

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

5 such as this one before us, who is like the gods in his singing;
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.

20 I am Odysseus son of Laertes, known before all men
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.

25 There is Doulichion and Same, wooded Zakynthos,
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.
30 For in truth Kalypso, shining among divinities, kept me
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.
40 'From Ilion the wind took me and drove me ashore at Ismaros
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 Achaeans 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.

P-138

65 '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
until a cry had been made three times for each of my wretched
companions, who died there in the plain, killed by the Kikonians.
70 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.
The ships were swept along yawning down the current; these then,
75 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,
for pain and weariness together eating our hearts out.
80 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,
but as I turned the hook of Maleia, the sea and current
85 and the North Wind beat me off course, and drove me on past Kyrhena
and the North Wind 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
food, and there we set foot on the mainland, and fetched water,
90 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.
I chose two men, and sent a third with them, as a herald.
95 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
was unwilling to take any message back, or to go
100 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
fast, then gave the order to the rest of my eager

P-139

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,
wheat and barley and also the grapevines, which yield for them
110 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
for his own wives and children, and cares nothing about the others.

115 "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.

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.

150 Then after we had beached the ships we took all the sails down,
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 Kikonian's 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."

180 '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,
 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
 great flocks, sheep and goats alike, and there was a fenced yard
 built around it with a high wall of grubbled-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,
 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.
 190 'At that time I told the rest of my eager companions
 to stay where they were beside the ship and guard it. Meanwhile
 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
 from harm. He made his dwelling among the trees of the sacred
 grove of Phoibos Apollo, and he gave me glorious presents.
 200 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
 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
 were added, and the mixing bowl gave off a sweet smell.
 210 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.

220 'Tightly 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
 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
 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;
 230 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.
 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,
 and threw it down inside the cave, making a terrible
 235 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,
 he heaved up and set into position the huge door stop,
 240 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
 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.
 But after he had briskly done all his chores and finished,
 250 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

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:

260 "We are Achaians coming from Troy, beaten off our true course 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.

265 We claim we are of the following of the son of Atreus, Agamemnon, whose fame now is the greatest thing under heaven, such a city was that he sacked and destroyed so many people; but now in turn we come to you and are suppliants

270 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, 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:

275 "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. The Cyclopes do not concern themselves over Zeus of the agis, 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.

285 He drove it against the rocks on the outer coast of your country, 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."

290 "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, 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

295 cried out aloud and held our hands up to Zeus, seeing the cruelty of what he did, but our hearts were helpless.

300 But when the Cyclopes had filled his enormous stomach, feeding on human flesh and drinking down milk unmix'd with water, he lay down to sleep in the cave sprawled out through his sheep. Then I

305 took counsel with myself in my great-hearted spirit 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 gate of the cave the ponderous boulder he had propped there.

310 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. But after he had briskly done all his chores and finished,

315 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.

And so the Cyclopes, 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.

320 The Cyclopes had lying there beside the pen a great bludgeon 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 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.

330 Then I put it well away and hid it under the ordure 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

and spin it in Cyclops' eye when sweet sleep had come over him.

335 The ones drew it whom I myself would have wanted chosen,
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
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
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

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,
then I brought it close up from the fire and my friends about me
stood fast. Some great divinity breathed courage into us.

380 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
a ship timber, and his men from underneath, grasping

385 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
and eyelids, and the fire made the roots of his eye crackle.

390 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 blubbered 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
around him in their own caves along the windy pinnacles.

400 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,

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

"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 withies, 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 spirit clung fast to the glory of this fleece, unrelenting.

435 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 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

440 how my men were fastened under the breasts of his fleecy sheep. Last of all the flock the ram went out of the doorway, loaded with his own fleece, and with me, and my close counsels. Then, feeling him, powerful Polyphemos spoke a word to him:

445 "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 on the tender bloom of the grass, be first at running rivers,

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 Nobody, who I think has not yet got clear of destruction.

455 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 from the burden of all the evils this nattering Nobody gave me."

460 "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 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;

465 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 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.

470 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,

485 but the sea washed up in the splash as the stone went under, the tidal 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 out of the threatening evil, and they leaned on and rowed hard.

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 refit 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,

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,

in someone else's ship, and find troubles in his household."

535 "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,

540 and the stone fell behind the dark-prowed ship by only

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

545 our strong-benched ships were waiting together, and our companions

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 Cyclopes

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 X



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 Achaeans'
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

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.

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,

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."

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.

"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 sat down, and their minds wondered at us and they asked us:

"What brings you back, Odysseus? What evil spirit has vexed you?"

65 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."

70 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.

75 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.

80 Nevertheless we sailed on, night and day, for six days,
and on the seventh came to the sheer citadel of Lamos,
Telepylos of the Laistrygones, where one herdsman, driving
his flocks in hails another, who answers as he drives

his flocks out; and there a man who could do without sleep could earn
him

85 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,
90 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.

95 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.

100 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.

105 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.

110 This was the powerful daughter of the Laistrygonian
Antipates, 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.

115 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 Antipates, 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.

120 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.

125 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.

130 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

135 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.
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.

145 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

150 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,

155 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.

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

160 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 wittes 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,

170 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:

175 "Dear friends, sorry as we are, we shall not yet go down into the house of Hades. Not until our day is appointed.

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 unweiling 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:

190 "Hear my words, my companions, in spite of your hearts' sufferings. 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.

195 For I climbed to a rocky place of observation and looked at 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 Antiphrates 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 Eurylochus had the other. Promptly then we shook the lots in a brazen helmet,

and the lot of great-hearted Eurylochus sprang out. He then went on his way, and with him two-and-twenty companions,

210 weeping, and we whom they left behind were mourning also. 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

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."

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 Pramnian 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 illex and cornel buds, such food as pigs who sleep on the ground always feed on.

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:

"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,

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. Then the whole lot of them vanished away together, nor did one single one come out, though I sat and watched for a long time."

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."

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."

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.

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. 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,

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."

'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.

"Then Hermes went away, passing over the wooded island,

toward tall Olympus, 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:

"Go to your sty now and lie down with your other friends there."

'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.

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."

'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.

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,

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.

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:

380 "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."

So she spoke, but I answered her again and said to her:

385 "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 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.

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 howling 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.

So they came in tears about me, and cried in winged words:

420 "O great Odysseus, we are as happy to see you returning as if we had come back to our own Ithakan country.

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

425 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."

So I spoke, and at once they did as I told them. Only

Eurylochus was trying to hold back all my other

430 companions, and he spoke to them and addressed them in winged words:

"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.

435 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."

So he spoke, and I considered in my mind whether

440 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 the ship. You show us the way to the sacred dwelling of Circe."

445 So they spoke, and started up from the ship and the seashore; nor would Eurylochus 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, spirited from the constant thought of your hard wandering, nor is there any spirit in your festivity, because of so much suffering."
- 460 "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, then my eager companions called me aside and said to me:
- 465 "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."
- 470 "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 flitting 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 glutted 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 will 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. 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 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,
crouch there, and do not let the strengthless heads of the perished
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
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;
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 quicnly Circe has shown me the way. So let us go now."

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

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,
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?