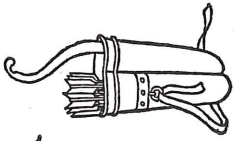


BOOK X



25 a little, but set the West Wind free to blow me and carry the ships and the men aboard them on their way; but it was not so to be, for we were ruined by our own folly.

30 'Nevertheless we sailed on, night and day, for nine days, and on the tenth at last appeared the land of our fathers, and we could see people tending fires, we were very close to them. But then the sweet sleep came upon me, for I was worn out with always handling the sheet myself, and I would not give it to any other companion, so we could come home quicker to our own country; but my companions talked with each other and said that I was bringing silver and gold home with me, given me by great-hearted Aiolos, son of Hippotas; and thus they would speak to each other, each looking at the man next him:

'See now, this man is loved by everybody and favored by all, whenever he visits anyone's land and city,

40 and is bringing home with him handsome treasures taken from the plunder of Troy, while we, who have gone through everything he has on the same venture, come home with our hands empty. Now too Aiolos in favor of friendship has given him all these goods. Let us quickly look inside and see what is in there, and how much silver and gold this bag contains inside it.'

45 'So he spoke, and the evil counsel of my companions prevailed, and they opened the bag and the winds all burst out. Suddenly the storm caught them away and swept them over the water weeping, away from their own country. Then I waking pondered deeply in my own blameless spirit, whether to throw myself over the side and die in the open water, or wait it out in silence and still be one of the living; and I endured it and waited, and hiding my face I lay down in the ship, while all were carried on the evil blast of the stormwind back to the Aiolian island, with my friends grieving.

55 'There again 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 took along one herald with me, and one companion, and went up to the famous house of Aiolos. There I found him sitting at dinner with his wife and with his own children. We came to the house beside the pillars, and on the doorstep

'We came next to the Aiolian island, where Aiolos lived, Hippotas' son, beloved by the immortal gods, on a floating island, the whole enclosed by a rampart of bronze, not to be broken, and the sheer of the cliff runs upward to it; and twelve children were born to him in his palace, six of them daughters, and six sons in the pride of their youth, so he bestowed his daughters on his sons, to be their consorts. And evermore, beside their dear father and gracious mother, these feast, and good things beyond number are set before them; and all their days the house fragrant with food echoes in the courtyard, but their nights they sleep each one by his modest wife, under coverlets, and on bedsteads corded for bedding.

We came to the city of these men and their handsome houses, and a whole month he entertained me and asked me everything of Ilion, and the ships of the Argives, and the Achaians' homecoming, and I told him all the tale as it happened. But when I asked him about the way back and requested conveyance, again he did not refuse, but granted me passage.

He gave me a bag made of the skin taken off a nine-year ox, stuffed full inside with the courses of all the blowing winds, for the son of Kronos had set him in charge over the winds, to hold them still or start them up at his pleasure. He stowed it away in the hollow ship, tied fast with a silver string, so there should be no wrong breath of wind, not even

- we sat down, and their minds wondered at us and they asked us:
 "What brings you back, Odysseus? What evil spirit has vexed you?
 We sent you properly on your way, so you could come back
 to your own country and house and whatever else is dear to you."
 "So they spoke, and I though sorry at heart answered:
 "My wretched companions brought me to ruin, helped by the pitiless
 sleep. Then make it right, dear friends; for you have the power."
 "So I spoke to them, plying them with words of endearment,
 but they were all silent; only the father found words and answered:
 "O least of living creatures, out of this island! Hurry!
 I have no right to see on his way, none to give passage
 to any man whom the blessed gods hate with such bitterness."
 Out. This arrival means you are hateful to the immortals."
 "So speaking he sent me, groaning heavily, out of his palace,
 and from there, grieving still at heart, we sailed on further,
 but the men's spirit was worn away with the pain of rowing
 and our own silliness, since homecoming seemed ours no longer.
 "Nevertheless we sailed on, night and day, for six days,
 and on the seventh came to the sheer citadel of Lamos,
 Tepeylos of the Laistrygones, where one herdsman, driving
 his flocks in halls another, who answers as he drives
 his flocks out; and there a man who could do without sleep could earn
 him
 double wages, one for herding the cattle, one for the silvery
 sheep. There the courses of night and day lie close together.
 There as we entered the glorious harbor, which a sky-towering
 cliff encloses on either side, with no break anywhere,
 and two projecting promontories facing each other
 run out toward the mouth, and there is a narrow entrance,
 there all the rest of them had their oar-swept ships in the inward
 part, they were tied up close together inside the hollow
 harbor, for there was never a swell of surf inside it,
 neither great nor small, but there was a pale calm on it.
 I myself, however, kept my black ship on the outside,
 at the very end, making her fast to the cliff with a cable,
 and climbed to a rocky point of observation and stood there.
 From here no trace of cattle nor working of men was visible;
 all we could see was the smoke going up from the country.
 So I sent companions ahead telling them to find out

- what men, eaters of bread, might live here in this country.
 I chose two men, and sent a third with them, as a herald.
 They left the ship and walked on a smooth road where the wagons
 carried the timber down from the high hills to the city,
 and there in front of the town they met a girl drawing water.
 This was the powerful daughter of the Laistrygonian
 Antiphates, who had gone down to the sweet-running wellspring,
 Artakie, whence they would carry their water back to the city.
 My men stood by her and talked with her, and asked her who was
 king of these people and who was lord over them. She readily
 pointed out to them the high-roofed house of her father.
 But when they entered the glorious house, they found there a woman
 as big as a mountain peak, and the sight of her filled them with horror.
 At once she summoned famous Antiphates, her husband,
 from their assembly, and he devised dismal death against them.
 He snatched up one of my companions, and prepared him for dinner,
 but the other two darted away in flight, and got back to my ship.
 The king raised the cry through the city. Hearing him the powerful
 Laistrygones came swarming up from every direction,
 tens of thousands of them, and not like men, like giants.
 These, standing along the cliffs, pelted my men with man-sized
 boulders, and a horrid racket went up by the ships, of men
 being killed and ships being smashed to pieces. They speared them
 like fish, and carried them away for their joyless feasting.
 But while they were destroying them in the deep-water harbor,
 meanwhile I, drawing from beside my thigh the sharp sword,
 chopped away the cable that tied the ship with the dark prow,
 and called out to my companions, and urged them with all speed
 to throw their weight on the oars and escape the threatening evil,
 and they made the water fly, fearing destruction. Gladly
 my ship, and only mine, fled out from the overhanging
 cliffs to the open water, but the others were all destroyed there.
 'From there we sailed on further along, glad to have escaped death,
 but grieving still at heart for the loss of our dear companions.
 135 We came to Aiaia, which is an island. There lived Circe
 of the lovely hair, the dread goddess who talks with mortals,
 who is own sister to the malignant-minded Aietes;
 for they both are children of Helios, who shines on mortals,
 and their mother is Perse who in turn is daughter of Ocean.

140 There we brought our ship in to the shore, in silence,
 at a harbor fit for ships to lie, and some god guided us
 in. There we disembarked, and for two days and two nights
 we lay there, for sorrow and weariness eating our hearts out.
 But when the fair-haired Dawn in her rounds brought on the third day,
 then at last I took up my spear again, my sharp sword,
 and went up quickly from beside the ship to find a lookout
 place, to look for some trace of people, listen for some sound.
 I climbed to a rocky point of observation and stood there,
 and got a sight of smoke which came from the halls of Circe
 going up from wide-wayed earth through undergrowth and forest.
 Then I pondered deeply in my heart and my spirit,
 whether, since I had seen the fire and smoke, to investigate;
 but in the division of my heart this way seemed the best to me,
 to go back first to the fast ship and the beach of the sea, and give
 my companions some dinner, then send them forward to investigate.
 145 But on my way, as I was close to the oar-swept vessel,
 some god, because I was all alone, took pity upon me,
 and sent a great stag with towering antlers right in my very
 path; he had come from his range in the forest down to the river
 to drink, for the fierce strength of the sun was upon him. As he
 stepped out, I hit him in the middle of the back, next to
 the spine, so that the brazen spearhead smashed its way clean through.
 He screamed and dropped in the dust and the life spirit fluttered from
 him.
 I set my foot on him and drew the bronze spear out of
 the wound it had made, and rested it on the ground, while I
 pulled growing twigs and willow withes and, braiding them into
 a rope, about six feet in length, and looping them over
 the feet of this great monster on both sides, lashed them together,
 and with him loaded over my neck went toward the black ship,
 propping myself on my spear, for there was no way to carry him
 on the shoulder holding him with one hand, he was such a very
 big beast. I threw him down by the ship and roused my companions,
 standing beside each man and speaking to him in kind words:
 "Dear friends, sorry as we are, we shall not yet go down into
 the house of Hades. Not until our day is appointed.
 175 Come then, while there is something to eat and drink by the fast ship,
 let us think of our food and not be worn out with hunger."

180 'So I spoke, and they listened at once to me and obeyed me,
 and unveiling their heads along the beach of the barren water
 they admired the stag, and truly he was a very big beast.
 But after they had looked at him and their eyes had enjoyed him,
 they washed their hands and set to preparing a communal high feast.
 So for the whole length of the day until the sun's setting
 we sat there feasting on unlimited meat and sweet wine.
 185 But when the sun went down and the sacred darkness came over,
 then we lay down to sleep along the break of the seashore;
 but when the young Dawn showed again with her rosy fingers,
 then I held an assembly and spoke forth to all of them:
 "Hear my words, my companions, in spite of your hearts' sufferings.
 190 Dear friends, for we do not know where the darkness is nor the sunrise,
 nor where the Sun who shines upon people rises, nor where
 he sets, then let us hasten our minds and think, whether there is
 any course left open to us. But I think there is none.
 For I climbed to a rocky place of observation and looked at
 195 the island, and the endless sea lies all in a circle
 around it, but the island itself lies low, and my eyes saw
 smoke rising in the middle through the undergrowth and the forest."
 'So I spoke, and the inward heart in them was broken,
 as they remembered Antiphates the Laistrygonian
 200 and the violence of the great-hearted cannibal Cyclops,
 and they wept loud and shrill, letting the big tears fall,
 but there came no advantage to them for all their sorrowing.
 'I counted off all my strong-greaved companions into two
 divisions, and appointed a leader for each, I myself
 205 taking one, while godlike Eurylochos had the other.
 Promptly then we shook the lots in a brazen helmet,
 and the lot of great-hearted Eurylochos sprang out. He then
 went on his way, and with him two-and-twenty companions,
 weeping, and we whom they left behind were mourning also.
 210 In the forest glen they came on the house of Circe. It was
 in an open place, and put together from stones, well polished,
 and all about it there were lions, and wolves of the mountains,
 whom the goddess had given evil drugs and enchanted,
 and these made no attack on the men, but came up thronging
 215 about them, waving their long tails and fawning, in the way
 that dogs go fawning about their master, when he comes home

Half the men changed to swine

- 220 from dining out, for he always brings back something to please them; so these wolves with great strong claws and lions came fawning on my men, but they were afraid when they saw the terrible big beasts. They stood there in the forecourt of the goddess with the glorious hair, and heard Circe inside singing in a sweet voice as she went up and down a great design on a loom, immortal such as goddesses have, delicate and lovely and glorious their work. Now Polites leader of men, who was the best and dearest to me of my friends, began the discussion: "Friends, someone inside going up and down a great piece of weaving is singing sweetly, and the whole place murmurs to the echo of it, whether she is woman or goddess. Come, let us call her."
- 230 "So he spoke to them, and the rest gave voice, and called her, and at once she opened the shining doors, and came out, and invited them in, and all in their innocence entered; only Eurylochos waited outside, for he suspected treachery. She brought them inside and seated them on chairs and benches, and mixed them a potion, with barley and cheese and pale honey added to Prameian wine, but put into the mixture malignant drugs, to make them forgetful of their own country. When she had given them this and they had drunk it down, next thing she struck them with her wand and drove them into her pig pens, and they took on the look of pigs, with the heads and voices and bristles of pigs, but the minds within them stayed as they had been before. So crying they went in, and before them Circe threw down acorns for them to eat, and ilex and cornel buds, such food as pigs who sleep on the ground always feed on.
- 245 "Eurylochos came back again to the fast black ship, to tell the story of our companions and of their dismal fate, but he could not get a word out, though he was trying to speak, but his heart was stunned by the great sorrow, and both eyes filled with tears, he could think of nothing but lamentation. But after we had wondered at him and asked him questions, at last he told us about the loss of his other companions:
- 250 "We went, O glorious Odysseus, through the growth as you told us, and found a fine house in the glen. It was in an open place, and put together from stones, well polished. Someone, goddess or woman, was singing inside in a clear voice as she went up and down her loom, and they called her, and spoke to her,

Odysseus encounters Hermes

- and at once she opened the shining doors, and came out and invited them in, and all in their innocence entered, only I waited for them outside, for I suspected treachery. The whole lot of them vanished away together, nor did one single one come out, though I sat and watched for a long time."
- 260 "So he spoke, and I slung my great bronze sword with the silver nails across my shoulders, and hung my bow on also, and told him to guide me back by the same way he had gone; but he, clasping my knees in both hands, entreated me, and in loud lamentation spoke to me and addressed me: "Illustrious, do not take me against my will there. Leave me here, for I know you will never come back yourself, nor bring back any of your companions. Let us rather make haste, and with these who are left, escape, for we still may avoid the day of evil."
- 270 "So he spoke, and I answered again in turn and said to him: "Eurylochos, you may stay here eating and drinking, even where you are and beside the hollow black ship; only I shall go. For there is strong compulsion upon me."
- 275 "So I spoke, and started up from the ship and the seashore. But as I went up through the lonely glens, and was coming near to the great house of Circe, skilled in medicines, there as I came up to the house, Hermes, of the golden staff, met me on my way, in the likeness of a young man with beard new grown, which is the most graceful time of young manhood.
- 280 He took me by the hand and spoke to me and named me, saying: "'Where are you going, unhappy man, all alone, through the hilltops, ignorant of the land-lay, and your friends are here in Circe's place, in the shape of pigs and holed up in the close pig pens. Do you come here meaning to set them free? I do not think you will get back yourself, but must stay here with the others. But see, I will find you a way out of your troubles, and save you. Here, this is a good medicine, take it, and go into Circe's house; it will give you power against the day of trouble. And I will tell you all the malevolent guiles of Circe.
- 290 She will make you a potion, and put drugs in the food, but she will not even so be able to enchant you, for this good medicine which I give you now will prevent her. I will tell you the details of what to do. As soon as Circe with her long wand strikes you,

- 295 then drawing from beside your thigh your sharp sword, rush forward against Circe, as if you were raging to kill her, and she will be afraid, and invite you to go to bed with her. Do not then resist and refuse the bed of the goddess, for so she will set free your companions, and care for you also; but bid her swear the great oath of the blessed gods, that she has no other evil hurt that she is devising against you, so she will not make you weak and unmanned, once you are naked."
- 300 "So spoke Argeiphontes, and he gave me the medicine, which he picked out of the ground, and he explained the nature of it to me. It was black at the root, but with a milky flower. The gods call it moly. It is hard for mortal men to dig up, but the gods have power to do all things.
- 305 "Then Hermes went away, passing over the wooded island, toward tall Olympos, and I meanwhile made my way to the house of Circe, but my heart was a storm in me as I went. Now I stood outside at the doors of the goddess with the glorious hair, and standing I shouted aloud; and the goddess heard me, and at once she opened the shining doors and came out and invited me in; and I, deeply troubled in my heart, went in with her. She made me sit down in a chair that was wrought elaborately and splendid with silver nails, and under my feet was a footstool. She made a potion for me to drink and gave it in a golden cup, and with evil thoughts in her heart added the drug to it. Then when she had given it and I drank it off, without being enchanted, she struck me with her wand and spoke and named me:
- 315 "Go to your sty now and lie down with your other friends there."
- 320 "So she spoke, but I, drawing from beside my thigh the sharp sword, rushed forward against Circe as if I were raging to kill her, but she screamed aloud and ran under my guard, and clasping both knees in loud lamentation spoke to me and addressed me in winged words: "What man are you and whence? Where are your city and parents? The wonder is on me that you drank my drugs and have not been enchanted, for no other man beside could have stood up under my drugs, once he drank and they passed the barrier of his teeth. There is a mind in you no magic will work on. You are then resourceful Odysseus. Argeiphontes of the golden staff was forever telling me you would come to me, on your way back from Troy with your fast black ship.
- 330

- 335 Come then, put away your sword in its sheath, and let us two go up into my bed so that, lying together in the bed of love, we may then have faith and trust in each other."
- "So she spoke, and I answered her again and said to her: "Circe, how can you ask me to be gentle with you, when it is you who turned my companions into pigs in your palace? And now you have me here myself, you treacherously ask me to go into your chamber, and go to bed with you, so that when I am naked you can make me a weakling, unmanned. I would not be willing to go to bed with you unless you can bring yourself, O goddess, to swear me a great oath that there is no other evil hurt you devise against me."
- 345 "So I spoke, and she at once swore me the oath, as I asked her, But after she had sworn me the oath, and made an end of it, I mounted the surpassingly beautiful bed of Circe.
- "Meanwhile, the four maidservants, who wait on Circe in her house, were busy at their work, all through the palace. These are daughters born of the springs and from the coppices and the sacred rivers which flow down to the sea. Of these one laid the coverlets, splendid and stained in purple, over the backs of the chairs, and spread on the seats the cloths to sit on. The second drew up the silver tables and placed them in front of the chairs, and laid out the golden serving baskets upon them. The third mixed wine, kindly sweet and fragrant, in the silver mixing bowl, and set out the golden goblets. The fourth one brought in water, then set about building up an abundant fire, underneath the great caldron, and the water heated.
- 355 But when the water had come to a boil in the shining bronze, then she sat me down in the bathtub and washed me from the great caldron, mixing hot and cold just as I wanted, and pouring it over shoulders and head, to take the heart-wasting weariness from my limbs. When she had bathed me and anointed me with olive oil,
- 360 she put a splendid mantle and a tunic upon me, and made me sit down in a chair that was wrought elaborately and splendid with silver nails, and under my feet was a footstool. A maidservant brought water for us and poured it from a splendid and golden pitcher, holding it above a silver basin, for us to wash, and she pulled a polished table before us.
- 370

The swine changed back to men

A grave housekeeper brought in the bread and served it to us, adding many good things to it, generous with her provisions, and told us to eat, but nothing pleased my mind, and I sat there thinking of something else, mind full of evil imaginings.

375 "When Circe noticed how I sat there without ever putting my hands out to the food, and with the strong sorrow upon me, she came close, and stood beside me and addressed me in winged words: "Why, Odysseus, do you sit so, like a man who has lost his voice, eating your heart out, but touch neither food nor drink. Is it that you suspect me of more treachery? But you have nothing to fear, since I have already sworn my strong oath to you."

380 "So she spoke, but I answered her again and said to her: "Oh, Circe, how could any man right in his mind ever endure to taste of the food and drink that are set before him, until with his eyes he saw his companions set free? So then, if you are sincerely telling me to eat and drink, set them free, so my eyes can again behold my eager companions."

390 "So I spoke, and Circe walked on out through the palace, holding her wand in her hand, and opened the doors of the pigsty, and drove them out. They looked like nine-year-old porkers. They stood ranged and facing her, and she, making her way through their ranks, anointed each of them with some other medicine, and the bristles, grown upon them by the evil medicine Circe had bestowed upon them before, now fell away from them, and they turned back once more into men, younger than they had been

395 and taller for the eye to behold and handsomer by far. They recognized me, and each of them clung to my hand. The lovely longing for lamentation came over us, and the house echoed terribly to the sound, and even the goddess took pity,

400 and she, shining among goddesses, came close and said to me: "Son of Laertes and seed of Zeus, resourceful Odysseus, go back down now to your fast ship and the sand of the seashore, and first of all, drag your ship up on the land, stowing your possessions and all the ship's running gear away in the sea caves, and then come back, and bring with you your eager companions."

405 "So she spoke, and the proud heart in me was persuaded, and I went back down to my fast ship and the sand of the seashore, and there I found beside the fast ship my eager companions pitiful in their lamentation and weeping big tears.

Reunion of all the crew

410 And as, in the country, the calves, around the cows returning from pasture back to the dung of the farmyard, well filled with grazing, come gamboling together to meet them, and the pens no longer can hold them in, but lowing incessantly they come running around their mothers, so these men, once their eyes saw me, came streaming around me, in tears, and the spirit in them made them feel as if they were back in their own country, the very city of rugged Ithaka, where they were born and raised up.

415 So they came in tears about me, and cried in winged words: "O great Odysseus, we are as happy to see you returning as if we had come back to our own Ithakan country.

420 But come, tell us about the death of our other companions."

"So they spoke, but I answered in soft words and told them: "First of all, let us drag our ship up on the land, stowing our possessions and all the ship's running gear away in the sea caves, and then make haste, all of you, to come along with me, so that you can see your companions, in the sacred dwelling of Circe, eating and drinking, for they have all in abundance."

425 "So I spoke, and at once they did as I told them. Only Eurylochos was trying to hold back all my other companions, and he spoke to them and addressed them in winged words:

430 "Ah, poor wretches. Where are we going? Why do you long for the evils of going down into Circe's palace, for she will transform the lot of us into pigs or wolves or lions, and so we shall guard her great house for her, under compulsion. So too it happened with the Cyclops, when our companions went into his yard, and the bold Odysseus was of their company; for it was by this man's recklessness that these too perished."

435 "So he spoke, and I considered in my mind whether to draw out the long-edged sword from beside my big thigh, and cut off his head and throw it on the ground, even though he was nearly related to me by marriage; but my companions checked me, first one then another speaking, trying to soothe me: "Zeus-sprung Odysseus, if you ask us to, we will leave this man here to stay where he is and keep watch over

440 the ship. You show us the way to the sacred dwelling of Circe." "So they spoke, and started up from the ship and the seashore; nor would Eurylochos be left alone by the hollow ship, but followed along in fear of my fierce reproaches.

450 'Meanwhile, inside the house, Circe with loving care bathed the rest of my companions, and anointed them well with olive oil, and put about them mantles of fleece and tunics. We found them all together, feasting well in the halls. When my men looked each other in the face and knew one another, they burst into an outcry of tears, and the whole house echoed, But she, shining among goddesses, came close and said to us:

455 "Son of Laertes and seed of Zeus, resourceful Odysseus, no longer raise the swell of your lamentation. I too know all the pains you have suffered on the sea where the fish swarm, and all the damage done you on the dry land by hostile men. But come now, eat your food and drink your wine, until you gather back again into your chests that kind of spirit you had in you when first you left the land of your fathers on rugged Ithaka. Now you are all dried out, dispirited from the constant thought of your hard wandering, nor is there any spirit in your festivity, because of so much suffering."

465 'So she spoke, and the proud heart in us was persuaded. There for all our days until a year was completed we sat there feasting on unlimited meat and sweet wine. But when it was the end of a year, and the months wasted away, and the seasons changed, and the long days were accomplished, 470 then my eager companions called me aside and said to me: "'What ails you now? It is time to think about our own country, if truly it is ordained that you shall survive and come back to your strong-founded house and to the land of your fathers.'"

475 'So they spoke, and the proud heart in me was persuaded. 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, they lay down to sleep all about the shadowy chambers, but I, mounting the surpassingly beautiful bed of Circe, clasped her by the knees and entreated her, and the goddess listened to me, and I spoke to her and addressed her in winged words:

480 "O Circe, accomplish now the promise you gave, that you would see me on my way home. The spirit within me is urgent now, as also in the rest of my friends, who are wasting my heart away, lamenting around me, when you are elsewhere."

485 'So I spoke, and she, shining among goddesses, answered:

490 "Son of Laertes and seed of Zeus, resourceful Odysseus, you shall no longer stay in my house when none of you wish to; but first there is another journey you must accomplish and reach the house of Hades and of revered Persephone, there to consult with the soul of Teiresias the Theban, the blind prophet, whose senses stay unshaken within him, to whom alone Persephone has granted intelligence even after death, but the rest of them are flittering shadows."

495 'So she spoke, and the inward heart in me was broken, and I sat down on the bed and cried, nor did the heart in me wish to go on living any longer, nor to look on the sunlight. But when I had gutted myself with rolling about and weeping, then at last I spoke aloud and answered the goddess:

500 "Circe, who will be our guide on that journey? No one has ever yet in a black ship gone all the way to Hades'."

505 'So I spoke, and she, shining among goddesses, answered: "Son of Laertes and seed of Zeus, resourceful Odysseus, let no need for a guide on your ship trouble you; only set up your mast pole and spread the white sails upon it, and sit still, and let the blast of the North Wind carry you. But when you have crossed with your ship the stream of the Ocean, you will

510 find there a thickly wooded shore, and the groves of Persephone, and tall black poplars growing, and fruit-perishing willows; then beach your ship on the shore of the deep-eddying Ocean and yourself go forward into the moldering home of Hades. There Pyriphlegethon and Kokytos, which is an off-break from the water of the Styx, flow into Acheron. There is a rock there, and the junction of two thunderous rivers. 515 There, hero, you must go close in and do as I tell you. Dig a pit of about a cubit in each direction, and pour it full of drink offerings for all the dead, first honey mixed with milk, then a second pouring of sweet wine, and the third, water, and over all then sprinkle white barley, and promise many times to the strengthless heads of the perished dead that, returning to Ithaka, you will slaughter a barren cow, your best, in your palace and pile the pyre with treasures, and to Teiresias apart dedicate an all-black 520 ram, the one conspicuous in all your sheepflocks.

Sailing instructions—the men are told

But when with prayers you have entreated the glorious hordes
of the dead, then sacrifice one ram and one black female,
turning them toward Erebos, but yourself turn away from them
and make for where the river runs, and there the numerous
souls of the perished dead will come and gather about you.
Then encourage your companions and tell them, taking
the sheep that are 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 you yourself, drawing from beside your thigh the sharp sword,
530 dead draw nearer to the blood until you have questioned Teiresias.
Then, leader of the host, the prophet will soon come to you,
and he will tell you the way to go, the stages of your journey,
and tell you how to make your way home on the sea where the fish
540 swarm."

'So she spoke, and Dawn of the golden throne came on us,
and she put clothing upon me, an outer cloak and a tunic,
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;
545 while I walked all about the house and roused my companions,
standing beside each man and speaking to him in kind words:
"no longer lie abed and dreaming away in sweet sleep.

The queenly Circe has shown me the way. So let us go now."

'So I spoke, and the proud heart in them was persuaded.
550 Yet I did not lead away my companions without some
loss. There was one, Elpenor, the youngest man, not terribly
powerful in fighting nor sound in his thoughts. This man,
apart from the rest of his friends, in search of cool air, had lain
down drunkenly to sleep on the roof of Circe's palace,
and when his companions stirred to go he, hearing their tumult
and noise of talking, started suddenly up, and never thought,
when he went down, to go by way of the long ladder,
555 but blundered straight off the edge of the roof, so that his neck bone
was broken out of its sockets, and his soul went down to Hades'.

'Now as my men were on their way I said a word to them:
560 "You think you are on your way back now to your own beloved
country, but Circe has indicated another journey

Death of Elpenor

for us, to the house of Hades and of revered Persephone
there to consult with the soul of Teiresias the Theban."

565 'So I spoke, and the inward heart in them was broken.
They sat down on the ground and lamented and tore their hair out,
but there came no advantage to them for all their sorrowing.

'When we came down to our fast ship and the sand of the seashore,
570 we sat down, sorrowful, and weeping big tears. Circe
meanwhile had gone down herself to the side of the black ship,
and tethered aboard it a ram and one black female, easily
passing by us unseen. Whose eyes can follow the movement
of a god passing from place to place, unless the god wishes?