then at last through my maidservants, those careless hussies,
 155 they learned, and came upon me and caught me, and gave me a scolding.
 So, against my will and by force, I had to finish it.
 Now I cannot escape from this marriage; I can no longer
 think of another plan; my parents are urgent with me
 to marry; my son is vexed as they eat away our livelihood;
 160 he sees it all; he is a grown man now, most able
 to care for the house, and it is to him Zeus grants this honor.
 But even so, tell me who you are, and the place where you come from.
 You were not born from any fabulous oak, or a boulder.
 Then resourceful Odysseus spoke in turn and answered her:
 165 'O respected wife of Odysseus, son of Laertes,
 you will not stop asking me about my origin?
 Then I will tell you; but you will give me over to sorrows
 even more than I have; but such is the way of it, when one
 strays away from his own country as long as I have,
 170 wandering many cities of men and suffering hardships.
 Even so, I will tell you what you ask me and seek for.
 There is a land called Crete in the middle of the wine-blue water,
 a handsome country and fertile, seagirt, and there are many
 peoples in it, innumerable; there are ninety cities.
 175 Language with language mix there together. There are Achaians,
 there are great-hearted Eteokretans, there are Kydonians,
 and Dorians in three divisions, and noble Pelasgians;
 and there is Knossos, the great city, the place where Minos
 was king for nine-year periods, and conversed with great Zeus.

to have entertained Odysseus in Crete

180 He was the father of my father, great-hearted Deukalion.
 Deukalion had two sons, myself and the lord Idomeneus,
 but Idomeneus had gone with the curved ships to Ilion
 along with the sons of Atreus. My glorious name was Aithon,
 and I was the younger born, but he was the elder and better.
 185 It was there that I knew Odysseus and entertained him,
 for the force of the wind had caught him, as he was making for Ilion,
 and brought him to Crete, driving him off course past Maleia.
 He stopped at Amnisos, where there is a cave of Eileithyia,
 in difficult harbors, and barely he had escaped from the stormwind.
 190 He went up to the town at once, and asked for Idomeneus,
 for he said he was his hereditary friend, and respected;
 but it was now the tenth or eleventh day since Idomeneus
 had gone away along with his curved ships for Ilion.
 But I took him back to my own house, and well entertained him
 195 with proper hospitality, since there was abundance
 in the house, and for his other companions, who were his followers,
 I collected from the public and gave them barley, and shining
 wine, and cattle to dedicate, to content their spirits.
 There the noble Achaians stayed twelve days, for a mighty
 200 North Wind contained them, such that a man could not stand upright
 and walk the earth. Some harsh divinity must have roused it.
 But on the thirteenth day the wind fell, and they put forth.
 He knew how to say many false things that were like true sayings.
 As she listened her tears ran and her body was melted,
 205 as the snow melts along the high places of the mountains
 when the West Wind has piled it there, but the South Wind melts it,
 and as it melts the rivers run full flood. It was even
 so that her beautiful cheeks were streaming tears, as Penelope
 wept for her man, who was sitting there by her side. But Odysseus
 210 in his heart had pity for his wife as she mourned him,
 but his eyes stayed, as if they were made of horn or iron,
 steady under his lids. He hid his tears and deceived her.
 But when she had taken her pleasure of tearful lamentation,
 then she answered him once again and spoke and addressed him:
 215 'Now, my friend, I think I will give you a test, to see if
 it is true that there, and with his godlike companions,
 you entertained my husband, as you say you did, in your palace.
 Tell me what sort of clothing he wore on his body, and what sort

He claims Odysseus is in Thesprotia

of man he was himself, and his companions, who followed him.'

220 Then resourceful Odysseus spoke in turn and answered her:
'Lady, it is difficult to tell you, with so much
time between, for now it is the twentieth year since
he was in that place and went away from my country.
Still, I will tell you, in the way my heart imagines him.

225 Great Odysseus was wearing a woolen mantle of purple,
with two folds, but the pin to it was golden and fashioned
with double sheaths, and the front part of it was artfully
done: a hound held in his forepaws a dappled
fawn, preying on it as it struggled; and all admired it,
230 how, though they were golden, it preyed on the fawn and strangled it
and the fawn struggled with his feet as he tried to escape him.
I noticed also the shining tunic that he was wearing
on his body. It was like the dried-out skin of an onion,
so sheer it was and soft, and shining bright as the sun shines.

235 Many of the women were looking at it in admiration.
But put away in your heart this other thing that I tell you.
I do not know if this clothing Odysseus wore had come from
his home, or if some companion gave it to him as he boarded
his fast ship; or some friend abroad, since Odysseus had friendship
240 with many men. Indeed, there were few Achaians like him.
I myself gave him a brazen sword and a double
cloak of purple, a handsome thing, and a fringed tunic,
and saw him off in the proper way on his strong-benched vessel.
Also there was a herald, a little older than he was,
245 who went with him. I will describe to you what he looked like.
He was round in the shoulders, black-complexioned, wooly-haired,
and had the name Eurybates. Odysseus prized him
above his other companions, for their thoughts were in harmony.'

He spoke, and still more aroused in her the passion for weeping,
250 as she recognized the certain proofs Odysseus had given.
But when she had taken her pleasure of tearful lamentation,
then once again she spoke to him and gave him an answer:
'Stranger, while before this you had my pity, you now shall
be my friend and be respected here in my palace.

255 For I myself gave him this clothing, as you describe it.
I folded it in my chamber, and I too attached the shining
pin, to be his adornment; but I shall never welcome him

and nearing home

home, come back again to the beloved land of his fathers.
It was on a bad day for him that Odysseus boarded
260 his hollow ship for that evil, not-to-be-mentioned Iliion.'

Then resourceful Odysseus spoke in turn and answered her:
'O respected wife of Odysseus, son of Laertes,
no longer waste your beautiful skin nor eat your heart out
in lamentation for your husband. Yet I do not blame you.

265 For any woman mourns when she loses her wedded husband,
with whom she has lain in love and borne children, even a lesser
man than Odysseus. They say that he was like the immortals.
But now give over your lamentation, and mark what I tell you,
for I say to you without deception, without concealment,
270 that I have heard of the present homecoming of Odysseus.
He is near, in the rich land of the men of Thesprotia,
and alive, and bringing many treasures back to his household.
He collects this about the district. His eager companions
were lost to him, with his hollow ship, on the wine-blue water
275 as he left the island of Thrinakia, for Zeus and Helios
hated him, since his companions killed the cattle of Helios.
So they all perished in the wash of the great sea; only
Odysseus, riding the keel, was cast ashore by the sea swell
on the land of the Phaiakians, who are near the immortals;
280 and they honored him in their hearts as if he had been a divinity,
and gave him much, and they themselves were willing to carry him
home without harm. So Odysseus would have been home a long time
before this, but in his mind he thought it more profitable
to go about and visit much country, collecting possessions.

285 For Odysseus knew profitable ways beyond all other
men who are mortal, no other man could rival him at it.
So Pheidon, king of the Thesprotians, told me the story;
and he swore to me in my presence, as he poured out a libation
in his house, that the ship was drawn down to the sea, and the crew were
ready
290 to carry Odysseus back again to his own dear country;
but before that he sent me off, for a ship of Thesprotian
men happened then to be sailing for Doulichion, rich in wheatfields.
And he showed me all the possessions gathered in by Odysseus;
these would feed a succession of heirs to the tenth generation,
295 so many treasures are stored for him in the house of the great king.

But he said Odysseus had gone to Dodona, to listen
to the will of Zeus, out of the holy deep-leaved oak tree,
for how he could come back to the rich countryside of Ithaka,
in secret or openly, having been by now long absent.

300 So he is safe, as you see, and is now coming back. He is very
close at hand, and will not for long be far from his country
and his own people. I will swear you a firm oath to this.
Zeus be my witness, first of the gods, and the table of friendship,
305 and the hearth of blameless Odysseus, to which I come as a suppliant,
all these things are being accomplished in the way I tell them.
Some time within this very year Odysseus will be here,
either at the waning of the moon or at its onset.

Circumspect Penelope said to him in answer:

310 'If only this word, stranger and guest, were brought to fulfillment,
soon you would be aware of my love and many gifts given
by me, so any man who met you would call you blessed.
But here is the way I think in my mind, and the way it will happen.
Odysseus will never come home again, nor will you be given
conveyance, for there are none to give orders left in the household
315 such as Odysseus was among men—if he ever existed—
for receiving respected strangers and sending them off on their journeys.
But come, handmaidens, give him a wash and spread a couch for him
here, with bedding and coverlets and with shining blankets,
so that he can keep warm as he waits for Dawn of the golden
320 throne, and early tomorrow you shall give him a bath, anoint him,
so that he can sit in the hall beside Telemachos
and expect to dine there; and it will be the worse for any
of those men who inflicts heart-wasting annoyance on him;
he will accomplish nothing here for all his terrible
325 spite; for how, my friend, will you learn if I in any way
surpass the rest of women, in mind and thoughtful good sense,
if you must attend, badly dressed and unwashed, the feasting
in the palace? Human beings live for only a short time,
and when a man is harsh himself, and his mind knows harsh thoughts,
330 all men pray that sufferings will befall him hereafter
while he lives; and when he is dead all men make fun of him.
But when a man is blameless himself, and his thoughts are blameless,
the friends he has entertained carry his fame widely
to all mankind, and many are they who call him excellent.'

335 Then resourceful Odysseus spoke in turn and answered her:
'O respected wife of Odysseus, son of Laertes,
coverlets and shining rugs have been hateful to me
ever since that time when I left the snowy mountains
of Crete behind me, and went away on my long-oared vessel.
340 I will lie now as I have lain before through the sleepless
nights; for many have been the nights when on an unpleasant
couch I lay and awaited the throned Dawn in her splendor.
Nor is there any desire in my heart for foot basins, to wash
my feet, nor shall any woman lay hold of my feet, not one
345 of those such as do your work for you in your palace;
not unless there is some aged and virtuous woman
whose heart has had to endure as many troubles as mine has.
If such a one were to touch my feet, I should not be angry.'

Then in turn circumspect Penelope answered:

350 'Dear friend, never before has there been any man so thoughtful,
among those friends from far places who have come to my palace
as guests, so thoughtful and so well-considered is everything
you say. I do have one old woman, whose thoughts are prudent,
who was nurse to that unhappy man, and took good care of him.
355 She took him up in her hands when first his mother had borne him,
and she shall wash your feet, though she has little strength for it.
Come then, circumspect Eurykleia, rise up and wash
the feet of one who is the same age as your master. Odysseus
must by this time have just such hands and feet as you do,
360 for in misfortune mortal men grow old more suddenly.'

So he spoke, and the old woman covered her face in her hands,
and shed hot tears, and spoke to him in words of compassion:
'How helpless I am to help you, my child. Surely Zeus hated you
beyond all other men, though you had a godly spirit;

365 for no man among mortals ever has burned so many
thigh pieces to Zeus who delights in the thunder, nor given so many
choice and grand sacrifices, as you prayed you might come to
a sleek old age, and raise your glorious son to manhood.
Now for you alone he took away your day of homecoming.
370 So it must be for him also that in the houses of far-off
friends, whose famous homes he enters, the women tease him,
as now these sluts are all teasing you, stranger, and it is
to avoid their abuse and shameful speaking you will not let them

wash your feet. But circumspect Penelope, daughter
 375 of Ikarios told me to do it, nor am I unwilling.
 So I shall wash your feet, both for the sake of Penelope
 but also for yourself, since the heart is stirred within me
 by sorrows; but come, attend to me and the word I tell you.
 There have been many hard-traveling strangers who have come here,
 380 but I say I have never seen one as like as you are
 to Odysseus, both as to your feet, and voice and appearance.
 Then resourceful Odysseus spoke in turn and answered her:
 'So all say, old dame, who with their eyes have looked on
 the two of us. They say we two are very similar
 385 each to each, as you yourself have noticed and tell me.'
 So he spoke, and the old woman took up the shining basin
 she used for foot washing, and poured in a great deal of water, the cold
 first, and then she added the hot to it. Now Odysseus
 was sitting close to the fire, but suddenly turned to the dark side;
 390 for presently he thought in his heart that, as she handled him,
 she might be aware of his scar, and all his story might come out.
 She came up close and washed her lord, and at once she recognized
 that scar, which once the boar with his white tusk had inflicted
 on him, when he went to Parnassos, to Autolykos and his children.
 395 This was his mother's noble father, who surpassed all men
 in thievery and the art of the oath, and the god Hermes
 himself had endowed him, for he had pleased him by burning the thigh
 bones
 of lambs and kids, and the god freely gave him his favor.
 Autolykos came once to the rich country of Ithaka,
 400 and found that a child there was newly born to his daughter;
 and, as he finished his evening meal, Eurykleia laid him
 upon his very knees, and spoke him a word and named him:
 'Autolykos, now find yourself that name you will bestow
 on your own child's dear child, for you have prayed much to have him.'
 405 Then Autolykos spoke to her and gave her an answer:
 'My son-in-law and daughter, give him the name I tell you;
 since I have come to this place distasteful to many, women
 and men alike on the prospering earth, so let him be given
 the name Odysseus, that is distasteful. Then when he grows up,
 410 and comes to the great house of his mother's line, and Parnassos,
 where there are possessions that are called mine, I will give him

freely of these to make him happy, and send him back to you.'
 This was why Odysseus came, so that he would give him
 glorious presents. Autolykos and the sons of Autolykos
 415 greeted him with clasping of hands and words of endearment,
 and Amphithea, his mother's mother, embraced Odysseus,
 and kissed his head and kissed too his beautiful shining
 eyes. Autolykos gave his glorious sons the order
 to make ready the dinner, and they listened to his urging.
 420 Presently they brought in an ox, a male, five years old.
 They skinned the victim and put it in order, and butchered the carcass,
 and cut the meat expertly into small pieces, and spitted the morsels,
 and roasted all carefully, and shared out the portions.
 So, for the whole length of the day until the sun's setting,
 425 they feasted, nor was any man's hunger denied a fair portion;
 but when the sun went down and the sacred darkness came over,
 then they went to their beds and took the blessing of slumber.
 But when the young Dawn showed again with her rosy fingers,
 they went out on their way to the hunt, the dogs and the people,
 430 these sons of Autolykos, and with them noble Odysseus
 went. They came to the steep mountain, mantled in forest,
 Parnassos, and soon they were up in the windy folds. At this time,
 the sun had just begun to strike on the plowlands, rising
 out of the quiet water and the deep stream of the Ocean.
 435 The hunters came to a wooded valley, and on ahead of them
 ran the dogs, casting about for the tracks, and behind them
 the sons of Autolykos, and with them noble Odysseus
 went close behind the hounds, shaking his spear far-shadowing.
 Now there, inside that thick of the bush, was the lair of a great boar.
 440 Neither could the force of wet-blown winds penetrate here,
 nor could the shining sun ever strike through with his rays, nor yet
 could the rain pass all the way through it, so close together
 it grew, with a fall of leaves drifted in dense profusion.
 The thudding made by the feet of men and dogs came to him
 445 as they closed on him in the hunt, and against them he from his woodlair
 bristled strongly his nape, and with fire from his eyes glaring
 stood up to face them close. The first of all was Odysseus,
 who swept in, holding high in his heavy hand the long spear,
 and furious to stab, but too quick for him the boar drove
 450 over the knee, and with his tusk gashed much of the flesh,

tearing sidewise, and did not reach the bone of the man. Now Odysseus stabbed at him, and hit him in the right shoulder, and straight on through him passed the point of the shining spearhead. He screamed and dropped in the dust, and the life spirit flittered from him.

455 The dear sons of Autolykos were busy to tend him, and understandingly they bound up the wound of stately godlike Odysseus, and singing incantations over it stayed the black blood, and soon came back to the house of their loving father. Then Autolykos and the sons of Autolykos,
460 healing him well and giving him shining presents, sent him speedily back rejoicing to his own beloved country in Ithaka, and there his father and queenly mother were glad in his homecoming, and asked about all that had happened, and how he came by his wound, and he told well his story,
465 how in the hunt the boar with his white tusk had wounded him as he went up to Parnassos with the sons of Autolykos.

The old woman, holding him in the palms of her hands, recognized this scar as she handled it. She let his foot go, so that his leg, which was in the basin, fell free, and the bronze echoed.

470 The basin tipped over on one side, and the water spilled out on the floor. Pain and joy seized her at once, and both eyes filled with tears, and the springing voice was held within her. She took the beard of Odysseus in her hands and spoke to him: 'Then, dear child, you are really Odysseus. I did not know you before; not until I had touched my lord all over.'

475 She spoke, and turned her eyes toward Penelope, wishing to indicate to her her beloved husband's presence, but Penelope was not able to look that way, or perceive him, since Athene turned aside her perception. Odysseus
480 groped for her, and took her by the throat with his right hand, while with the other he pulled her closer to him, and said to her: 'Nurse, why are you trying to kill me? You yourself suckled me at your own breast; and now at last after suffering much, I have come, in the twentieth year, back to my own country.
485 But now that you have learned who I am, and the god put it into your mind, hush, let nobody else in the palace know of it. For so I tell you straight out, and it will be a thing accomplished. If you do, and by my hands the god beats down the arrogant

suitors, nurse of mine though you are, I will not spare you
490 when I kill the rest of the serving maids in my palace.'

Then in turn circumspect Eurykleia said to him:

'My child, what sort of word escaped your teeth's barrier? You know what strength is steady in me, and it will not give way at all, but I shall hold as stubborn as stone or iron.

495 And put away in your heart this other thing that I tell you. If by your hands the god beats down the arrogant suitors, then I will give you the list of those women who in your palace have been mutinous against you, and tell you which are innocent.'

Then resourceful Odysseus spoke in turn and answered her:

500 'Nurse, why should you tell me of them? There is no need to. I myself will properly study each and learn of each. Leave it to the gods and keep the story in silence.'

So he spoke, and the old woman went back through the hall, to fetch another basin, for all the water that had been there formerly
505 was spilled. When she had washed him and anointed him with oil, Odysseus drew his chair closer to the fire, trying to keep warm, but hid the scar under his ragged clothing.

Circumspect Penelope then began their talking:

'Friend, I will stay here and talk to you, just for a little.
510 To be sure, it will soon be the time for sweet rest,

for one delicious sleep takes hold of, although he may be sorrowful. The divinity gave me grief beyond measure. The day times I indulge in lamentation, mourning as I look to my own tasks and those of my maids in the palace.

515 But after the night comes and sleep has taken all others, I lie on my bed, and the sharp anxieties swarming thick and fast on my beating heart torment my sorrowing self. As when Pandareos' daughter, the greenwood nightingale, perching in the deep of the forest foliage sings out

520 her lovely song, when springtime has just begun; she, varying the manifold strains of her voice, pours out the melody, mourning Itylos, son of the lord Zethos, her own beloved child, whom she once killed with the bronze when the madness was on her;

so my mind is divided and starts one way, then another.

525 Shall I stay here by my son and keep all in order, my property, my serving maids, and my great high-roofed house,

The dream of the geese

keep faith with my husband's bed and regard the voice of the people,
 or go away at last with the best of all those Achaians
 who court me here in the palace, with endless gifts to win me?
 530 My son, while he was still a child and thoughtless, would not
 let me marry and leave the house of my husband; but now
 that he is grown a tall man and come to maturity's measure,
 he even prays me to go home out of the palace, fretting
 over the property, which the Achaian men are devouring.
 535 But come, listen to a dream of mine and interpret it for me.
 I have twenty geese here about the house, and they feed on
 grains of wheat from the water trough. I love to watch them.
 But a great eagle with crooked beak came down from the mountain,
 and broke the necks of them all and killed them. So the whole twenty
 540 lay dead about the house, but he soared high in the bright air.
 Then I began to weep—that was in my dream—and cried out
 aloud, and around me gathered the fair-haired Achaian women
 as I cried out sorrowing for my geese killed by the eagle.
 But he came back again and perched on the jut of the gabled
 545 roof. He now had a human voice and spoke aloud to me:
 "Do not fear, O daughter of far-famed Ikarios.
 This is no dream, but a blessing real as day. You will see it
 done. The geese are the suitors, and I, the eagle, have been
 a bird of portent, but now I am your own husband, come home,
 550 and I shall inflict shameless destruction on all the suitors."
 So he spoke; and then the honey-sweet sleep released me,
 and I looked about and saw the geese in my palace, feeding
 on their grains of wheat from the water trough, just as they had been.
 Then resourceful Odysseus spoke in turn and answered her:
 555 'Lady, it is impossible to read this dream and avoid it
 by turning another way, since Odysseus himself has told you
 its meaning, how it will end. The suitors' doom is evident
 for one and all. Not one will avoid his death and destruction.'
 Circumspect Penelope said to him in answer:
 560 'My friend, dreams are things hard to interpret, hopeless to puzzle
 out, and people find that not all of them end in anything.
 There are two gates through which the insubstantial dreams issue.
 One pair of gates is made of horn, and one of ivory.
 Those of the dreams which issue through the gate of sawn ivory,
 565 these are deceptive dreams, their message is never accomplished.

The contest of the bow is proposed

But those that come into the open through the gates of the polished
 horn accomplish the truth for any mortal who sees them.
 I do not think that this strange dream that I had came to me
 through this gate. My son and I would be glad if it did so.
 570 And put away in your heart this other thing that I tell you.
 This dawn will be a day of evil name, which will take me
 away from the house of Odysseus; for now I will set up a contest:
 those axes which, in his palace, he used to set up in order
 so that, twelve in all, they stood in a row, like timbers
 575 to hold a ship. He would stand far off, and send a shaft through them.
 Now I will set these up as a contest before my suitors,
 and the one who takes the bow in his hands, strings it with the greatest
 ease, and sends an arrow clean through all the twelve axes
 shall be the one I will go away with, forsaking this house
 580 where I was a bride, a lovely place and full of good living.
 I think that even in my dreams I shall never forget it.'
 Then resourceful Odysseus spoke in turn and answered her:
 'O respected wife of Odysseus, son of Laertes,
 do not put off this contest in your house any longer.
 585 Before these people can handle the well-wrought bow, and manage
 to hook the string and bend it, and send a shaft through the iron,
 Odysseus of the many designs will be back here with you.'
 Circumspect Penelope said to him in answer:
 'If, my friend, you were willing to sit by me in my palace
 590 and entertain me, no sleep would be drifted over my eyelids.
 But it is in no way possible for people forever
 to go without sleep; and the immortals have given to mortals
 each his own due share all over the grain-giving corn land.
 So I shall now go back again to my upper chamber,
 595 and lie on my bed, which is made a sorrowful thing now, always
 disordered with the tears I have wept, ever since Odysseus
 went away to that evil, not-to-be-mentioned Ilion.
 There I must lie; but you can sleep here in the house, either
 bedding down on the floor, or they can make a bed for you.'
 600 So she spoke, and went back up to her shining chamber,
 not alone, since others, her women, went to attend her.
 She went back to the upper story with her attendant
 women, and wept for Odysseus, her beloved husband, until
 gray-eyed Athene cast sweet slumber over her eyelids.

The suitors tease Telemachos

'No one has worse luck with his guests than you, Telemachos. Here, for one, somebody brought you in this vagabond who wants his food and his wine, who does not know how to do any work, who has no strength, but is just a weight on the good land.

380 And now this other one stood up and began to prophesy. If you would listen to what I say, it would be far better. Let us put these guests in a vessel with many oarlocks and take them to the Sicilians. There they would fetch a good price.'

So spoke the suitors, but Telemachos paid no attention, 385 but looked across at his father silently, always waiting for the time when he would lay his hands on the shameless suitors.

The daughter of Ikarios, circumspect Penelope, had taken her beautiful chair and set it just outside the door, and listened to every word the men in the hall were saying.

390 For these were laughing aloud as they prepared a dinner that was sweet and staving, for they had made a very big sacrifice; but there could not be a meal that was more unpleasant than this one, such was to be the attack that the powerful man and the goddess would make on them. For they had first begun the wrongdoing.

BOOK XXI



But now the goddess, gray-eyed Athene, put it in the mind of the daughter of Ikarios, circumspect Penelope, to set the bow before the suitors, and the gray iron, in the house of Odysseus: the contest, the beginning of the slaughter.

5 So she ascended the high staircase of her own house, and in her solid hand took up the beautiful, brazen and artfully curved key, with an ivory handle upon it. With her attendant women she went to the inmost recess of the chamber. There were stored away the master's possessions.

10 Bronze was there, and gold, and difficulty wrought iron, and there the backstrung bow was stored away, and the quiver to hold the arrows. There were many painful shafts inside it. These were gifts from a friend whom he met in Lakedaimon, Iphitos, son of Eurytos, one like the immortal

15 gods. These two, in Messene, had encountered each other in the house of wise Ortilochos, at the time when Odysseus went there on an errand enjoined by the whole community. For men of Messene had come in ships with many oarlocks and lifted three hundred sheep from Ithaka, also the herdsmen

20 with them, so Odysseus traveled far on the embassy while still a boy, sent by his father and the rest of the elders. Iphitos was there in search of his horses, twelve mares he had lost; hard-working mule colts were with them, nursing. These mares presently were to mean his doom and murder,

Penelope fetches the bow of Odysseus

25 at the time when he came to the son of Zeus, strong-hearted,
 the man called Herakles, guilty of monstrous actions,
 who killed Iphitos while he was a guest in his household;
 hard man, without shame for the watchful gods, nor the table
 he had set for Iphitos, his guest; and when he had killed him
 30 he kept the strong-footed horses for himself in his palace.
 In search of his mares, Iphitos met Odysseus, and gave him
 the bow, which once the great Eurytos had carried, and left it
 afterward to his son when he had died in his high house.
 Odysseus gave him in turn a sharp sword and a strong spear,
 35 to begin their considerate friendship, but these two never
 entertained each other; before that, the son of Zeus killed
 Iphitos, son of Eurytos, one like the immortal
 gods, who gave Odysseus the bow. But Odysseus never
 took it with him when he went to war on the black ships,
 40 but always it was stored away in his halls, in memory
 of a dear friend; but he carried it at home in his country.
 When she, shining among women, had come to the chamber,
 and had come up to the oaken threshold, which the carpenter
 once had expertly planed and drawn it true to a chalkline,
 45 and fitted the door posts to it and joined on the shining door leaves,
 first she quickly set the fastening free of the hook, then
 she inserted the key and knocked the bolt upward, pushing
 the key straight in, and the door bellowed aloud, as a bull
 does, when he feeds in his pasture; such was the noise the splendid
 50 doors made, struck with the key, and now they quickly spread open.
 Then she went up to the high platform, where there were standing
 chests, and in these were stored fragrant pieces of clothing.
 From there she reached, and took the bow from its peg, where it hung,
 in its own case, a shining thing that covered it. Thereupon
 55 she sat down, and laid the bow on her dear knees, while she
 took her lord's bow out of its case, all the while weeping
 aloud. But when she had sated herself with tears and crying;
 she went on her way to the hall to be with the lordly suitors,
 bearing in her hand the backstrung bow, and the quiver
 60 to hold the arrows, with many sorrowful shafts inside it.
 Her serving women carried the box for her, and there lay
 much iron and bronze, prizes that had been won by the master.
 When she, shining among women, came near the suitors,

and promises marriage to the best archer

she stood by the pillar that supported the roof with its joinery,
 65 holding her shining veil in front of her face, to shield it,
 and a devoted attendant was stationed on either side of her.
 Now at once she spoke and addressed a word to the suitors:
 'Hear me now, you haughty suitors, who have been using
 this house for your incessant eating and drinking, though it
 70 belongs to a man who has been gone for a long time; never
 have you been able to bring any other saying before me,
 but only your desire to make me your wife and marry me.
 But come, you suitors, since here is a prize set out before you;
 for I shall bring you the great bow of godlike Odysseus.
 75 And the one who takes the bow in his hands, strings it with the greatest
 ease, and sends an arrow clean through all the twelve axes,
 shall be the one I go away with, forsaking this house
 where I was a bride, a lovely place and full of good living.
 I think that even in my dreams I shall never forget it.'
 80 So she spoke, and told the noble swineherd, Eumaios,
 to put the bow and the gray iron in front of the suitors.
 Eumaios accepted it, in tears, and put them before them,
 and the oxherd also wept, when he saw the bow of his master,
 but Antinoös scolded the two of them, and spoke out and named them:
 85 'You foolish countrymen, who never think of tomorrow,
 poor wretches, why are you streaming tears, and troubling the lady
 now, and stirring her heart, when she has enough already
 of sadness her heart rests on, now she has lost a dear husband.
 Go and sit in silence and eat, or else take your crying
 90 out of the door and begone, but leave the bow where you put it,
 a prize for the suitors to strive for; a terrible one; I do not think
 that this well-polished bow can ever be strung easily.
 There is no man among the lot of us who is such a one
 as Odysseus used to be. I myself have seen him,
 95 and I remember well, though I was still young and childish.'
 So he spoke, but the spirit inside his heart was hopeful
 that he would be able to string the bow and shoot through the iron;
 but he was to be the first to get a taste of the arrow
 from the hands of blameless Odysseus, to whom he now paid no attention
 100 as he sat in Odysseus' halls and encouraged all his companions.
 Now the hallowed prince, Telemachos, spoke his word to them:
 'Ah, how Zeus, the son of Kronos, has made me witless.

Telemachos sets up the axes

My own beloved mother, though she is sensible, tells me
 that she will forsake this house and go away with another;
 105 and then, in the witlessness of my heart, I laugh and enjoy it.
 But come, you suitors, since here is a prize set out before you,
 a woman; there is none like her in all the Achaian country,
 neither in sacred Pylos nor Argos nor in Mykene,
 nor here in Ithaka itself, nor on the dark mainland.
 110 You yourselves also know this; then why should I praise my mother?
 But come, no longer drag things out with delays, nor turn back
 still from the stringing of the bow, so that we may see it.
 I myself am also willing to attempt the bow. Then,
 if I can put the string on it and shoot through the iron,
 115 my queenly mother would not go off with another, and leave me
 sorrowing here in the house; since I would still be found here
 as one now able to take up his father's glorious prizes.'

He spoke, and sprang upright, laying aside from his shoulders
 the red cloak, and from his shoulders too took off the sharp sword.
 120 He began by setting up the axes, digging
 one long trench for them all, and drawing it true to a chalkline,
 and stamped down the earth around them; wonder seized the onlookers
 at how orderly he set them up. He never had seen them
 before. He went then and tried the bow, standing on the threshold.
 125 Three times he made it vibrate, straining to bend it, and three times
 he gave over the effort, yet in his heart was hopeful
 of hooking the string to the bow and sending a shaft through the iron.
 And now, pulling the bow for the fourth time, he would have strung it,
 but Odysseus stopped him, though he was eager, making a signal
 130 with his head. The hallowed prince, Telemachos, said to them:
 'Shame on me. I must be then a coward and weakling,
 or else I am still young, and my hands have yet no confidence
 to defend myself against a man who has started a quarrel.
 Come then, you who in your strength are greater than I am,
 135 make your attempts on the bow, and let us finish the contest.'

So he spoke, and put the bow from him, leaning it
 on the ground, and against the compacted and polished door leaves,
 and in the same place leaned the swift shaft against the fine handle,
 and went back and sat in the chair from which he had risen.
 140 Now Antinoös the son of Eupheithes said to them:
 'Take your turns in order from left to right, my companions

but fails with the bow

all, beginning from the place where the wine is served out.'
 So spoke Antinoös, and his word was pleasing to all of them.
 Leodes was the first to arise: the son of Oinops,
 145 who was a diviner among them, and sat always in the corner
 beside the fine mixing bowl. To him alone their excesses
 were hateful, and he disapproved of all of the suitors.
 He was the first to take up the bow and the swift arrow
 now. He went then and tried the bow, standing on the threshold,
 150 and could not string it; before that he ruined his soft, uncalloused
 hands, pulling at the string, and now he spoke to the suitors:
 'Friends, I cannot string this; let one of the others take it.
 Here is a bow such that it will sunder many of the princes
 from life and soul, since truly it is far better to die
 155 than go on living and fail of that for whose sake we forever
 keep on gathering here, all our days in expectation.
 Now a man may be hopeful and in his heart desirous
 of marrying Penelope, the wife of Odysseus.
 But when the bow has been attempted, and all is made plain,
 160 then one must court some other fair-robed Achaian woman,
 and strive to win her with gifts of courtship; she will then marry
 the man she is fated to have and who brings her the greatest presents.'

So he spoke, and put the bow from him, leaning it
 on the ground, and against the compacted and polished door leaves,
 165 and in the same place leaned the swift shaft against the fine handle,
 and went back and sat in the chair from which he had risen.
 But now Antinoös scolded him, and spoke out and named him:
 'Leodes, what sort of word escaped your teeth's barrier?
 A terrible and shameful word. I am outraged to hear it;
 170 if this is to be such a bow that will sunder the princes
 from life and soul, because you are unable to string it.
 You were not such a one, when the lady your mother bore you,
 as ever to be able to manage the bow and the arrows.
 But presently the other lordly suitors will string it.'

So he spoke, and now urged Melanthios the goatherd:
 175 'Come now, Melanthios, light us a fire inside the palace,
 and set beside it a great chair with fleeces upon it,
 and bring out from the inside stores a great wheel of tallow,
 so that we young men, having heated the bow and rubbed it
 180 with fat, can then attempt to bend it, and finish the contest.'

The suitors fail

So he spoke, and Melanthios quickly kindled the weariless
fire, and brought out the chair, and laid the fleeces upon it,
and brought out from the inside stores a great wheel of tallow.
The young men heated the bow and tried it, but were not able
185 to string it. They were not nearly strong enough. All this time
Antinoös still held back, as did godlike Eurymachos,
those lords of the suitors, out and away the best men among them.

Two men, the oxherd and the swineherd of godlike Odysseus,
went out of the house, in company keeping close together,
190 and great Odysseus himself came from the house to join them.
But after they were out of the way of the doors and the courtyard,
Odysseus spoke to the two of them in words of endearment:
'Oxherd, and you too, swineherd, shall I say something to you,
or keep it hidden within? My spirit tells me to speak out.
195 What sort of fight would you put up in defense of Odysseus,
if he were to come suddenly, so, with the god leading him?
Would you fight for the suitors, or would you fight for Odysseus?
Tell me what your heart and spirit would have you answer.'

Then the herdsman of oxen spoke in turn and answered him:
200 'Father Zeus, if you would achieve this prayer I ask for,
that the man himself would come home with the divinity guiding him,
then you yourself would see what kind of strength my hands have.'

So Eumaios also prayed to all the divinities
that they would grant the homecoming of thoughtful Odysseus.
205 But when Odysseus had recognized the infallible temper
of these men, then he spoke to them again and answered them:
'I am he. I am here in my house. After many sufferings
I have come home in the twentieth year to the land of my fathers.
And now I see that of all my men it was only you two
210 who wanted me to come; I have not heard one of the others
praying that I should return again and come to my own house.
Therefore I will tell you the truth, and so it shall be;
if by my hand the god overmasters the lordly suitors,
then I shall get wives for you both, and grant you possessions
215 and houses built next to mine, and think of you in the future
always as companions of Telemachos, and his brothers.
But come now, let me show you a proof that shall be manifest,
so that you may know me for sure and trust my identity;
that scar, which once the boar with his white tooth inflicted

Odysseus reveals himself to Eumaios

220 on me, when I went to Parnassos with the sons of Autolykos.'
So he spoke, and pushed back the rags that covered his great scar.
When these two had examined it and recognized everything,
they burst out weeping and threw their arms around wise Odysseus,
and made much of him, and kissed him on his head and his shoulders,
225 and so Odysseus also kissed their heads and hands. Now
the sun would have gone down while they were still thus clamoring,
had not Odysseus stayed them from it and said a word to them:
'Now stop your lamentation and wailing, or someone may come out
from the hall and see us, and tell about it inside. So rather
230 let us go in severally, not all together,
I first, you after me, but let us have this as a signal
arranged; for all the others there, who are lordly suitors,
will not say that you can give me the bow and the quiver;
but you must carry the bow through the house, noble Eumaios,
235 and put it into my hands, and then you must tell the women
to bar the tightly fitted doors that close the hall; tell them,
if any of them hears from inside the crash and the outcry,
of men who are caught within our toils, that they must not peep in
from outside, but simply sit still at their work, in silence.
240 Noble Philoitios, your task is to make fast the courtyard
door with the bolt, and tie the fastening quickly upon it.'
So he spoke, and went into the established palace,
and went back and sat in the chair from which he had risen,
and after him the two thralls of godlike Odysseus entered.
245 Eurymachos by now had taken the bow, and handled it,
turning it round and round by the blaze of the fire, but even
so he could not string it, and his proud heart was harrowed.
Deeply vexed he spoke to his own great-hearted spirit:
'Oh, my sorrow. Here is a grief beyond all others;
250 it is not so much the marriage I grieve for, for all my chagrin.
There are many Achaian women besides, some of them close by
in seagirt Ithaka, and some in the rest of the cities;
but it is the thought, if this is true, that we come so far short
of godlike Odysseus in strength, so that we cannot even
255 string his bow. A shame for men unborn to be told of.'
Then in turn Antinoös, son of Eupheithes, answered:
'It will not happen that way, Eurymachos. You yourself know this.
Now there is a holy feast in the community

Odysseus asks for a try at the bow

for the god. Who could string bows then? Put it away now
 260 for our good time; but we shall leave all the axes standing
 where they are. I do not believe anyone will come in
 and steal them away from the halls of Odysseus, son of Laertes.
 Come, let the wine steward pour a round of wine in the goblets,
 so we can make a libation and put away the curved bow;
 265 then at dawn instruct Melanthios, who is the goatherd,
 to bring in goats, those far the best in all of his goatflocks,
 so that, dedicating the thighs to the glorious archer
 Apollo, we can attempt the bow and finish the contest.
 So spoke Antinoös, and his word was pleasing to all of them.
 270 The heralds poured water over their hands to wash with,
 and the young men filled the mixing bowls with wine for their drinking,
 and passed to all, after they had offered a drink in the goblets.
 But when they had poured, and drunk, each as much as he wanted,
 resourceful Odysseus spoke to them in crafty intention:
 275 'Hear me now, you who are suitors of our glorious queen,
 while I speak out what the heart within my breast urges.
 Above all I entreat Eurymachos and the godlike
 Antinoös, since what he said also was fair and orderly.
 Let the bow be for the time, give it over to the divinities,
 280 and tomorrow the god will give success to whomever he wishes;
 but come now, give me the well-polished bow, so that among you
 I may try out my strength and hands, to see if I still have
 force in my flexible limbs as there has been in time past,
 or whether my wandering and lack of good care have ruined me.'
 285 So he spoke, but all of them were wildly indignant,
 and feared that he might take the well-polished bow and string it.
 Now Antinoös scolded him and spoke out and named him:
 'Ah, wretched stranger, you have no sense, not even a little.
 Is it not enough that you dine in peace, among us, who are violent
 290 men, and are deprived of no fair portion, but listen
 to our conversation and what we say? But there is no other
 vagabond and newcomer who is allowed to hear us
 talk. The honeyed wine has hurt you, as it has distracted
 others as well, who gulp it down without drinking in season.
 295 It was wine also that drove the Centaur, famous Eurytion,
 distracted in the palace of great-hearted Peirithoös
 when he visited the Lapiths. His brain went wild with drinking,

Objections from the suitors

and in his fury he did much harm in the house of Peirithoös.
 Grief and rage then seized the heroes, they sprang up and dragged him
 300 through the forecourt and outside, with the pitiless bronze severing
 his ears and nose; and he, having had his brains bewildered,
 knew what a disaster his unstable spirit had got him.
 Since his time there has been a feud between men and Centaurs,
 and he was the first who found his own evil in heavy drinking.
 305 So I announce great trouble for you as well, if ever
 you string this bow; you will meet no kind of courtesy
 in our group, but we shall put you into a black ship
 and take you over to King Echetos, one who mutilates
 all men; there you will lose everything; sit and be quiet
 310 and drink your wine, nor quarrel with men who are younger than you
 are.'

Circumspect Penelope said to him in answer:
 'Antinoös, it is neither fair nor just to browbeat
 any guest of Telemachos who comes to visit him.
 Do you imagine that if this stranger, in the confidence
 315 of hands and strength, should string the great bow of Odysseus,
 that he would take me home with him and make me his wife? No,
 he himself has no such thought in the heart within him.
 Let none of you be sorrowful at heart in his feasting
 here, for such a reason. There is no likelihood of it.'
 320 And now Eurymachos, the son of Polybos, answered:
 'Daughter of Ikarios, circumspect Penelope,
 we do not think he will take you away. That is not likely.
 But we are ashamed to face the talk of the men and the women,
 for fear some other Achaian, who is meaner than we are,
 325 might say: "Far baser men are courting the wife of a stately
 man. They are not even able to string his bow. Then
 another, some beggar man, came wandering in from somewhere,
 and easily strung the bow, and sent a shaft through the iron."
 So they will speak; and that would be a disgrace on all of us.'
 330 *Circumspect Penelope said to him in answer:*
 'Eurymachos, there can be no glory among our people
 in any case, for those who eat away and dishonor
 the house of a great man. Why be concerned over reproaches?
 But this stranger is a very big man, and he is built strongly,
 335 and also he claims to be the son of a noble father.'

Penelope sent away

Come then, give him the polished bow. Let us see what happens.
For I tell you this straight out, and it will be a thing accomplished.
If he can string the bow, and Apollo gives him that glory,
I will give him fine clothing to wear, a mantle and tunic,
340 and give him a sharp javelin, to keep men and dogs off,
and give him sandals for his feet, a sword with two edges,
and send him wherever his heart and spirit desire to be sent.

Then the thoughtful Telemachos said to her in answer:

'My mother, no Achaian man has more authority
345 over this bow than I, to give or withhold, at my pleasure;
not one of those who are lords here in rocky Ithaka,
not one of those in the islands off horse-pasturing Elis;
no one can force me against my will; if I want, I can give it
to the stranger as an outright gift, to take away with him.
350 Go therefore back into the house, and take up your own work,
the loom and the distaff, and see to it that your handmaidens
ply their work also. The men shall have the bow in their keeping,
all men, but I most of all. For mine is the power in this household.'

Penelope went back inside the house, in amazement,

355 for she laid the serious words of her son deep away in her spirit;
and she went back to the upper story with her attendant
women, and wept for Odysseus, her beloved husband, until
gray-eyed Athene cast sweet slumber over her eyelids.

Now the noble swineherd took the curved bow and carried it;

360 but all the suitors in the palace cried out against him,
and thus would go the word of one of these arrogant young men:
'Where are you carrying the bow, you sorry and shiftless
swineherd? Those swift dogs that you raised yourself will feed on you
beside your pigs, forsaken by men, if only Apollo
365 and the rest of the immortal gods are propitious toward us.'

They spoke, and he took the bow and put it back where it had been,
in fear, since many men were shouting at him in the palace,
but from the other side Telemachos spoke and threatened him:

'Keep on with the bow, old fellow. You cannot do what everyone
370 tells you. Take care, or, younger though I am, I might chase you
out to the fields with a shower of stones. I am stronger than you are.
I only wish I were as much stronger, and more of a fighter
with my hands, than all these suitors who are here in my household.
So I could hatefully speed any man of them on his journey

Odysseus easily strings the bow

375 out of our house, where they are contriving evils against us.'

So he spoke, and all the suitors laughed happily at him,
and all gave over their bitter rage against Telemachos.
The swineherd took up the bow and carried it through the palace,
and stood beside the wise Odysseus, and handed it to him.

380 Then he called aside the nurse Eurykleia, and told her:

'Circumspect Eurykleia, Telemachos wants you
to bar the tightly fitted doors that close the house; and then,
if any of you hear from inside the crash and the outcry
of men who are caught within our toils, you must not peep in
385 from outside, but simply sit still at your work, in silence.'

So he spoke, and she had no winged words for an answer.

Eurykleia barred the doors of the strong-built great hall.

Philoitios sprang to his feet and went silently outside
the house, and then he closed the doors of the well-made courtyard.

390 Lying beneath the portico was a fiber cable

for an oar-driven ship; with that he made fast the doors, and himself
went in, and sat again on the chair from which he had risen,
looking toward Odysseus, who by now was handling the bow, turning it
all up and down, and testing it from one side and another

395 to see if worms had eaten the horn in the master's absence.

And thus would one of them say as he looked across at the next man:

'This man is an admirer of bows, or one who steals them.

Now either he has such things lying back away in his own house,
or else he is studying to make one, the way he turns it

400 this way and that, our vagabond who is versed in villainies.'

And thus would speak another one of these arrogant young men:

'How I wish his share of good fortune were of the same measure
as is the degree of his power ever to get this bow strung.'

So the suitors talked, but now resourceful Odysseus,

405 once he had taken up the great bow and looked it all over,
as when a man, who well understands the lyre and singing,
easily, holding it on either side, pulls the strongly twisted
cord of sheep's gut, so as to slip it over a new peg,
so, without any strain, Odysseus strung the great bow.

410 Then plucking it in his right hand he tested the bowstring,
and it gave him back an excellent sound like the voice of a swallow.

A great sorrow fell now upon the suitors, and all their color
was changed, and Zeus showing forth his portents thundered mightily.

Odysseus shoots through the axes

415 Hearing this, long-suffering great Odysseus was happy
 that the son of devious-devising Kronos had sent him a portent.
 He chose out a swift arrow that lay beside him uncovered
 on the table, but the others were still stored up inside the hollow
 quiver, and presently the Achaians must learn their nature.
 Taking the string and the head grooves he drew to the middle
 420 grip, and from the very chair where he sat, bending the bow
 before him, let the arrow fly, nor missed any axes
 from the first handle on, but the bronze-weighted arrow passed through
 all, and out the other end. He spoke to Telemachos:
 'Telemachos, your guest that sits in your halls does not then
 425 fail you; I missed no part of the mark, nor have I made much
 work of stringing the bow; the strength is still sound within me,
 and not as the suitors said in their scorn, making little of me.
 Now is the time for their dinner to be served the Achaians
 in the daylight, then follow with other entertainment,
 430 the dance and the lyre; for these things come at the end of the feasting.'
 He spoke, and nodded to him with his brows, and Telemachos,
 dear son of godlike Odysseus, put his sharp sword about him
 and closed his own hand over his spear, and took his position
 close beside him and next the chair, all armed in bright bronze.

BOOK XXII



Now resourceful Odysseus stripped his rags from him, and sprang
 up atop the great threshold, holding his bow and the quiver
 filled with arrows, and scattered out the swift shafts before him
 on the ground next his feet, and spoke his word to the suitors:
 5 'Here is a task that has been achieved, without any deception.
 Now I shall shoot at another mark, one that no man yet
 has struck, if I can hit it and Apollo grants me the glory.'
 He spoke, and steered a bitter arrow against Antinoös.
 He was on the point of lifting up a fine two-handled
 10 goblet of gold, and had it in his hands, and was moving it
 so as to drink of the wine, and in his heart there was no thought
 of death. For who would think that one man, alone in a company
 of many men at their feasting, though he were a very strong one,
 would ever inflict death upon him and dark doom? But Odysseus,
 15 aiming at this man, struck him in the throat with an arrow,
 and clean through the soft part of the neck the point was driven.
 He slumped away to one side, and out of his stricken hand fell
 the goblet, and up and through his nostrils there burst a thick jet
 of mortal blood, and with a thrust of his foot he kicked back
 20 the table from him, so that all the good food was scattered
 on the ground, bread and baked meats together; but all the suitors
 clamored about the house when they saw that the man was fallen,
 sprang up from their seats and ranged about the room, throwing
 their glances every way all along the well-built walls,

Odysseus reveals himself

25 but there was never a shield there nor any strong spear for them.
 But they scolded Odysseus in words full of anger, saying:
 'Stranger, it is badly done to hit men. You will never
 achieve any more trials. Now your sudden destruction is certain,
 for now you have struck down the man who was far the greatest
 30 of the youth of Ithaka. For that the vultures shall eat you.'

Each spoke at random, for they thought he had not intended
 to kill the man, poor fools, and they had not yet realized
 how over all of them the terms of death were now hanging.
 But looking darkly upon them resourceful Odysseus answered:
 35 'You dogs, you never thought that I would any more come back
 from the land of Troy, and because of that you despoiled my household,
 and forcibly took my serving women to sleep beside you,
 and sought to win my wife while I was still alive, fearing
 neither the immortal gods who hold the wide heaven,
 40 nor any resentment sprung from men to be yours in the future.
 Now upon all of you the terms of destruction are fastened.'

So he spoke, and the green fear took hold of all of them,
 and each man looked about him for a way to escape sheer death.
 Only Eurymachos spoke up and gave him an answer:
 45 'If in truth you are Odysseus of Ithaka, come home,
 what you have said is fair about all the wickedness done you
 by the Achaians, much in your house and much in the country.
 But now the man is down who was responsible for all
 this, Antinoös. It was he who pushed this action,
 50 not so much that he wanted the marriage, or cared for it,
 but with other things in mind, which the son of Kronos would not
 grant him: to lie in wait for your son and kill him, and then
 be king himself in the district of strong-founded Ithaka.
 Now he has perished by his own fate. Then spare your own
 55 people, and afterward we will make public reparation
 for all that has been eaten and drunk in your halls, setting
 each upon himself an assessment of twenty oxen.
 We will pay it back in bronze and gold to you, until your heart
 is softened. Till then, we cannot blame you for being angry.'

60 Then looking darkly at him resourceful Odysseus answered:
 'Eurymachos, if you gave me all your father's possessions,
 all that you have now, and what you could add from elsewhere,
 even so, I would not stay my hands from the slaughter,

The battle begins

until I had taken revenge for all the suitors' transgression.
 65 Now the choice has been set before you, either to fight me
 or run, if any of you can escape death and its spirits.
 But I think not one man will escape from sheer destruction.'

So he spoke, and the others' knees, and the heart within them,
 went slack, but Eurymachos cried a second time, to the suitors:
 70 'Dear friends, now this man will not restrain his invincible
 hands, but since he has got the polished bow and the quiver,
 he will shoot at us from the smooth threshold, until he has killed us
 one and all. Then let us all remember our warcraft.
 Draw your swords and hold the table before you, to ward off
 75 the arrows of sudden death; let us all make a rush against him
 together, and try to push him back from the doors and the threshold,
 and go through the town. So the hue and cry could be most quickly
 raised, and perhaps this man will now have shot for the last time.'

So he spoke aloud, and drew from his side the sharp sword,
 80 brazen, and edged on either side, and made a rush at him,
 crying his terrible cry. At the same time, noble Odysseus
 shot an arrow, and struck him in the chest, by the nipple,
 and the speeding arrow fixed in his liver, and his sword tumbled
 out of his hand on the floor, as he, sprawling over the table,
 85 doubled and fell, and on the floor the good food was scattered,
 and the two-handled goblet. He struck the ground with his forehead
 in his paroxysm of pain, and kicking with both feet
 rattled the chair, and over his eyes the death mist drifted.

Amphinomos, springing forward to face glorious Odysseus,
 90 made a rush against him, and drew his sharp sword, thinking
 he might be forced to give way from the doors; but now Telemachos
 was too quick with a cast of the brazen spear from behind him
 between the shoulders, and drove it through to the chest beyond it.
 He fell, thunderously, and took the earth full on his forehead.
 95 Telemachos sprang away, and left behind the far-shadowing
 spear where it was in Amphinomos, turning back, for fear
 that as he pulled out the far-shadowing spear, some other Achaian
 might drive at him in an outrush, or else strike him from close up.
 He went on the run, and very soon he reached his dear father,
 100 and stood there close beside him and addressed him in winged words:
 'Father, now I will go and bring you a shield, and two spears,
 and a helmet all of bronze fitting close to your temples.

I too will go and put on armor, and give the swineherd
and oxherd more to wear. It is better for us to be armored.'

105 Then in turn resourceful Odysseus spoke to him in answer:
'Run and fetch them, while I have arrows still to defend me,
or else, while I am alone, they might force me from the doorway.'

So he spoke, and Telemachos obeyed his dear father,
and went on his way to the inner room, where glorious armor
110 was stored away, and took from inside four shields, and eight spears,
and four helmets plated with bronze and crested with horsehair,
and carried them back, and very soon he reached his dear father.
He was the first of all to put the bronze armor upon him,
and in the same way the two serving men put on their magnificent
115 arms, and stood beside the wise, resourceful Odysseus.

Odysseus, while he still had arrows left to defend him,
kept aiming at the suitors in his house; and every
time he hit his man, and they dropped one after another.
But when there were no more arrows left for the king's archery,
120 he set the bow so it leaned against a pillar sustaining
the strong-built palace, there by the shining walls, then himself
threw across his shoulders the shield of the fourfold oxhide.
Over his mighty head he set the well-fashioned helmet,
with the horsehair crest, and the plumes nodded terribly above it.
125 Then he caught up two powerful spears edged with the bright bronze.

There was a side door in the strongly-constructed wall, and also,
next the edge of the threshold into the well-made palace,
a way through the alley, with the door leaves fitting it closely.
Odysseus told the noble swineherd to take a position
130 near this, and watch it. Only one at a time could attack there.
Agelaos cried aloud to all of the suitors:

'Dear friends, could not one man slip away, through the side door,
and tell the people? So the hue and cry could be most quickly
raised, and perhaps this man will now have shot for the last time.'

135 Then in turn Melanthios the goatherd answered him:
'It cannot be, illustrious Agelaos. The fine doors
to the court are terribly close, the mouth of the alley is difficult
to force; one man could hold against all, if he were a fighter.
Come rather, let me bring you arms from inside the chamber
140 to arm you in; for there, I believe, and in no other
place, Odysseus and his glorious son have hidden them.'

So Melanthios the goatherd spoke, and climbed through
to Odysseus' inner chambers by the vents in the great hall.
From there he took out a dozen heavy shields, and as many
145 spears, and as many brazen helmets crested with horsehair,
and went on his way, and quickly handed them to the suitors.
Then the knees of Odysseus went slack, and the heart within him,
as he saw them putting the armor about them, and shaking
the long spears in their hands; he thought it was monstrous
150 treason, and he spoke now in winged words to Telemachos:
'Telemachos, some one of the women here in the palace,
or Melanthios, has made an evil attack upon us.'

Then the thoughtful Telemachos said to him in answer:
'Father, it was my own mistake, and there is no other
155 to blame. I left the door of the chamber, which can close tightly,
open at an angle. One of these men was a better observer
than I. Go now, noble Eumaios, and close the chamber
door, and see if it is one of the women doing this,
or Melanthios, son of Dolios, which is what I think.'

160 Now as these two were conversing thus with each other,
Melanthios the goatherd went back into the chamber
to bring more splendid armor, but the noble swineherd sighted him.
Quickly he spoke a word to Odysseus standing close by him:
'Son of Laertes and seed of Zeus, resourceful Odysseus,
165 there is that deadly man again, the one we suspected,
on his way into the chamber. Now give me your true instructions,
whether, if I prove stronger than he is, I am to kill him,
or bring him back here to you, so he can pay for the many
transgressions, all that he has devised in your house against you.'

170 Then resourceful Odysseus spoke in turn and answered him:
'Telemachos and I will hold off the haughty suitors,
for all their fury, here inside the palace; you two
twist the feet of Melanthios and his arms behind him,
put him away in the chamber and fasten boards behind him,
175 then make him secure with a braided rope, and hoist him upward
along the high column, till you fetch him up to the roof beams.
Thus, while he still stays alive, he will suffer harsh torment.'

So he spoke, and they listened well to him and obeyed him.
They went into the chamber. He was there, but he did not see them.
180 Now, he was searching out weapons, deep in the back of the chamber,

Melanthios tied up

and they stood there waiting for him behind the columns, on either side, until Melanthios the herdsman of goats came over the sill. In one hand he was holding a splendid helmet, and in the other the ancient shield, all fouled with mildew,
 185 of the hero Laertes, which he had carried when he was a young man. It had been lying there, and the stitches were gone on the handstraps. Now they sprang out and seized him, caught hold of his hair and dragged him
 in, and threw him down on the floor, there in his anguish of heart, and in the hurtful bond they securely fastened
 190 his feet and arms, twisted all the way back, obeying the orders given by great, enduring Odysseus, the son of Laertes. Then they made him secure with a braided rope, and hoisted him high on the column, until they fetched him up to the roof beams. Then you spoke and jeered at him, O swineherd Eumaios:
 195 'Now the whole night long, Melanthios, you shall keep watch wakefully, laid, as you deserve, to rest on a soft bed, well aware of the young Dawn throned in gold as she rises up from the Ocean rivers, at the time when you used to drive in goats to the palace, so as to make a feast for the suitors.'
 200 So they left him there, trussed up in his horrible bindings. The herdsmen closed the shining door, and put on their armor, and went and stood beside the wise, resourceful Odysseus. There both sides stood, breathing valor, the four men holding the threshold, but inside the house were many and brave men.
 205 Now to these men came the daughter of Zeus, Athene, likening herself in voice and appearance to Mentor. Odysseus was happy when he saw her, and hailed her, saying: 'Mentor, help me from hurt, and remember me, your companion and friend, who have done you much good. We two grew up together.'
 210 He spoke so, but thought it was Athene, leader of armies. On the other side in the palace the suitors cried out against her, and first to threaten was Agelaos, son of Damastor; 'Mentor, never let Odysseus by talking persuade you to fight against the suitors and defend him. Consider
 215 what we propose to do, and I think it will be accomplished. When we kill these men, the son and the father, you too shall be killed in their company, for what you are trying to do here in the palace. You shall pay for it with your own head.

Athene helps Odysseus and his party

But when with the bronze we have taken away the lives of all of you,
 220 all the possessions which are yours, both here and elsewhere, we shall count in with those of Odysseus, nor will we suffer your sons to go on living here in your halls, nor your daughters and loving wife to go about in the town of Ithaka.'
 He spoke, and Athene in her heart grew still more angry,
 225 and she scolded Odysseus in words full of anger, saying: 'No longer, Odysseus, are the strength and valor still steady within you, as when, for the sake of white-armed, illustrious Helen, you fought nine years with the Trojans, ever relentless; and many men you killed there in the dreaded encounter,
 230 and by your counsel the wide-wayed city of Priam was taken. How is it now, when you have come back to your own possessions and house, you complain, instead of standing up to the suitors? Come here, friend, and watch me at work, and standing beside me see what kind of man is Mentor the son of Alkimos,
 235 and how against your enemies he repays your kindness.'
 She spoke, but did not yet altogether turn the victory their way. She still was putting to proof the strength and courage alike of Odysseus and his glorious son; and she now, likening herself to a swallow in their sight, shot up
 240 high aloft, and perched on a beam of the smoky palace. Now Agelaos, son of Damastor, urged on the suitors, with Demoptolemos, Amphimedon, and Peisandros the son of Polyktor, Eurynomos, and the wise Polybos. For these in warcraft were by far the best of the suitors
 245 who still were alive and fighting for their lives; but others had already fallen before the bow and the showering arrows. To these Agelaos spoke, directing his words to all of them: 'Dear friends, now this man will have to stay his invincible hands, since Mentor, after doing some empty boasting,
 250 has gone, and these are left alone in the front doorway. Now, do not all of you throw your long spears at the same time at him, but let us six throw first with our spears, and it may be Zeus will grant that we strike Odysseus and win the glory. We care nothing about the others, once this man has fallen.'
 255 So he spoke, and all six aimed their spears, as he told them, and threw, but Athene made vain all their casts, so that one man threw his spear against the pillar sustaining

the strong-built palace, another into the door, close-fitted.
 One ash spear heavy with bronze was driven into the side wall.
 260 But then, after they had avoided the spears of the suitors,
 much-enduring great Odysseus began speaking to them:
 'Dear friends, now I would say it was the time for our turn
 to throw our spears into the midst of the suitors, furious
 as they are to kill us, and add to former evils committed.'
 265 So he spoke, and they all aimed their sharp spears and threw them
 straight ahead. Demoptolemos was killed by Odysseus,
 Euryades by Telemachos, Elatos by the swineherd,
 Peisandros by Philoitios, the herdsman of oxen.
 But when all these had fallen, and bit with their teeth the great earth,
 270 the suitors drew away into the corner of the palace,
 and the others rushed, and plucked their spears from the fallen bodies.
 Once again the suitors aimed at them with their sharp spears,
 and threw, but Athene made vain most of their casts, so that
 one man threw his spear against the pillar sustaining
 275 the strong-built palace, another into the door, close-fitted.
 One ash spear heavy with bronze was driven into the side wall.
 But Amphimedon struck Telemachos on the wrist, with a glancing
 blow, and the bronze ripped the outermost skin; and also
 Ktesippos with his long spear hit Eumaïos over
 280 the shield, and scratched his shoulder, but the spear flew over, and landed
 void. Then the company of wise, devious-devising
 Odysseus threw their spears into the mass of the suitors.
 This time Odysseus, stormer of cities, struck down Eurydamas;
 Telemachos hit Amphimedon; the swineherd, Polybos.
 285 Then Philoitios, herdsman of oxen, struck Ktesippos
 full in the chest, and spoke a word of vaunting over him:
 'O son of Polytherses, lover of mockery, never
 speak loud and all at random in your recklessness. Rather
 leave all speech to the gods, since they are far stronger than you are.
 290 Here is your guest gift, in exchange for that hoof you formerly
 gave to godlike Odysseus, as he went about through the palace.'
 So spoke the herdsman of horn-curved oxen; but now Odysseus
 stabbed Agelaos, son of Damastor, from close, with the long spear,
 while Telemachos stabbed Leokritos, son of Euenor,
 295 in the midmost belly with the spear, and drove the bronze clean
 through.

He fell then headlong, and took the earth full on his forehead.
 And now Athene waved the aegis, that blights humanity,
 from high aloft on the roof, and all their wits were bewildered;
 and they stampeded about the hall, like a herd of cattle
 300 set upon and driven wild by the darting horse fly
 in the spring season, at the time when the days grow longer;
 but the other men, who were like hook-clawed, beak-bent vultures,
 descending from the mountains to pounce upon the lesser birds;
 and these on the plain, shrinking away from the clouds, speed off,
 305 but the vultures plunge on them and destroy them, nor is there any
 defense, nor any escape, and men are glad for the hunting;
 so these men, sweeping about the palace, struck down
 the suitors, one man after another; the floor was smoking
 with blood, and the horrible cries rose up as their heads were broken.
 310 Leodes rushed in and caught the knees of Odysseus,
 and spoke to him in winged words and in supplication:
 'I am at your knees, Odysseus. Respect me, have mercy;
 for I claim that never in your halls did I say or do anything
 wrong to any one of the women, but always was trying
 315 to stop any one of the other suitors who acted in that way.
 But they would not listen to me and keep their hands off evil.
 So by their own recklessness they have found a shameful
 death, but I was their diviner, and I did nothing;
 but I must fall, since there is no gratitude for past favors.'
 320 Then looking darkly at him spoke resourceful Odysseus:
 'If you claim to be the diviner among these people,
 many a time you must have prayed in my palace, asking
 that the completion of my sweet homecoming be far off
 from me, that my dear wife would go off with you, and bear you
 325 children. So you cannot escape from sorry destruction.'
 So he spoke, and in his heavy hand caught up a sword
 that was lying there on the ground where Agelaos had dropped it
 when he was killed. With this he cut through the neck at the middle,
 and the head of Leodes dropped in the dust while he was still speaking.
 330 Phemios the singer, the son of Terpias, still was skulking
 away from death. He had been singing among the suitors
 under compulsion, and stood with the clear-toned lyre in his hands
 by the side door, and his heart was pondering one of two courses:
 either to slip out of the hall to the altar of mighty

- 335 Zeus of the court, and crouch at the structure, where once Odysseus
and Laertes had burned up the thighs of many oxen,
or rush up and make entreaty at the knees of Odysseus.
Then in the division of his heart this way seemed best to him,
to seize hold of the knees of Odysseus, son of Laertes.
- 340 Thereupon he laid the hollowed lyre on the ground,
between the mixing bowl and the chair with its nails of silver,
but he himself rushed in and caught the knees of Odysseus,
and spoke to him in winged words and in supplication:
'I am at your knees, Odysseus. Respect me, have mercy.
- 345 You will be sorry in time to come if you kill the singer
of songs. I sing to the gods and to human people, and I am
taught by myself, but the god has inspired in me the song-ways
of every kind. I am such a one as can sing before you
as to a god. Then do not be furious to behead me.
- 350 Telemachos too, your own dear son, would tell you, as I do,
that it was against my will, and with no desire on my part,
that I served the suitors here in your house and sang at their feasting.
They were too many and too strong, and they forced me to do it.'
- So he spoke, and the hallowed prince Telemachos heard him.
- 355 Quickly then he spoke to his father, who stood close by him:
'Hold fast. Do not strike this man with the bronze. He is innocent.
And let us spare Medon our herald, a man who has always
taken care of me when I was a child in your palace;
unless, that is, Philoitios or the swineherd has killed him,
or unless he came in your way as you stormed through the palace.'
- 360 So he spoke, and Medon, a man of prudent thoughts, heard him;
for he had hidden under a chair, and put on about him
the hide of an ox, freshly skinned, so avoiding black death.
He came out quickly from under the chair, and took off the oxhide,
and then rushed in and caught hold of the knees of Telemachos,
365 and spoke to him in winged words and in supplication:
'Here I am, dear friend. Hold fast, and speak to your father,
before—since he is so strong—he destroys me with the tearing
bronze, in anger over the suitors, who kept ruining
his goods in his palace and, like fools, paid you no honor.'
- 370 Then resourceful Odysseus smiled upon him and answered:
'Do not fear. Telemachos has saved you and kept you
alive, so you may know in your heart, and say to another,

- that good dealing is better by far than evil dealing.
- 375 But go out now from the palace and sit outside, away from
the slaughter, in the courtyard, you and the versatile singer,
so that I can do in the house the work that I have to.'
- So he spoke, and the two went away, outside the palace,
and sat down both together beside the altar of mighty
- 380 Zeus, looking all about them, still thinking they would be murdered.
Odysseus looked about his own house, to see if any
man still was left alive, escaping the black destruction;
but he saw them, one and all in their numbers, lying fallen
in their blood and in the dust, like fish whom the fishermen
- 385 have taken in their net with many holes, and dragged out
onto the hollow beach from the gray sea, and all of them
lie piled on the sand, needing the restless salt water;
but Helios, the shining Sun, bakes the life out of them.
Like these, the suitors now were lying piled on each other.
- 390 Then at last resourceful Odysseus said to Telemachos:
'Telemachos, come now, summon in the nurse, Eurykleia,
so that I can say what is on my mind to say to her.'
- So he spoke, and Telemachos obeyed his dear father.
He opened the door and called out to the nurse, Eurykleia:
- 395 'Rise and come here, aged woman, you who watch over
all that the serving women do here in our palace.
Come here. My father calls you. He has something to tell you.'
- So he spoke, and she had no winged words for an answer,
but she opened the doors of the strong-built great hall, and went
- 400 on inside, but Telemachos went ahead, leading her.
There she found Odysseus among the slaughtered dead men,
spattered over with gore and battle filth, like a lion
who has been feeding on an ox of the fields, and goes off
covered with blood, all his chest and his flanks on either
- 405 side bloody, a terrible thing to look in the face; so
now Odysseus' feet and the hands above them were spattered.
She, when she saw the dead men and the endless blood, began then
to raise the cry of triumph, having seen it was monstrous
work, but Odysseus checked her and held her, for all her eagerness,
and spoke to her and addressed her in winged words, saying:
- 410 'Keep your joy in your heart, old dame; stop, do not raise up
the cry. It is not piety to glory so over slain men.

These were destroyed by the doom of the gods and their own hard actions,
 for these men paid no attention at all to any man on earth
 415 who came their way, no matter if he were base or noble.
 So by their own recklessness they have found a shameful death. Now assemble here the women who are in the palace,
 both those who have done me no honor, and those who are innocent.'

Then the beloved nurse Eurykleia said to him in answer:
 420 'So, my child, I will tell you the whole truth of the matter.
 You have fifty serving women here in your palace,
 and these I have taught to work at their own tasks, the carding
 of wool, and how to endure their own slavery. Of these
 fifty, twelve in all have taken to immorality.

425 They pay no attention to me, or even to Penelope.
 Telemachos is but lately come of age, and his mother
 would not let him be in charge of the serving women.
 But come, let me go up to the shining upper chamber
 and tell your wife. Some god has sent down a sleep upon her.'

430 Then resourceful Odysseus spoke in turn and answered her:
 'Do not waken her yet, but tell those women who have been
 shameful in their devisings to come here to my presence.'

So he spoke, and the old woman went through the palace,
 bringing the message to the women and urging them onward.
 435 But Odysseus, calling Telemachos and the oxherd
 and swineherd to him, spoke to them in winged words, saying:
 'Begin the work of carrying out the bodies, and tell
 the women to help, and after that to wash the beautiful
 chairs and tables clean, with water and porous sponges.

440 Then, after you have got all the house back in good order,
 lead all these maidservants out of the well-built palace
 between the round-house and the unfaulted wall of the courtyard,
 and hew them with the thin edge of the sword, until you have taken
 the lives from all, and they forget Aphrodite, the goddess
 445 they had with them when they lay secretly with the suitors.'

So he spoke, and the women all in a huddle came out,
 with terrible cries of sorrow, and the big tears falling.
 First they carried away the bodies of all the dead men,
 and laid them under the portico of the well-built courtyard,
 450 stacking them on each other. Odysseus himself directed them

and hurried them on. They carried the bodies out. They had to.
 Then, after they had done this, the women washed the beautiful
 chairs and tables clean, with water and porous sponges.
 After this Telemachos, the oxherd and the swineherd,
 455 scraped out the floor of the strongly constructed house, with shovels,
 and the women carried the scrapings way, and piled them outside.
 But after they had got all the house back in good order,
 leading the maidservants out of the well-built palace,
 between the round-house and the unfaulted wall of the courtyard,
 460 they penned them in a strait place from which there was no escaping.
 Now the thoughtful Telemachos began speaking among them:
 'I would not take away the lives of these creatures by any
 clean death, for they have showered abuse on the head of my mother,
 and on my own head too, and they have slept with the suitors.'

465 So he spoke, and taking the cable of a dark-prowed ship,
 fastened it to the tall pillar, and fetched it about the round-house;
 and like thrushes, who spread their wings, or pigeons, who have
 flown into a snare set up for them in a thicket, trying
 to find a resting place, but the sleep given them was hateful;
 470 so their heads were all in a line, and each had her neck caught
 fast in a noose, so that their death would be most pitiful.

They struggled with their feet for a little, not for very long.

They took Melanthios along the porch and the courtyard.
 They cut off, with the pitiless bronze, his nose and his ears,
 475 tore off his private parts and gave them to the dogs to feed on
 raw, and lopped off his hands and feet, in fury of anger.

Then, after they had washed their own hands and feet clean,
 they went into the house of Odysseus. Their work was ended.

But Odysseus said to the beloved nurse, Eurykleia:
 480 'Bring me brimstone, old dame, the cure of evils, and bring me
 fire, so I can sulphur the hall, and tell Penelope
 to come here now, together with her attendant women,
 and tell all the serving maids to come here to the palace.'

485 Then the beloved nurse Eurykleia said to him in answer:
 'All this you have said, my child, was fair and orderly.
 But come now, let me bring you out a mantle and tunic,
 and do not stand thus here in the hall, with your broad shoulders
 covered over with rags as they are. That would be scandalous.'

490 Then resourceful Odysseus spoke in turn and answered her:

Odysseus cleans the palace

'Before all this, let me have the fire in my palace.'

He spoke, and the dear nurse Eurykleia did not disobey him. She brought him out the fire and brimstone; and then Odysseus cleaned his palace, house and courtyard alike, with sulphur.

495 The old woman went off through the fine house of Odysseus, to take the message to the women and tell them to gather. They came from the main house, and in their hands held torches, and all the serving women clung to Odysseus, and greeted him, and made much of him, and kissed him on his head and his shoulders
500 and hands, admiring him, and sweet longing for lamentation and tears took hold of him. He recognized all these women.

BOOK XXIII



The old woman, laughing loudly, went to the upper chamber to tell her mistress that her beloved husband was inside the house. Her knees moved swiftly, but her feet were tottering. She stood above Penelope's head and spoke a word to her:

- 5 'Wake, Penelope, dear child, so that, with your own eyes, you can see what all your days you have been longing for. Odysseus is here, he is in the house, though late in his coming; and he has killed the haughty suitors, who were afflicting his house, and using force on his son, and eating his property.'
- 10 Circumspect Penelope said to her in answer:
'Dear nurse, the gods have driven you crazy. They are both able to change a very sensible person into a senseless one, and to set the light-wit on the way of discretion. They have set you awry; before now your thoughts were orderly.
- 15 Why do you insult me when my heart is heavy with sorrows, by talking in this wild way, and waking me from a happy sleep, which had come and covered my eyes, and held them fastened? For I have not had such a sleep as this one, since the time when Odysseus went to that evil, not-to-be-mentioned Ilium.
- 20 But go down now, and take yourself back into the palace. If any of those other women, who are here with me, had come with a message like yours, and wakened me from my slumber, I would have sent her back on her way to the hall in a hateful fashion for doing it. It shall be your age that saves you.'

Penelope comes down to Odysseus

- 25 Then the beloved nurse Eurykleia said to her in answer:
 'I am not insulting you, dear child. It is all true.
 Odysseus is here, he is in the house, just as I tell you.
 He is that stranger-guest, whom all in the house were abusing.
 Telemachos has known that he was here for a long time,
 30 but he was discreet, and did not betray the plans of his father,
 so he might punish these overbearing men for their violence.'
 So she spoke, and Penelope in her joy sprang up
 from the bed, and embraced the old woman, her eyes streaming
 tears, and she spoke to her and addressed her in winged words:
 35 'Come, dear nurse, and give me a true account of the matter,
 whether he really has come back to his house, as you tell me,
 to lay his hands on the shameless suitors, though he was only
 one, and they were always lying in wait, in a body!'
 Then the beloved nurse Eurykleia said to her in answer:
 40 'I did not see, I was not told, but I heard the outcry
 of them being killed; we, hidden away in the strong-built storerooms,
 sat there terrified, and the closed doors held us prisoner,
 until from inside the great hall your son Telemachos
 summoned me, because his father told him to do it.
 45 There I found Odysseus standing among the dead men
 he had killed, and they covered the hardened earth, lying
 piled on each other around him. You would have been cheered to see
 him,
 spattered over with gore and battle filth, like a lion.
 Now they lie all together, by the doors of the courtyard,
 50 while he is burning a great fire, and cleaning the beautiful
 house with brimstone. He has sent me on to summon you.
 Come with me then, so that both of you can turn your dear hearts
 the way of happiness, since you have had so much to suffer,
 but now at last what long you prayed for has been accomplished.
 55 He has come back and is here at his hearth, alive, and has found you
 and his son in the palace, and has taken revenge on the suitors
 here in his house, for all the evils that they have done him.'
 Circumspect Penelope said to her in answer:
 'Dear nurse, do not yet laugh aloud in triumph. You know
 60 how welcome he would be if he appeared in the palace:
 to all, but above all to me and the son we gave birth to.
 No, but this story is not true as you tell it; rather,

but will not speak to him

- some one of the immortals has killed the haughty suitors
 in anger over their wicked deeds and heart-hurting violence;
 65 for these men paid no attention at all to any man on earth
 who came their way, no matter if he were base or noble.
 So they suffered for their own recklessness. But Odysseus
 has lost his homecoming and lost his life, far from Achaia.'
 Then the beloved nurse Eurykleia said to her in answer:
 70 'My child, what sort of word escaped your teeth's barrier?
 Though your husband is here beside the hearth, you would never
 say he would come home. Your heart was always mistrustful.
 But here is another proof that is very clear. I will tell you.
 That scar, which once the boar with his white teeth inflicted.
 75 I recognized it while I was washing his feet, and I wanted
 to tell you about it, but he stopped my mouth with his hands, would not
 let me speak, for his mind sought every advantage. Come then,
 follow me, and I will hazard my life upon it.
 Kill me by the most pitiful death, if I am deceiving you.'
 80 Circumspect Penelope said to her in answer:
 'Dear nurse, it would be hard for you to baffle the purposes
 of the everlasting gods, although you are very clever.
 Still, I will go to see my son, so that I can look on
 these men who courted me lying dead, and the man who killed them.'
 85 She spoke, and came down from the chamber, her heart pondering
 much, whether to keep away and question her dear husband,
 or to go up to him and kiss his head, taking his hands.
 But then, when she came in and stepped over the stone threshold,
 she sat across from him in the firelight, facing Odysseus,
 90 by the opposite wall, while he was seated by the tall pillar,
 looking downward, and waiting to find out if his majestic
 wife would have anything to say to him, now that she saw him.
 She sat a long time in silence, and her heart was wondering.
 Sometimes she would look at him, with her eyes full upon him,
 95 and again would fail to know him in the foul clothing he wore.
 Telemachos spoke to her and called her by name and scolded her:
 'My mother, my harsh mother with the hard heart inside you,
 why do you withdraw so from my father, and do not
 sit beside him and ask him questions and find out about him?
 100 No other woman, with spirit as stubborn as yours, would keep back
 as you are doing from her husband who, after much suffering,

Plans to deceive the people

came at last in the twentieth year back to his own country.
But always you have a heart that is harder than stone within you.'

Circumspect Penelope said to him in answer:

105 'My child, the spirit that is in me is full of wonderment,
and I cannot find anything to say to him, nor question him,
nor look him straight in the face. But if he is truly Odysseus,
and he has come home, then we shall find other ways, and better,
to recognize each other, for we have signs that we know of
110 between the two of us only, but they are secret from others.'

So she spoke, and much-enduring noble Odysseus
smiled, and presently spoke in winged words to Telemachos:
'Telemachos, leave your mother to examine me in the palace
as she will, and presently she will understand better;

115 but now that I am dirty and wear foul clothing upon me,
she dislikes me for that, and says I am not her husband.
But let us make our plans how all will come out best for us.
For when one has killed only one man in a community,
and then there are not many avengers to follow, even

120 so, he flees into exile, leaving kinsmen and country.
But we have killed what held the city together, the finest
young men in Ithaka. It is what I would have you consider.'

Then the thoughtful Telemachos said to him in answer:

125 'You must look to this yourself, dear father; for they say
you have the best mind among men for craft, and there is
no other man among mortal men who can contend with you.
We shall follow you eagerly; I think that we shall not
come short in warcraft, in so far as the strength stays with us.'

Then resourceful Odysseus spoke in turn and answered him:

130 'So I will tell you the way of it, how it seems best to me.
First, all go and wash, and put your tunics upon you,
and tell the women in the palace to choose out their clothing.
Then let the inspired singer take his clear-sounding lyre,
and give us the lead for festive dance, so that anyone
135 who is outside, some one of the neighbors, or a person going
along the street, who hears us, will think we are having a wedding.
Let no rumor go abroad in the town that the suitors
have been murdered, until such time as we can make our way
out to our estate with its many trees, and once there
140 see what profitable plan the Olympian shows us.'

Odysseus reproaches Penelope

So he spoke, and they listened well to him and obeyed him.
First they went and washed, and put their tunics upon them,
and the women arrayed themselves in their finery, while the inspired
singer took up his hollowed lyre and stirred up within them
145 the impulse for the sweetness of song and the stately dancing.
Now the great house resounded aloud to the thud of their footsteps,
as the men celebrated there, and the fair-girdled women;
and thus would a person speak outside the house who heard them:
'Surely now someone has married our much-sought-after
150 queen; hard-hearted, she had no patience to keep the great house
for her own wedded lord to the end, till he came back to her.'

So would a person speak, but they did not know what had happened.

Now the housekeeper Eurynome bathed great-hearted
Odysseus in his own house, and anointed him with olive oil,
155 and threw a beautiful mantle and a tunic about him;
and over his head Athene suffused great beauty, to make him
taller to behold and thicker, and on his head she arranged
the curling locks that hung down like hyacinthine petals.
And as when a master craftsman overlays gold on silver,
160 and he is one who was taught by Hephaistos and Pallas Athene
in art complete, and grace is on every work he finishes;
so Athene gilded with grace his head and his shoulders.
Then, looking like an immortal, he strode forth from the bath,
and came back then and sat on the chair from which he had risen,
165 opposite his wife, and now he spoke to her, saying:
'You are so strange. The gods, who have their homes on Olympos,
have made your heart more stubborn than for the rest of womankind.
No other woman, with spirit as stubborn as yours, would keep back
as you are doing from her husband who, after much suffering,
170 came at last in the twentieth year back to his own country.
Come then, nurse, make me up a bed, so that I can use it
here; for this woman has a heart of iron within her.'

Circumspect Penelope said to him in answer:

175 'You are so strange. I am not being proud, nor indifferent,
nor puzzled beyond need, but I know very well what you looked like
when you went in the ship with the sweeping oars, from Ithaka.
Come then, Eurykleia, and make up a firm bed for him
outside the well-fashioned chamber: that very bed that he himself
built. Put the firm bed here outside for him, and cover it

She tricks him into betraying himself,

180 over with fleeces and blankets, and with shining coverlets.
 So she spoke to her husband, trying him out, but Odysseus
 spoke in anger to his virtuous-minded lady:
 'What you have said, dear lady, has hurt my heart deeply. What man
 has put my bed in another place? But it would be difficult
 185 for even a very expert one, unless a god, coming
 to help in person, were easily to change its position.
 But there is no mortal man alive, no strong man, who lightly
 could move the weight elsewhere. There is one particular feature
 in the bed's construction. I myself, no other man, made it.
 190 There was the bole of an olive tree with long leaves growing
 strongly in the courtyard, and it was thick, like a column.
 I laid down my chamber around this, and built it, until I
 finished it, with close-set stones, and roofed it well over,
 and added the compacted doors, fitting closely together.
 195 Then I cut away the foliage of the long-leaved olive,
 and trimmed the trunk from the roots up, planing it with a brazen
 adze, well and expertly, and trued it straight to a chalkline,
 making a bed post of it, and bored all holes with an auger.
 I began with this and built my bed, until it was finished,
 200 and decorated it with gold and silver and ivory.
 Then I lashed it with thongs of oxhide, dyed bright with purple.
 There is its character, as I tell you; but I do not know now,
 dear lady, whether my bed is still in place, or if some man
 has cut underneath the stump of the olive, and moved it elsewhere.'
 205 So he spoke, and her knees and the heart within her went slack
 as she recognized the clear proofs that Odysseus had given;
 but then she burst into tears and ran straight to him, throwing
 her arms around the neck of Odysseus, and kissed his head, saying:
 'Do not be angry with me, Odysseus, since, beyond other men,
 210 you have the most understanding. The gods granted us misery,
 in jealousy over the thought that we two, always together,
 should enjoy our youth, and then come to the threshold of old age.
 Then do not now be angry with me nor blame me, because
 I did not greet you, as I do now, at first when I saw you.
 215 For always the spirit deep in my very heart was fearful
 that some one of mortal men would come my way and deceive me
 with words. For there are many who scheme for wicked advantage.
 For neither would the daughter born to Zeus, Helen of Argos,

then embraces him

have lain in love with an outlander from another country,
 220 if she had known that the warlike sons of the Achaians would bring her
 home again to the beloved land of her fathers.
 It was a god who stirred her to do the shameful thing she
 did, and never before had she had in her heart this terrible
 wildness, out of which came suffering to us also.
 225 But now, since you have given me accurate proof describing
 our bed, which no other mortal man beside has ever seen,
 but only you and I, and there is one serving woman,
 Aktor's daughter, whom my father gave me when I came here,
 who used to guard the doors for us in our well-built chamber;
 230 so you persuade my heart, though it has been very stubborn.'
 She spoke, and still more roused in him the passion for weeping.
 He wept as he held his lovely wife, whose thoughts were virtuous.
 And as when the land appears welcome to men who are swimming,
 after Poseidon has smashed their strong-built ship on the open
 235 water, pounding it with the weight of wind and the heavy
 seas, and only a few escape the gray water landward
 by swimming, with a thick scurf of salt coated upon them,
 and gladly they set foot on the shore, escaping the evil;
 so welcome was her husband to her as she looked upon him,
 240 and she could not let him go from the embrace of her white arms.
 Now Dawn of the rosy fingers would have dawned on their weeping,
 had not the gray-eyed goddess Athene planned it otherwise.
 She held the long night back at the outward edge, she detained
 Dawn of the golden throne by the Ocean, and would not let her
 245 harness her fast-footed horses who bring the daylight to people:
 Lampos and Phaethon, the Dawn's horses, who carry her.
 Then resourceful Odysseus spoke to his wife, saying:
 'Dear wife, we have not yet come to the limit of all our
 trials. There is unmeasured labor left for the future,
 250 both difficult and great, and all of it I must accomplish.
 So the soul of Teiresias prophesied to me, on that day
 when I went down inside the house of Hades, seeking
 to learn about homecoming, for myself and for my companions.
 But come, my wife, let us go to bed, so that at long last
 255 we can enjoy the sweetness of slumber, sleeping together.'
 Circumspect Penelope said to him in answer:
 'You shall have your going to bed whenever the spirit

Penelope and Odysseus reunited

desires it, now that the gods have brought about your homecoming to your own strong-founded house and to the land of your fathers.

260 But since the gods put this into your mind, and you understand it, tell me what this trial is, since I think I shall hear of it later; so it will be none the worse if I now hear of it.'

Then in turn resourceful Odysseus said to her in answer:

'You are so strange. Why do you urge me on and tell me
265 to speak of it? Yet I will tell you, concealing nothing. Your heart will have no joy in this; and I myself am not happy, since he told me to go among many cities of men, taking my well-shaped oar in my hands and bearing it, until I come where there are men living who know nothing
270 of the sea, and who eat food that is not mixed with salt, who never have known ships whose cheeks are painted purple, who never have known well-shaped oars, which act for ships as wings do. And then he told me a very clear proof. I will not conceal it. When, as I walk, some other wayfarer happens to meet me,
275 and says I carry a winnow fan on my bright shoulder, then I must plant my well-shaped oar in the ground, and render ceremonious sacrifice to the lord Poseidon, one ram and one bull, and a mounter of sows, a boar pig, and make my way home again, and render holy hecatombs
280 to the immortal gods who hold the wide heaven, all of them in order. Death will come to me from the sea, in some altogether unwarlike way, and it will end me in the ebbing time of a sleek old age. My people about me will prosper. All this he told me would be accomplished.'

285 Circumspect Penelope said to him in answer:
'If the gods are accomplishing a more prosperous old age, then there is hope that you shall have an escape from your troubles.'

Now as these two were conversing thus with each other, meanwhile the nurse and Eurynome were making the bed up
290 with soft coverings, under the light of their flaring torches. Then when they had worked and presently had a firm bed made, the old woman went away back to bed in her own place, while Eurynome, as mistress of the chamber, guided them on their way to the bed, and her hands held the torch for them.
295 When she had brought them to the chamber she went back. They then gladly went together to bed, and their old ritual.

He tells his story

At this time Telemachos and the oxherd and swineherd stopped the beat of their feet in the dance, and stopped the women, and they themselves went to bed in the shadowy palace.

300 When Penelope and Odysseus had enjoyed their lovemaking, they took their pleasure in talking, each one telling his story. She, shining among women, told of all she had endured in the palace, as she watched the suitors, a ravening company, who on her account were slaughtering many oxen and fat sheep, and much wine was being drawn from the wine jars.
305 But shining Odysseus told of all the cares he inflicted on other men, and told too of all that in his misery he had toiled through. She listened to him with delight, nor did any sleep fall upon her eyes until he had told her everything.

310 He began with how he had beaten the Kikonians, and then gone to the rich country of the men who feed on the lotus. He told all that the Cyclops had done, and how he took vengeance on him for his strong companions he had eaten, and showed no pity. How he came to Aiolos, who generously received him
315 and gave him passage, but it was not fated for him to come back yet to his country, so the stormwinds caught and carried him out again on the sea where the fish swarm, groaning heavily; and how he came to Telepylos of the Laistrygonas, and these men had destroyed his ships and strong-greaved companions
320 [all; but Odysseus only got away with his black ship]. He told her of the guile and the many devices of Circe, and how he had gone into the moldering home of Hades, there to consult the soul of Theban Teiresias, going in his ship with many benches, and there saw all his companions,
325 and his mother, who had borne him and nursed him when he was little. He told how he had heard the song of the echoing Sirens, and made his way to the Roving Rocks and dreaded Charybdis and Skylla, whom no men ever yet have escaped without damage. He told how his companions ate the cattle of Helios,
330 then told how Zeus who thunders on high had struck his fast ship with the smoky thunderbolt, and all his noble companions perished alike, only he escaped the evil death spirits; and how he came to the island Ogygia and the nymph Kalypso who detained him with her, desiring that he should be her husband,
335 in her hollow caverns, and she took care of him and told him

Odysseus goes to see his father

that she would make him ageless all his days, and immortal,
 but never so could she persuade the heart that was in him;
 then how, after much suffering, he reached the Phaiakians,
 who honored him in their hearts as if he were a god, and sent him
 340 back, by ship, to the beloved land of his fathers,
 bestowing bronze and gold in abundance on him, and clothing.
 And this was the last word he spoke to her, when the sweet sleep
 came to relax his limbs and slip the cares from his spirit.

Then the goddess gray-eyed Athene thought what to do next.
 345 As soon as she thought the heart of Odysseus had full contentment
 of the pleasure of resting in bed beside his wife, and of sleeping,
 immediately she stirred from Ocean the golden-throned early
 Dawn, to shine her light upon men, and Odysseus rose up
 from his soft bed, and spoke then to his wife, telling her:
 350 'Dear wife, we both have had our full share of numerous trials
 now; yours have been here as you cried over my much-longed-for
 homecoming, while as for me, Zeus and the other gods held me
 back from my own country, as I was striving to reach it.
 But now that we two have come to our desired bed together,
 355 you look after my possessions which are in the palace,
 but as for my flocks, which the overbearing suitors have ruined,
 many I shall restore by raiding, others the Achaians
 shall give me, until they have filled up all of my sheepfolds.
 But now I shall go to our estate with its many orchards,
 360 to see my noble father who has grieved for me constantly.
 But I tell you this, my wife, though you have your own understanding.
 Presently, when the sun rises, there will be a rumor
 about the men who courted you, whom I killed in our palace.
 Then go to the upper chamber with your attendant women,
 365 and sit still, looking at no one, and do not ask any questions.'
 He spoke, and put his splendid armor over his shoulders,
 and wakened Telemachos and the oxherd and the swineherd,
 and told all to take up in their hands their warlike weapons;
 nor did they disobey him, but armed themselves in the bronze, then
 370 opened the doors and went outside, and Odysseus led them.
 By now the light was over the earth, but Athene, hiding
 these men in darkness, guided them quickly out of the city.

BOOK XXIV



Hermes of Kyllene summoned the souls of the suitors
 to come forth, and in his hands he was holding the beautiful
 golden staff, with which he mazes the eyes of those mortals
 whose eyes he would maze, or wakes again the sleepers. Herding
 5 them on with this, he led them along, and they followed, gibbering.
 And as when bats in the depth of an awful cave flitter
 and gibber, when one of them has fallen out of his place in
 the chain that the bats have formed by holding one on another;
 so, gibbering, they went their way together, and Hermes
 10 the kindly healer led them along down moldering pathways.
 They went along, and passed the Ocean stream, and the White Rock,
 and passed the gates of Helios the Sun, and the country
 of dreams, and presently arrived in the meadow of asphodel.
 This is the dwelling place of souls, images of dead men.
 15 There they found the soul of Achilles, the son of Peleus,
 the soul of Patroklos, and the soul of stately Antilochos,
 and the soul of Aias, who for beauty and stature was greatest
 of all the Danaans, next to the blameless son of Peleus.
 So these were gathered around Achilles, and now came to them
 20 the soul of Agamemnon, the son of Atreus, sorrowing,
 and around him were gathered the souls of those others, who with him
 also died and met their fate in the house of Aigisthos.
 First of these two to speak was the soul of the son of Peleus:
 'Son of Atreus, we thought that all your days you were favored

- 25 beyond all other heroes by Zeus who delights in the thunder,
because you were lord over numerous people, and strong ones,
in the land of the Trojans, where we Achaians suffered hardships.
And yet it was to you that the destructive doom spirit
would come too early; but no man who is born escapes her.
- 30 How I wish that, enjoying that high place of your power,
you could have met death and destiny in the land of the Trojans.
So all the Achaians would have made a mound to cover you,
and you would have won great glory for your son hereafter.
In truth you were ordained to die by a death most pitiful.'
- 35 The soul of Agamemnon, son of Atreus, answered:
'O happy son of Peleus, Achilleus, like the immortals,
who died in Troy, far away from Argos, and around you others
were killed, Trojans and the best men among the Achaians,
as they fought over you; and you in the turning dust lay
- 40 mightily in your might, your horsemanship all forgotten.
We fought on for the whole day long, nor would we ever
have stopped fighting, if Zeus had not stopped us with a whirlstorm.
But when we had carried you to the ships, away from the fighting,
we laid you out on a litter, and anointed your handsome body
- 45 with warm water and with unguents, and by you the Danaans
shed many hot tears, and cut their hair short for you; and also
your mother, hearing the news, came out of the sea, with immortal
sea girls beside her. Immortal crying arose and spread over
the great sea, and trembling seized hold of all the Achaians.
- 50 And now they would have started away, and gone on the hollow
ships, had not a man of much ancient wisdom halted them,
Nestor, whose advice had also shown best before this.
He in kind intention toward all spoke forth and addressed them:
'Hold fast, Argives; do not run away, O young Achaians.
- 55 It is his mother coming out of the sea with immortal
sea girls beside her, to be with her son, who has perished.'
'So he spoke, and the great-hearted Achaians stayed from
their panic. Around you stood the daughters of the Sea's Ancient,
mourning piteously, with immortal clothing upon them.
- 60 And all the nine Muses in sweet antiphonal singing
mourned you, nor would you then have seen any one of the Argives
not in tears, so much did the singing Muse stir them.
For ten and seven days, alike in the day and the night time,

- we wailed for you, both mortal people and the immortals.
- 65 On the eighteenth day we gave you to the fire, and around you
slaughtered a great number of fat sheep and horn-curved cattle.
You were burned in the clothing of the gods, and abundant
ointment and sweet honey, while many Achaian heroes
moved in armor about the pyre where you were burning,
- 70 with horses and on foot, and a great clamoring rose up.
But after the flame of Hephaistos had consumed you utterly,
then at dawn we gathered your white bones, Achilleus,
together with unmixed wine and unguents. Your mother gave you
a golden jar with handles. She said that it was a present
- 75 from Dionysos, and was the work of renowned Hephaistos.
In this your white bones are laid away, O shining Achilleus,
mixed with the bones of the dead Patroklos, son of Menoitios,
and apart from those of Antilochos, whom you prized above all
the rest of your companions after the death of Patroklos.
- 80 Around them then, we, the chosen host of the Argive
spearmen, piled up a grave mound that was both great and perfect,
on a jutting promontory there by the wide Hellespont,
so that it can be seen afar from out on the water
by men now alive and those to be born in the future.
- 85 Then your mother, asking the gods for the gift of beautiful
prizes, set them in the field for the best of the Achaians.
I in my time have attended the funerals of many
heroes, at those times when, because a king has perished,
the young men gird themselves for sport and set up the prizes;
- 90 but these your heart would have admired beyond any others,
such beautiful prizes as were set up by the goddess, silver-footed
Thetis, for your sake. You were very dear to the gods. So,
even now you have died, you have not lost your name, but always
in the sight of all mankind your fame shall be great, Achilleus;
- 95 but what pleasure was there for me when I had wound up the fighting?
In my homecoming Zeus devised my dismal destruction,
to be killed by the hands of my cursed wife, and Aigisthos.'
- Now as the spirits were conversing thus with each other,
there came approaching them the courier Argeiphontes,
leading down the souls of the suitors killed by Odysseus.
- 100 These two in wonderment went up to them as they saw them,
and the soul of Agamemnon, son of Atreus, recognized

glorious Amphimedon, the dear son of Melaneus,
 who, in his home in Ithaka, had once been his guest-friend.
 105 First of the two to speak was the soul of Agamemnon:
 'Amphimedon, what befell you that you came under the dark earth,
 all of you choice young men, of the same age, nor could one, gathering
 the best men out of all a city have chosen otherwise.
 Was it with the ships, and did Poseidon, rousing a stormblast
 110 of battering winds and waves towering prove your undoing?
 Or was it on the dry land, did men embattled destroy you
 as you tried to cut out cattle and fleecy sheep from their holdings,
 or fighting against them, for the sake of their city and women?
 Tell me what I ask. I claim that I am your guest-friend.
 115 Or do you not remember when I came into your house there,
 together with godlike Menelaos, to rouse up Odysseus
 so he would go to Ilion on the well-benched vessels
 with us? And we were a whole month crossing over the wide sea,
 having hardly persuaded Odysseus, sacker of cities.'
 120 Then in turn the soul of Amphimedon answered him, saying:
 'Son of Atreus, most lordly and king of man, Agamemnon,
 I remember it all, illustrious, as you tell it.
 I will tell you well and truthfully the entire story
 of how our wretched end came in death, how it was accomplished.
 125 We were courting the wife of Odysseus, who had been long gone.
 She would not refuse the hateful marriage, nor would she bring it
 about, but she was planning our death and black destruction
 with this other stratagem of her heart's devising.
 She set up a great loom in her palace, and set to weaving
 130 a web of threads long and fine. Then she said to us:
 "Young men, my suitors now that the great Odysseus has perished,
 wait, though you are eager to marry me, until I finish
 this web, so that my weaving will not be useless and wasted.
 This is a shroud for the hero Laertes, for when the destructive
 135 doom of death, which lays men low, shall take him, lest any
 Achaian woman in this neighborhood hold it against me
 that a man of many conquests lies with no sheet to wind him."
 So she spoke, and the proud heart in us was persuaded.
 Thereafter in the daytime she would weave at her great loom,
 140 but in the night she would have torches set by, and undo it.
 So for three years she was secret in her design, convincing

the Achaians, but when the fourth year came, with the seasons returning,
 and the months waned, and many days had been brought to completion,
 one of her women, who knew the whole of the story, told us,
 145 and we found her in the act of undoing her glorious weaving.
 So, against her will and by force, she had to finish it.
 Then she displayed the great piece of weaving that she had woven.
 She had washed it, and it shone like the sun or the moon. At that time
 an evil spirit, coming from somewhere, brought back Odysseus
 150 to the remote part of his estate, where his swineherd was living.
 At that time the dear son of godlike Odysseus came over
 from sandy Pylos, voyaging in his black ship. These two,
 after compacting their plot of a foul death for the suitors,
 made their way to the glorious town. In fact Odysseus
 155 came afterwards; Telemachos led the way, and the swineherd
 brought in Odysseus, wearing sorry clothing upon him,
 in the likeness of a wretched vagabond, an old man
 leaning on a stick, and poor was the clothing he had upon him.
 Not one of us, even of the older ones, was able
 160 to recognize who he was when he appeared so suddenly,
 but we treated him rudely with evil words and with blows. Odysseus,
 nevertheless, endured for the time with steadfast spirit
 to be pelted with missiles and harshly spoken to in his own palace;
 but then, when the purpose of aegis-bearing Zeus had stirred him,
 165 he, with Telemachos, took away the glorious armor,
 and stowed it away in the chamber, closing the doors upon it.
 Then, in the craftiness of his mind, he urged his lady
 to set the bow and the gray iron in front of the suitors,
 the contest for us ill-fated men, the start of our slaughter.
 170 Not one of us was able to hook the string on the powerful
 bow, but all of us were found far too weak for it;
 but when the great bow was given into the hands of Odysseus,
 then all of us spoke out and threatened the man, telling him
 not to give the bow, however much he might argue.
 175 Only Telemachos urged him on and told him to give it.
 Then much-enduring Odysseus, in his hand accepting it,
 easily strung the bow, and sent a shaft through the iron.
 He stood on the threshold, and scattered out the swift shafts before him,
 glaring terribly, and struck down the king Antinoös.
 180 Then he shot his baneful arrows into the others,

Odysseus finds his father

aiming straight at them, and they dropped one after another.
It could be seen then that some one of the gods was helping him,
for these men, chasing us through the house in their strength and fury,
killed us, one man after another; the floor was smoking
185 with blood, and the horrible cries rose up as our heads were broken.

So, Agamemnon, we were destroyed, and still at this moment
our bodies are lying uncared-for in the halls of Odysseus;
for our people in the house of each man know nothing of this,
they who would have washed away from our wounds the black blood,
190 and laid us out and mourned us; for this is the right of the perished.'

The soul of Agamemnon, son of Atreus, answered him:
'O fortunate son of Laertes, Odysseus of many devices,
surely you won yourself a wife endowed with great virtue.
How good was proved the heart that is in blameless Penelope,
195 Ikarios' daughter, and how well she remembered Odysseus,
her wedded husband. Thereby the fame of her virtue shall never
die away, but the immortals will make for the people
of earth a thing of grace in the song for prudent Penelope.
Not so did the daughter of Tyndareos fashion her evil
200 deeds, when she killed her wedded lord, and a song of loathing
will be hers among men, to make evil the reputation
of womankind, even for one whose acts are virtuous.'

So these two were conversing each with the other, standing
in the gates of Hades, underneath the earth's secret places.

205 The others went from the city, and presently came to the country
place of Laertes, handsomely cultivated. Laertes
himself had reclaimed it, after he spent much labor upon it.
There was his house, and all around the house ran a shelter,
in which the slaves, who worked at his pleasure under compulsion,
210 would take their meals, and sit, and pass the night. There was also
an old Sicilian woman there, who duly looked after
the old man out on the estate, far away from the city.

There Odysseus spoke a word to his son and his servants:
'Go now, all of you, inside the strong-fashioned building,
215 and sacrifice the best of all the pigs for our dinner
presently; but I myself will make trial of my father,
to see whether he will know me and his eyes recognize me,
or fail to know me, with all this time that has grown upon me.'

So he spoke, and gave his thralls their weapons of warfare,

Laertes on his farm

220 and they went quickly on their way to the house; but Odysseus
went closer to the abundant orchard, searching. He did not
find either Dolios, as he came into the great orchard,
nor any of his thralls, nor his sons, for all these had gone off
to gather stones and make them into a wall retaining
225 the orchard, and the old man had guided them on their errand;
but he did find his father alone in the well-worked orchard,
spading out a plant, and he had a squalid tunic upon him,
patched together and ugly, and on his legs he had oxhide
gaiters fastened and patched together, to prevent scratching,
230 and gloves on his hands because of the bushes, and he was wearing
a cap of goatskin on his head, to increase his misery.
Now when much-enduring great Odysseus observed him,
with great misery in his heart, and oppressed by old age,
he stood underneath a towering pear tree and shed tears for him,
235 and deliberated then in his heart and his spirit
whether to embrace his father and kiss him and tell him
everything, how he was come again to his own dear country,
or question him first about everything, and make trial of him.
In the division of his heart this way seemed best to him,
240 first to make trial of him and speak in words of mockery.
With this in mind, noble Odysseus came straight up to him.
He was digging around a plant with his head held downward,
and now his glorious son stood near, and spoke to him, saying:
'Old sir, there is in you no lack of expertness in tending
245 your orchard; everything is well cared for, and there is never
a plant, neither fig tree nor yet grapevine nor olive
nor pear tree nor leek bed uncared for in your garden.
But I will also tell you this; do not take it as cause for
anger. You yourself are ill cared for; together with dismal
250 old age, which is yours, you are squalid and wear foul clothing upon you.
It is not for your laziness that your lord does not take care of you,
nor is your stature and beauty, as I see it, such as
ought to belong to a slave. You look like a man who is royal,
and such a one as who, after he has bathed and eaten,
255 should sleep on a soft bed; for such is the right of the elders.
But come now, tell me this and give me an accurate answer.
What man's thrall are you? Whose orchard are you laboring?
And tell me this and tell me truly, so that I may know

Recognition of Odysseus

whether this is really Ithaka I have come to, as that man
 260 told me just now as I encountered him on my way here:
 not a very sensible man, for he had no patience
 to tell me all or listen to what I said, when I asked him
 about my friend from abroad, whether he still lives and is somewhere
 here, or is dead now and down in the house of Hades.
 265 And I tell you this; listen to me and understand me.
 Once I entertained a friend in my own dear country,
 when he came to our house, nor has any man been dearer
 to me, among all those who have come from afar to my palace.
 He announced that he was by birth a man of Ithaka,
 270 and said that his father was Laertes, son of Arkcisios.
 I took him into my own house and well entertained him
 with proper hospitality, since there was abundance
 in the house, and gave him presents of friendship, as was becoming.
 I gave him seven talents of well-wrought gold, and I gave him
 275 a mixing bowl made all of silver, with flowers wrought on it,
 and twelve mantles to be worn single, as many blankets,
 as many handsome cloaks, also the same number of tunics,
 and aside from these four comely women, whose skill in handiwork
 was without fault; and he could choose the ones that he wanted.
 280 Then his father, shedding tears, said to him in answer:
 'Friend, this land that you have reached is the one you were seeking;
 but violent and reckless men are in control of it,
 and the grace of those countless gifts you gave is all gone for nothing.
 If you had found him yet alive in the land of Ithaka,
 285 he would have sent you along with gifts in return, and given
 good entertainment, as is right for him who has given.
 But come now, tell me this and give me an accurate answer.
 How many years is it since you entertained that unhappy
 guest of yours, my son—did he ever live?—an ill-starred
 290 man, one whom, far from his country and his own people,
 the fish have eaten in the great sea, or else on the dry land
 he has been spoil for wild beasts and for birds; and his mother
 and father, whose child he was, did not give him his rites nor mourn him,
 nor yet did his bountiful wife, circumspect Penelope,
 295 wail for her husband on his bier, as would have been fitting,
 nor close his eyes; for that is the right of those who have perished.
 But tell me this too, tell me truly, so that I may know it.

by Laertes his father

What man are you and whence? Where is your city? Your parents?
 Where is your swift ship standing now, that brought you to this place,
 300 and your godlike companions? Or did you come as a passenger
 in someone else's ship, and they let you off, and went on?'
 Then resourceful Odysseus spoke in turn and answered him:
 'See, I will accurately answer all that you ask me.
 I am from Alybas, where I live in a famous dwelling,
 305 and am the son of Apheidas, son of the lord Polypemon.
 My own name is Eperitos; now the divinity
 drove me here on my way against my will, from Sikania.
 And my ship stands nearby, off the country, away from the city.
 But as for Odysseus, this is by now the fifth year since
 310 he went from there, and took his departure out of my country.
 Unhappy man. Indeed, the bird signs were good at his going.
 They were on his right; and I too rejoiced as I sent him
 off, and he rejoiced as he went. My heart was still hopeful
 that we would meet in friendship and give glorious presents.'
 315 He spoke, and the black cloud of sorrow closed on Laertes.
 In both hands he caught up the grimy dust and poured it
 over his face and grizzled head, groaning incessantly.
 The spirit rose up in Odysseus, and now in his nostrils
 there was a shock of bitter force as he looked on his father.
 320 He sprang to him and embraced and kissed and then said to him:
 'Father, I am he, the man whom you ask about. I am
 here, come back in the twentieth year to the land of my father.
 But stay now from your weeping, shedding of tears, and outcry,
 for I tell you this straight out; the need for haste is upon us.
 325 I have killed the suitors who were in our palace, avenging
 all their heart-hurting outrage and their evil devisings.'
 Then in turn Laertes answered him and said to him:
 'If in truth you are Odysseus, my son, who have come back
 here, give me some unmistakable sign, so that I can believe you.'
 330 Then resourceful Odysseus spoke in turn and answered him:
 'First, then, look with your eyes upon this scar and know it.
 The wild boar inflicted it with his white tusk, on Parnassos,
 when I went there; for you and my queenly mother had sent me
 to Autolykos, my mother's dear father, so I could be given
 335 those gifts, which he promised me and consented to when he came to us.
 Or come then, let me tell you of the trees in the well-worked

orchard, which you gave me once. I asked you of each one,
 when I was a child, following you through the garden. We went
 among the trees, and you named them all and told me what each one
 340 was, and you gave me thirteen pear trees, and ten apple trees,
 and forty fig trees; and so also you named the fifty
 vines you would give. Each of them bore regularly, for there were
 grapes at every stage upon them, whenever the seasons
 of Zeus came down from the sky upon them, to make them heavy.'

345 He spoke, and Laertes' knees and the heart within him went slack,
 as he recognized the clear proofs that Odysseus had given.
 He threw his arms around his dear son, and much-enduring
 great Odysseus held him close, for his spirit was fainting.
 But when he had got his breath back again, and the spirit gathered
 350 into his heart, once more he said to him, answering:
 'Father Zeus, there are gods indeed upon tall Olympos,
 if truly the suitors have had to pay for their reckless violence.
 But now I am terribly afraid in my heart that speedily
 the men of Ithaka may come against us here, and send out
 355 messages everywhere to the Kephallenian cities.'

Then resourceful Odysseus spoke in turn and answered him:
 'Never fear, let these concerns not trouble your thinking;
 but let us go to the house which lies here next to the orchard,
 for there I sent Telemachos on ahead, with the oxherd
 360 and the swineherd, so that they could most quickly prepare our dinner.'

So he spoke, and the two went into the handsome dwelling;
 and when they had come into the well-established dwelling place,
 there they found Telemachos, and the oxherd and swineherd,
 cutting up a great deal of meat, and mixing the bright wine.

365 Meanwhile the Sicilian serving maid bathed great-hearted
 Laertes in his house, and anointed him with olive oil,
 then threw a handsome mantle about him. Also, Athene,
 standing by the shepherd of the people, filled his limbs out,
 and made him taller and thicker to behold than he had been.

370 He stepped forth from the bath, and his son looked on in amazement
 as he saw him looking like one of the immortal gods to encounter.
 So he spoke to him and addressed him in winged words, saying:
 'Father, surely some one of the gods who are everlasting
 has made you better to look upon for beauty and stature.'

375 Then in turn the thoughtful Laertes said to him in answer:

'O father Zeus, Athene and Apollo, if only
 as I was when, lord of the Kephallenians, I took
 Nerikos, the strong-founded citadel on the mainland
 cape; if only I could have been such yesterday in the palace,
 380 with armor upon my shoulders, to stand beside you and fight off
 the suitors' attack; so I would have unstrung the knees of many
 there in the hall, and your heart within you would have been gladdened.'

Now these two were thus conversing one with the other.
 And all, when they had finished their work and made ready their dinner,
 385 took their places in order on chairs and along the benches.
 Then they were putting their hands to the dinner, and now there drew
 near
 the aged Dolios, and the old man's sons were with him,
 coming from their toilsome work, for their mother had called them.
 This was the old Sicilian woman, who had raised them, and carefully
 390 looked after the old man, now that great age had seized him.
 These, when they saw Odysseus and recognized his identity,
 stood still in the hall in astonishment; but Odysseus
 had words of conciliation for them, and so he addressed them:
 'Sit to dinner with us, old man, and let be your wonder;
 395 for a long time now we have been eager to put our hands to
 food, but we waited for you in the halls, ever expecting you.'

So he spoke, and Dolios, opening his arms wide, ran straight
 to him, and took Odysseus' hand at the wrist, and kissed it,
 and spoke aloud to him and addressed him in winged words, saying:
 400 'Dear master, since you have come back to us, who wanted you
 but expected you no more—but the very gods have brought you
 back—we heartily welcome you; may the gods give you blessings.
 And tell me this and tell me truly, so that I may know it.
 Does circumspect Penelope know all the truth of this
 405 and that you have come back, or shall we send her a messenger?'

Then in turn resourceful Odysseus said to him in answer:
 'She already knows, old man. Why should you trouble to do this?'

He spoke, and Dolios sat down again on the polished
 chair; so too, around great Odysseus, the sons of Dolios
 410 came to speak to him in welcome, and shake hands with him,
 and then went back in order to sit by their father, Dolios.

So these were busy in the hall preparing their dinner;
 but Rumor, a messenger, went swiftly through all the city,

crying aloud the terrible death and doom of the suitors;
 415 and the people as they heard it came, from their several places,
 to gather, with groaning and outcry, before the house of Odysseus.
 They carried the corpses out of the house, and each one buried
 his own, and sent back all who had come from the other cities,
 giving them in charge of fishermen to take in their fast ships.
 420 They themselves, sorrowful at heart, gathered in assembly.
 But when they were all assembled and in one place together,
 Euphithes stood up and addressed them, since unforgettable
 sorrow was stored away in his heart for the sake of Antinoös,
 his son, who was the first to be killed by noble Odysseus.
 425 For his sake weeping tears he now stood forth and addressed them:
 'Friends, this man's will worked great evil upon the Achaians.
 First he took many excellent men away in the vessels
 with him, and lost the hollow ships, and lost all the people,
 and then returning killed the best men of the Kephallenians.
 430 Come then, before he can make his way quickly over to Pylos,
 or else to shining Elis, where the Epeians are lords, let us
 go, or else we shall then be shamed forever; all this
 shall be a disgrace, even for the men hereafter to hear of,
 if we do not take revenge on the murderers of our brothers
 435 and sons; for there would be no pleasure in my heart to go on
 living, but I would wish to die and be with the perished.
 So let us go, before they cross the sea, and escape us.'
 He spoke, weeping, and pity took hold of all the Achaians.
 But now Medon arrived, and with him the inspired singer,
 440 from the palace of Odysseus, since now the sleep had left them;
 they stood in their midst, and amazement seized upon each man of them.
 Then Medon, full of prudent thoughts, spoke forth and addressed them:
 'Hear me now, you men of Ithaka; for Odysseus
 devised what he did, not without the consent of immortal
 445 gods. I myself saw an immortal god who was standing
 beside Odysseus. In every way it resembled Mentor.
 An immortal god was seen, at one time in front of Odysseus
 urging him on, and then next time he would rout the suitors,
 and dash about the hall, while they fell one after another.'
 450 So he spoke, and the green fear took hold of all of them.
 Now Halitherses, Mastor's son, an aged warrior,
 spoke to them. He alone saw what was before and behind him.

Now in kind intention toward all he spoke forth and addressed them:
 'Hear me now, you men of Ithaka; hear what I tell you.
 455 It is by your own weakness, dear friends, that these things have happened.
 You would not listen to me, nor to Mentor, shepherd of the people,
 when we told you to make your sons give over their senseless
 mood; for they, in their evil recklessness, did a great wrong
 in showing no respect to the wife, despoiling the possessions,
 460 of a lordly man. They thought that he never would be coming
 home. Now let it be thus. Hear me, and do as I tell you.
 Let us not go there. He who does might incur some evil.'
 So he spoke, but more than half who were there sprang up
 with a great cry—though others stayed where they were assembled—
 465 since Halitherses' speech did not please their hearts, but they listened
 to Euphithes, and now suddenly they ran for their armor.
 Now they, when in the shining bronze they had shrouded their bodies,
 assembled all in a body in front of the spacious city.
 Euphithes was their leader in their foolishness. He thought
 470 he would avenge the slaughter of his son, but he was not
 ever to come back, but must himself encounter his death there.
 Now Athene spoke a word to Zeus, son of Kronos:
 'Son of Kronos, our father, O lordliest of the mighty,
 tell me what I ask. What does your mind have hidden within it?
 475 Will you first inflict evil fighting upon them, and terrible
 strife, or will you establish friendship between the two factions?'
 Then Zeus the gatherer of the clouds said to her in answer:
 'My child, why do you ask and question me in these matters?
 For was not this your own intention, as you have counseled it,
 480 how Odysseus should make his way back, and punish those others?
 Do as you will; but I will tell you how it is proper.
 Now that noble Odysseus has punished the suitors, let them
 make their oaths of faith and friendship, and let him be king
 always; and let us make them forget the death of their brothers
 485 and sons, and let them be friends with each other, as in the time past,
 and let them have prosperity and peace in abundance.'
 So he spoke, and stirred on Athene, who was eager before this,
 and she went in a flash of speed down the pinnacles of Olympos.
 When the men had put away their desire for delicious feasting,
 490 much-enduring great Odysseus began speaking among them:
 'Let someone go out now and see if they are approaching.'

He spoke, and Dolios' son went out, as Odysseus told him.
He went and stood on the threshold and saw them all drawing closer.
Now presently he spoke in winged words to Odysseus:

495 'Here they are, coming close to us, so let us arm quickly.'
So he spoke, and they sprang up and put on their armor,
Odysseus with his three, and the six sons of Dolios;
and with them Dolios and Laertes put on their armor,
gray though they were, but they were fighters perforce. And now,
500 when all of them in shining bronze had shrouded their bodies,
they opened the doors, and went outside, and Odysseus led them.

But now came their way the daughter of Zeus, Athene,
likening herself in appearance and voice to Mentor.

505 Seeing her, much-enduring great Odysseus was happy,
and presently he spoke to his dear son, Telemachos:
'Telemachos, now yourself being present, where men do battle,
and the bravest are singled out from the rest, you must be certain
not to shame the blood of your fathers, for we in time past
all across the world have surpassed in manhood and valor.'

510 Then the thoughtful Telemachos said to him in answer:
'You will see, dear father, if you wish, that as far as my will goes,
I will not shame my blood that comes from you, which you speak of.'

So he spoke, and Laertes also rejoiced, and said to them:
'What day is this for me, dear gods? I am very happy.'

515 My son and my son's son are contending over their courage.'
Then standing close beside him gray-eyed Athene said to him:
'Son of Arkeisios, far dearest of all my companions,
make your prayer to the gray-eyed girl and to Zeus her father,
then quickly balance your far-shadowing spear, and throw it.'

520 So Pallas Athene spoke, and breathed into him enormous
strength, and, making his prayer then to the daughter of great Zeus,
he quickly balanced his far-shadowing spear, and threw it,
and struck Euphithes on the brazen side of his helmet,
nor could the helm hold off the spear, but the bronze smashed clean
through.

525 He fell, thunderously, and his armor clattered upon him.
Odysseus and his glorious son fell upon their front fighters,
and began to strike with swords and stab with spears leaf-headed.
And now they would have killed them all, and given none of them
homecoming, had not Athene, daughter of Zeus of the aegis,

530 cried out in a great voice and held back all the company:
'Hold back, men of Ithaka, from the wearisome fighting,
so that most soon, and without blood, you can settle everything.'

So spoke Athene, and the green fear took hold of them,
and in their terror they let fall from their hands their weapons,
535 which fell all on the ground at the cry of the goddess speaking.
Striving to save their lives, they turned in flight toward the city.
With a terrible cry, much-enduring Odysseus, gathering
himself together, made a swoop, like a high-flown eagle.

540 But the son of Kronos then threw down a smoky thunderbolt,
which fell in front of the gray-eyed daughter of the great father.
Then the gray-eyed goddess Athene said to Odysseus:
'Son of Laertes and seed of Zeus, resourceful Odysseus,
hold hard, stop this quarrel in closing combat, for fear
Zeus of the wide brows, son of Kronos, may be angry with you.'

545 So spoke Athene, and with happy heart he obeyed her.
And pledges for the days to come, sworn to by both sides,
were settled by Pallas Athene, daughter of Zeus of the aegis,
who had likened herself in appearance and voice to Mentor.