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Ulisse

By Clelia Castaldo

1

Go now, my ladies.

Go to your rooms.

Do not follow the unfortunate
example of Melanthius
who consorts with these unwelcome
guests in Ulysses' house.

And remember always
that only your lady Penelope
is mistress here.

Go now.

Euryclea! Euryclea!

Just now as the sun
descended into the sea,
a veil of clouds surrounded it.

And all of a sudden
a black shadow
shaped like a billowing sail
covered it completely.

What can this mean, Euryclea?

For years now you have
been desperately seeking
for omens of the return
of Ulysses--
in the flight of the birds,
in the blood of sacrificial offerings,
in the shape of clouds.

Do not torment yourself
like this any longer, Penelope.

But how can I do otherwise?

When the daylight starts
to fade slowly in the sky
and the night and the stars
spread their curtain of silence
and my torment and my sorrow
increase 1000 fold,
sometimes it seems

I can bear it no longer.

Do you hear them?

Those bullies,
my so called suitors,
using their strength
to enter here,
taking advantage of a lonely

and frightened woman
and her young son,
forcing her into a promise
of a hideous wedding.
Do you hear them?
Hear now my song
of the siege of Troy.
Is that the storyteller?
Yes, he is telling the seige of Troy.
And so...
as if despairing
that they could ever take it,
the Greeks departed from Troy
and left behind
in memory of their dead
a giant wooden horse.
Rejoicing, the Trojans
poured out of their walls
to claim the horse
as a token of their victory.
But inside the horse
hid a company of Greeks
commanded by Ulysses.
Get ready now.
Triumphantly, the Trojans
dragged the horse
inside the walls of Troy.
Then while the Trojans were feasting,
Ulysses and his Greeks
crept out of the wooden horse.
They opened up the city gates
and let the Grecian army in.
That night, the city of Troy
was sacked and burned.
That night, the Trojans died
by the hundreds.
Great was Ulysses' triumph,
but greater was his pride.
And in his pride
he sacked the temple
of the Trojan god,
the mighty Neptune,
king of all the seas
and smashed his holy statue.

And for this deed, the Trojan
prophetess Cassandra
laid a curse upon Ulysses.
Cursed be, sacrilegious Greeks.
And to you,
three times cursed Ulysses.
May the wrath of Neptune
descend upon you
and may you never
know peace again.
You will live in exile
and die in the depths of the sea.
Enough!
Enough, Phemius.
Penelope.
Penelope.
- The queen.
- The queen.
Penelope, it has been many months
since you've come to see us.
Sing a different song.
It is much too sad for us
to invoke these
ancient memories.
Not for us, Penelope.
No, we do not live on memories.
Be silent.
Have you no respect for her grief?
If it were at least grief
for one who is really dead,
it might soon come to an end
as it should.
Then you would be able
to choose one of us.
No one knows the fate
of Ulysses.
No one speak of him as dead
or have not seen his body
on a funeral pyre.
You see, Penelope,
even the storyteller
fantasies trouble you.
Inside you there is
still much doubt.

But as for us we are quite certain.

Where is Ulysses? Huh?

In what land

is he held prisoner?

You promised us that you'd
choose one of us for a husband
as soon you finish weaving
your tapestry.

But you've been working
too long on this tapestry
which you started years ago
and which never ends.

That's right.

It's the memory of Ulysses
which prevents me finishing it.

It's my sorrow and tears,
they cloud my eyes.

And so my hands
work slower.

If you would only favor
one of us with your smile.

There is not one among you
to compare with my father.

Are we not men too?

Have we not also
strength and courage
and noble hearts?

You have certainly one thing:
insatiable appetites.

You have taken advantage
of the weakness

of a woman

and her young son

to invade the house

of Ulysses

and squander his wealth

and his flocks.

You have even dared

to force from the queen

her promise to

marry one of you.

By what right

do you judge us, old one?

He speaks the truth.

You have invaded my house.
You have destroyed
my peace here.
You have extracted from me
a promise I did not--
No, it is more than a promise.
It is the destiny of Ithaca which
has been too long without a king.
He is right.
Not one of you
is worthy of the crown.
And so we continue
to have a king made of mist,
a shadow.
The people too
are growing weary, Penelope.
The feelings of my people
are no concern of yours.
You are all strangers
on this island.
I am still the queen here!
And the people of Ithaca
love their queen,
sympathize with her sorrow.
Respect her memories.
You are too selfish with your
beauty, Penelope.
You are much too young
to sleep only with your memories.
I say Ulysses lives
and he will return.
And when he does,
you will all regret having
dared to offend me.
Come, drink, Phemius. Clear
your voice and start your songs again.
I want to hear about
Cassandra once more
and all those wonderful curses.
Leucanthus, Melanthius
and the rest of you, get out!
You bring shame
upon this house.
Get back to your rooms

and stay there.

I'm going to bring an end
to this once and for all.

What makes you think
you can give orders?

- I'm the son of Ulysses.

- You're nothing but a young fool.

All I need is 10 armed men
to drive all of you from this house.

Come now. Come, little brave one,
and fight against half a man.

Jump again. my boy!

Jump, Telemachus, jump.

Go to your mother,

son of Ulysses.

Run, little boy.

Run home.

Run, Telemachus.

Run away.

One day your suitors will discover
that this tapestry never ends
only because you unravel at night
the weaving you do in the daytime.

What else can I do?

I was forced to promise
I would marry one of them.

We should thank the gods
that they agreed
to wait until the tapestry
is finished.

Let us hope they never
discover my secret.

- Mother.

- What is it, Telemachus?

What has happened?

- I must leave, Mother.

- Where do you want to go?

Away from here.

I can stand it no longer--
their insults and cruelties.

I must go to look for my father.

You wish to leave me also?

We must end this doubt, Mother.

We must be certain.

I shall go see the friends of Ulysses--
King Nestor of Pylos
and Menelaus in Sparta.
Do not leave me alone
with these people, Telemachus.
Do you believe
my father is alive?
Yes, Telemachus.
Tell me the truth, Mother.
You do not, do you?
You must not leave me.
Stay with me, my son.
Do not leave me.
If you go, what have I left?
Only your presence
and your voice
ever since you were a child
have filled my solitude.
In your face and in your eyes,
I have seen all the while
the face and eyes of Ulysses.
And I've found in you
the strength
which sometimes
seemed to abandon me.
Stay here with me,
Telemachus,
and we will fight together.
Don't leave me.
You must fight, Mother.
You must believe.
What does it matter
what I believe?
Ulysses is far off.
This alone we know to be true.
And that is why this tapestry
increases each day
and is undone each night.
And that is how I keep deceiving
these suitors who wait for me
while I wait for Ulysses.
Ulysses.
Nausicaa.
Nausicaa,

what are you doing?
Phaedra,
there's a dead man here.
- Where?
- Behind this rock.
Be careful, Nausicaa.
Do not touch him.
He's dead.
- He is alive.
- That's worse.
Where am I?
In the kingdom of Alcinous.
I am his daughter.
What part of the world is this?
The island of the Phaeacia.
Surely you know it.
It is very close to Ithaca.
Ithaca?
You've never heard
of Ithaca?
Who are you?
What is your name?
I don't know.
There's no name in my head.
You don't even know
the name of your country?
I remember nothing.
Hurry, girls. Hurry, please.
Send for Calops.
We must take him
to the palace at once.
Take care, Nausicaa.
He might be a god.
Sometimes the gods
take human form.
I hope he is not.
I want him to be a man.
As you know, Alcinous, I'm skilled
at mixing herbs and preparing potions,
but my remedies cannot help
this man found on the beach.
This stranger has no memory
of his past.
I have cured his body,

but his mind...
I am not a god.
But did you bleed him?
Aesculapius says
that bleeding is not a cure.
It is only a way of proving
that you are a physician
at the expense of your patient.
How could a man lose
all recollection of his past?
There are two alternatives.
Either the gods
have granted him oblivion,
or he wishes
to escape the memory
of some great sin
or misdeed of his past.
I would agree with the second
possibility.
Father! Father.
Father, he is here.
May your kingdom grow in power
and its king in wisdom.
My physicians tell me that your memory
has left you completely.
The past is gone.
Yet, you know
how to greet a king.
Your bearing, your noble manner
would seem to suggest
that you've stood
before other kings besides me.
Is there nothing
you can remember?
I remember nothing.
Nothing.
It is strange.
Whoever you are,
you shall be our honored guest.
Give the necessary orders
for the feasts,
for the dances
and for the games.
Bravo.

Krakos is the winner.
Who will fight with Krakos?
Go. You can beat him.
Who me fight that killer?
Oh no.
Who will fight with Krakos?
Who will
fight with Krakos?
Don't go away, my friend.
But he should not
be allowed to fight.
Why not? A good strong crack on
the head might be most healing.
Okay, so he seems to know a few tricks.
He might once have been a wrestler.
Diomedes believes
he was a soldier.
- It's not so easy, eh?
- I wouldn't hire you as a nursemaid.
Excuse me.
Father, he won.
He won!
Yes, Nausicaa, he won.
But why do you stare at me?
Because
I see the woman
taking the place
of my little child.
A hero, heh? Have you two
ever met a real hero?
Agamemnon, Ajax, Ulysses--
those were heroes.
Ulysses had a hand
as big as a barrel.
With my own eyes I've seen him
break the back of a bull with one blow.
Yes, this man is no weakling,
but he is not
to be compared with heroes.
He is like a sparrow against
the wings of an eagle.
This is the gift which King Alcinous
sends you for your victory.
My thanks to the king.

And this is my gift.
It is a rare ointment.
- It's fragrant, isn't it?
- Like springtime.
It is made from a secret formula.
Magic.
It was given to me by a woman
who lives in the hills.
And she told me that in one night
it will heal any wound.
- And will also restore one's youth.
- Youth?
Give me some.
I can use a few bottles.
Youth.
This is not a boy's arm.
You are the youngest man
in all Phaeacia.
For me, you were born
only a few days ago on the sands
when you opened your eyes
and looked at me.
And I will call you Stenos
the strong one.
And I'll make you most welcome.
What's wrong?
What is it?
I don't know.
A thought came to me.
A name, a voice.
Was it my name?
Was it Nausicaa?
Nausicaa?
Perhaps it was.
Leodes, 45 paces.
Eurymachus, 43.
The game is yours,
Eurymachus.
Does any of you
still doubt my victory?
We'll see about that
on Penelope's wedding day.
You won't have long
to wait, my friend,

now that we know
the trick of the tapestry.
You can marry Melanthius
for telling us
and I will marry Penelope.

Throw!

What are your stakes?

- The dowry of Penelope.
- Penelope's dowry?
- Is she gonna marry one of you?
- Of course.

Look here,

I've won.

I still have the stables
and half the horses.

The gods may still be with me.

I've won again.

Penelope, I've gambled away
your entire dowry.

If you choose me,
you may be quite sure
it is only for love
that I come to you.

Dirty spy!

You have revealed
the secret of the tapestry.

You spy!

You filthy spy!

Stop it.

Now go.

You will regret your treachery,
Madame Ghost.

What shall we do

now that our secret is discovered?

There's nothing we can do.

Your mother must marry one
of her suitors before they kill us all.

- Is it death that you fear so much?
- I am an old man.

I am only concerned with your safety
and that of Ithaca.

Enough, Mentor, enough

His rage is just,

even though it is useless.

Another suitor.

They're like flies around honey.

- Do you know him?

- I cannot see him well.

He's a good driver.

He handles his horses well.

- Antinous of Cephalonia.

- Son of Eupeithes?

- Mm-hmm.

- Loud mouth braggart.

There is no room for him.

We're already too many for one bed.

Stable my horses and prepare a bed.

- Why have you come here, Antinous?

- To see Penelope.

Not one of us up till now
has presumed to be so bold,

even to consider

entering her chambers.

Well, I'm glad to hear it.

I shall be the first.

- Here, wait.

- Stand aside.

Who are you?

Answer me.

I am Telemachus,

son of Ulysses.

Be calm, Telemachus.

I shall be your friend.

Greetings, Penelope.

Truly your beauty is beyond
a poet's dream.

Who are you?

I am Antinous of the island
of Cephalonia.

I know of your trick
with the tapestry, Penelope.

What is it you want
in my house?

You.

But I have not come to waste your
fortune like the others have done,
or to live under your roof
like a parasite.

I have not crossed the sea merely
to gaze into your eyes, Penelope.
I have come to fulfill
your destiny.
How dare you speak like that?
Because I of all the others
understand your loneliness.
Of how you were widowed
almost before you were a wife.
The ghost of Ulysses has haunted
this house long enough.
It needs a living man to rule it,
to drive this pack of suitors out...
to give you back your life,
Penelope.
Please, no more.
You may remain as a guest,
if that is what you wish.
I did not come to find a roof.
The sky is roof enough for me.
I have come to hear you
appoint the day
that will end
these long hours of waiting.
I have come to end
your loneliness, Penelope.
Allow me one more day
to think it over.
What difference
will one day make?
Decide now, Penelope.
Now.
When the moon is new,
on the day of the games of Apollo,
then I will make my choice.
Telemachus.
Telemachus!
Follow him, Euryclea.
Bring him back.
Now please leave.
Please go!
Your long wait
is over, Penelope.
Leave me, I tell you.

Leave me!

- Listen, Telemachus.

- I have listened enough.

Did you not hear
the words of that man?

Did you not hear my mother
fix the very day for the nuptials?

- My mother too has betrayed Ulysses.

- You must not speak like this.

We must not give up so easily.

We have to do something, Euryclea.

But how? We are only
an old woman and a young boy.

We'll find someone
who will follow us,
someone who still believes
in Ulysses.

But who? More women, more young boys
like and you and me?

The bow of Ulysses.

The bow only he could bend.

How old was my father the
first time he bent this bow?

You appear to be skilled
at this work.

It is strange
how a man's hands
can remember things that his mind
has forgotten.

Will you use it in today's games?

I don't know.

Another victory would make
a welcome gift for your bride.

When she was four years old,
Nausicaa announced to her father
that she would marry
only a warrior.

- A warrior.

- May well be.

You could give your bride
no greater wedding gift
than to remember your name
and your deeds.

My name.

My deeds.

Day and night I keep searching
for them in the dark.

But things like this
cannot be cured to quickly.

- Leave me, Diomedes.

- As you wish.

As you wish.

Even solitude, as Aesculapius tells us,
can be an excellent medicine.

An excellent medicine.

Do you think that he will
like this dress, mother?
or do you think its too good...

Put your mind at ease.

It is your youth and
beauty he loves.

Not the things we add to them.

What a beautiful day
for my wedding.

I hope your happiness
will last as long as ours.

But how could it be otherwise?

Young women,
as a rule,
do not know the man

they're going to marry.

But it is rare that a girl marries a man
who doesn't know himself.

But what more
should I know about him?

I know that Stenos
is handsome and kind.

What else matters?

Oh dear,

I look so ugly today.

Suppose he doesn't like me this way.

And suppose as we stand
at the altar

I should see a shadow
of a doubt in his eyes.

I couldn't bear such a thing.

I want him to see me.

Nausicaa, you cannot.

You must not see him now.
Father, it's such an old
and stupid custom,
keeping lovers apart from each other
on their wedding day.
And what is the use of having
a king for a father
if you cannot have him
change a custom only this one time
for your daughter?
Look, I won't go alone.
Attile, come. Come along with me.
Very well, go along.
Accompany her.
Hurry!
Stenos!
Stenos?
Where is he?
Strike sail!
Get the oars!
What are you doing
with that fire?
We are making a sacrifice
to Neptune.
He is the god who protected the Trojans.
He helped them build their city.
Where was he when we pulled it apart
stone by stone?
When you have offended a god
you must then offer sacrifice.
What are you a pagan priest
or a sailor?
Get back to your post!
Come on, all of you.
Come on.
Get down with that sail.
Keep her heading into the wind.
The rudder has broken.
Look, the mast is cracking.
Throw the cargo overboard!
The gold? Are you mad?
What can we do?
Everything- the gold, the silver,
the statues-- everything.

We fought for years to gain
the wealth of Troy.
It'll only take minutes for that wealth
to drag us to the bottom of the sea!
Throw the cargo overboard.
Hurry!
Overboard!
We should have made a sacrifice
to Neptune.
There is no Neptune out there.
There's nothing but wind,
water and death.
Get to your posts
and help sail the ship.
Come on,
overboard with this!
Neptune.
Take care.
Watch the sail!
Happy hunting. Ulysses.
We'll be back with
food and water.
Prepare the fires
for a sacrifice to Athena.
Shh. Quiet.
Run! Run!
Hunger must be blinding you.
No use running after it.
You'll only miss it again.
Ho, come quickly.
- It's enormous.
- The imprint of a foot.
Another.
It's the footprint of a god.
Probably just a man with big feet.
Let us not stay here.
I think we should return to the boat.
Fear is making you forget
your empty stomach.
We leave after we've found food
for ourselves and our men. Come.
Grapes.
Look. Look at these grapes.
There's plenty of them.

Sheep!

Come on!

Hurry!

Where are the sheep?

Must be the cave of a giant.

Look at the size of this basket.

Where are we?

- The sheep!

- There they are.

Come on.

Look at this cheese!

Mmm, excellent.

There's milk here too.

Come with me.

What sort of place is this?

This one is ready.

- Hurry with that sheep.

- All right.

I do not like this place, Ulysses.

Remember those footprints?

Stop worrying.

Look at the size

of that cheese.

Get the fire started.

Drop it here.

Let us make some wine.

It's better than milk.

Good.

What's a feast without wine?

Let us go with all the food

we can carry.

I tell you I'm afraid.

We must leave here as soon as possible.

- You're forgetting your stomach again.

- But listen--

Eat.

It's almost done.

- Turn it over.

- I can hardly wait.

Come on, turn it.

Careful with those cheeses.

There are hungry men waiting for them.

Hurry!

Hurry!

Eurylochus,
I know you're in a hurry,
but please don't drop anything
so precious as wine.
Quick, men,
let's leave this place.
Watch out!
Stand where you are.
Who are you?
You do not answer.
You are thieves.
We are not thieves.
We are Greeks
returning home from Troy.
Oh, Greeks.
You are welcome.
I ask you to remember
the laws of hospitality.
The law of Zeus the avenger.
What do I care about Zeus?
I'm Polyphemus.
I'm son of Neptune.
- The son of Neptune!
- Silence!
No! No!
These Greeks are tough.
What stringy meat.
No! Stop, no!
No. Where are you going?
Here is something that will
make even a Greek palatable.
- What is it?
- Wine.
Wine?
It looks like blood.
It is.
The blood of the earth.
Why do you offer it to me?
If it pleases you.
Perhaps you will remember the laws
of hospitality let us go.
Let me taste it.
It's good.
Very good.

How do you make this wine?

- Grapes.

- Grapes?

Oh, those little berries
that grow in the sun.

Give me more of this wine of yours.

I like it.

- There's no more.

- No more? I want more.

We'll go out. We'll gather grapes,
we'll make more.

Polites, Piodes,
come out.

We'll fill every skin and bucket
in the place with wine.

You think I would let you
go get more grapes?

I'll get more grapes.

You stay here.

You stay here.

I'll be back soon.

- He's gone.

- Quickly!

What are you doing, you fools?

100 men couldn't move that rock.

Come back.

- What can we do?

- We're all trapped here.

- He will kill us all.

- I told you we stayed here too long.

We'll never get out now.

What are you trying to do?

Never mind.

Let's get this club over there.

Hurry, before he comes back.

All right, up.

Lean it up against the wall.

Careful.

Careful.

Polites, help me sharpen it.

Give me an ax.

What do you want to do?

I'm gonna try

to get us out of here.

Shall We kill him?
No. If we kill him, how can we get him
to move that stone?
I've got a better idea.
Quick, get some of those embers
and build a fire back there.
Craiton, give him a hand.
He's coming.
Hurry, get that down.
The rest of you, come on, hide it.
Here are the grapes.
Make me some more wine.
What is it?
Are you afraid of me?
All right, I'll go.
I won't bother you.
Well, what are we waiting for?
Let's make him some wine.
You hear?
Let's make him wine.
- Don't be afraid.
- More. More wine!
Get another one.
Wine for Polyphemus,
son of Neptune.
I want more wine.
Give me more.
More wine for the son of Neptune.
Good.
More more more.
- More wine.
- And more wine.
Wine for Polyphemus,
son of Neptune!
We make more wine.
We make more wine, hey.
More wine!
More wine for Polyphemus.
Well, Greek,
you have taught me what wine is.
Polyphemus shall reward you.
In gratitude,
I shall eat you last of all.
How do you prefer me, master?

Roasted, boiled, spiced?
Raw?
Soaked in this...
river of fire
that burns my insides.
In his eye.
The eye.
What have you done to me?
I am blind!
I am blind!
They have blinded me!
Where are you, cowards?
I will kill you.
Neptune, help me.
Help me kill the accursed Greeks.
May the gods destroy you!
Hey hey, here I am.
Over here.
Here, behind this rock.
Behind the rock, are you?
I'll get you.
No, over here, stupid.
- Accursed Greek, where are you?
- Here!
Where are you?
Come on, get those sheep out.
Quick.
Hurry.
Come on, let's hurry.
Goodbye, Polyphemus,
you drunken son of Neptune.
Enjoy your wine
and remember the Greeks
and the dance
they danced in your cave.
Quiet.
He'll know where we are.
Silence, sniveler.
Let me boast.
Who's master now,
Neptune or Ulysses?
The god with his trident
or the man with his grapes?
Roar on, you sightless drunkard,

roar on!
Go ahead, fill the sea
with blind stones.
Throw another
and another!
And when your father asks
who took your eye,
tell him it was Ulysses!
Ulysses, destroyer of cities,
sacker of Troy,
son of Laertes
and king of Ithaca.
To your oars, men.
Up with the sail.
Up with the sail!
Watch that rudder.
Take some of this wine
to those men up there.
- Here, eat this.
- Hurry, they're thirsty.
All right, I'm going.
Here, have this.
Pass this around.
There's no wind,
but we have a swift current.
Makes you happy, doesn't it?
Yes.
Doesn't it please you too?
I don't know.
There's a part of me
that loves the familiar,
the end of the journey, the harbor,
the cooking fires at home.
There's always the other part.
That part loves the voyage--
the open sea, storms,
strange shapes
of uncharted islands,
demons, giants.
Yes, Eurylochus,
there's part of me that's always
homesick for the unknown.
Yes, I understand.
And that is why I follow you--

even though I often
tremble with fear.
I often tremble too.
There's a strange odor
in the air tonight.
Yes, that's true.
A dry, dusty fragrance,
like a garden of dead flowers.
Why is it so quiet?
Can't even hear
the noise of the oars.
Look there!
- The rocks of the Sirens!
- Sirens?
No man who hears their song
can escape.
They will draw us
to the rocks and destroy us.
- We must flee, Ulysses, now
- Let us go, Ulysses.
It may be too late.
Quick, get some wax and stop up
the ears of all the men.
Tell them not to look to the right
nor to the left but to row.
Row for their lives.
It's the only thing
that will save them. Hurry!
- The Sirens!
- Do not be afraid.
Keep your heads down and row.
Put this in your ears and row!
- Give me some wax.
- Polites!
- Polites.
- What is it?
- Tie me to the mast.
- What's that?
Whatever my mouth speaks, whatever
orders I may give, do not obey them.
- What are you going to do?
- I want to hear their song.
- You're mad?
- Tie me to the mast.

All right then,
if that's what you wish.
As tight as you can.
Put the wax in your ears and row.
Put this in your ears.
- Give me some.
- Give me some.
Tighter.
And don't untie me.
Keep your eyes down.
Get your head down and row.
- What are you doing to him?
- He ordered me to do it.
- But why?
- I want to hear their song.
You are mad, Ulysses.
Put this in your ears quick.
Put this in your ears.
Stop up your own ears.
Hurry, before it's too late.
Give me some wax too.
Ulysses.
Ulysses.
It is I, Penelope.
Penelope?
Penelope the faithful.
Your young bride
when you sailed to Troy.
Your journey has ended.
You are back in Ithaca.
Ithaca.
Stop your rowing, men.
I have waited for you
1000 nights.
Are you not tired
of wandering?
Of never resting beside me
in your bed?
You are home, Ulysses.
Home in Ithaca at last.
Stop rowing, I say.
We're home in Ithaca.
Ship your oars.
Father, I'm your son

Telemachus.

Telemachus?

I am your son Telemachus,
who you left an infant
in his nurse's arms.

I am nearly a man now
and I do not know
the face of my father.

Telemachus.

Come ashore to your son,
your home,
your kingdom,
your awaiting wife.

Untie me!

Father.

Father, do not leave me!

Untie me!

I am waiting, Ulysses.

Untie me, you monsters!

Would you tear me
from my wife and my son?

Don't leave me!

Don't leave me!

The danger has passed.

Men, the danger has passed

Remove the wax.

Ulysses.

What did you hear?

The gods are playful
and without pity, Eurylochus.

The tricks they play
are merciless.

We're not making any headway.

Swing that rudder a little.

Row. Row.

There is something very strange.

The wind is blowing
but the sails do not fill.

The ship is out of control.

- It must be the current.

- There is no current.

We are rowing towards the open sea,
but that island keeps drawing us back.

I've never seen anything like this.

I can do nothing to control the ship.

- Down sail.

- Eh?

- We're going to land.

- Land?

I beg you, Ulysses, we don't know
what we'll find behind those rocks.

No, but it'll be interesting
to find out.

Down sail!

Eurylochus!

Eurylochus!

They've gone, Ulysses. They are
waiting for you at my house.

- Who are you?

- Circe.

Circe the witch.

That's such an ugly word.

Why not goddess?

Was it you who

pulled the ship off course?

I was lonely.

- What do you want with me?

- To help you.

To load your ship with riches
of all kinds.

To give you a favorable wind
to lead you home.

Why should you want

to do that for me?

It has been many years now
that men have been landing on my island.

Men famous for their bravery
and for their heroic deeds.

And each time

I was left more lonely than before.

But ever since the winds first
brought your name to me

and Echo repeated your deeds,

I have been waiting

for your ship, Ulysses.

And for the first time,

Echo and the winds have not lied.

What is it?

Strange.
Same proud face.
Same dark eyes
as Penelope.
It's strange.
Why is it strange?
Isn't the difference
between one woman
and another only
in the mind of a man?
No, the difference is
Penelope would never let
a stranger take her in his arms.
Not even a stranger
like Ulysses?
Hey!
Hey!
Where is your mistress?
Why don't you answer
when I speak to you? Where is Circe?
Oh, deaf and dumb.
Ideal for servants in a place like this.
Were you looking for me,
Ulysses?
I can't see you very well.
Why this mm light?
To protect your sleep.
I hate darkness.
You know, at sea I always
sleep on deck so that I--
- So that I can wake up with the sun.
- Leave us now.
The sun is high.
You have slept a long time.
It's been many years
since I've slept on so soft a bed.
Where are my men?
They are safe, never fear.
- I'd like to see them.
-You will.
There are so many things
you still have to see on this island.
I haven't time.
I must be on my way

Polites, Piodes,
Eurylochus.
Eurylochus.
What are these pigs doing here?
Get out. Get out.
Circe, get them out of here.
Get away. Get away.
Why don't you answer me?
Where are my men?
You have just been kicking them.
You witch!
While I slept you turned
a band of heroes into swine.
It was much easier to do
than you think.
You would like to do
the same to me, wouldn't you?
But you wouldn't find it
so easy.
I know you hate men.
Perhaps you even hate me.
Give me back my men.
Don't you understand
why I had to do it,
why I had to take
your men away from you?
So that you will be alone,
just as I am alone.
Give me back my men, goddess,
demon, witch- or whatever you are.
It is useless having you
if you remain as my enemy.
Return now to the form
of humans.
- Ulysses.
- Ulysses.
Where have you been, Ulysses?
How do you feel?
Are you all right?
But of course we're all right.
We've been eating.
We've slept too. But I have a pain here
as though I'd been kicked.
All right, men, get back on board.

We leave in an hour.

Yes, Ulysses is very anxious
to depart.

I will see that you get provisions
and fresh water.

- Thank you.

- Get everything ready for sailing.

We haven't much time.

Hurry. Hurry.

Come. Come.

Goodbye, Circe.

I am grateful to you for making my
island less lonely if only for one day.

- Well, I must go.

- I know.

So I say goodbye.

We must get underway
before the wind drops.

The wind has
not even come up yet.

On this island it is always calm
until sundown.

Before sunset, eh?

Well, there's no sense in putting
out to sea before the wind rises.

Breaking men's backs
at the oars.

They're fine brave fellas.

I owe them a little consideration.

They will be grateful to you.

Ulysses.

Welcome, friends.

It's been a long time.

Did you get the flagons
of wine I sent you?

We are weary of eating and drinking
and living aimlessly on this island.

We have homes and families
waiting for us in Ithaca.

So have I, Eurylochus.

So have I.

Well, as soon as we've given
the ship a new coat of pitch

- we'll set sail.

- We should sail now.
We have lost too much time already.
We've put up a new sail
and the ship is filled with provisions.
We want to leave at once.
Have you forgotten, Eurylochus?
I am your captain.
No.
But come with us now.
Now? So soon?
You say so soon
after six months?
Six months?
Has it been that long?
Seems like a single summer's evening.
Well, Ulysses,
have you made up your mind?
Yes yes, of course.
Beautiful, isn't it?
A present from Circe.
I hope you like it.
It becomes you very well.
It does, doesn't it?
Look, Eurylochus.
We ought to introduce
this kind of weaving in Ithaca, eh?
We are leaving without you.
One moment.
You must not go.
Neptune has sworn to sink
the ship of Ulysses.
This night there will be
a terrible tempest.
Don't you realize she has
never yet told you the truth?
She is treacherous.
If you listen to her,
we will never leave here.
Stop fretting, Eurylochus,
and tell the men
to start working.
We'll set sail soon enough.
May the gods give you
the strength you will need

to escape the spell
which has blinded you.
Good bye.
They won't sail without me.
They're good men, but they're completely
lost without me to lead them.
They won't sail.
Circe!
Circe!
Where are my men?
The ship is gone.
Where are they?
Look there.
They're drowning.
They are already dead...
because they refused
to listen to me.
They were my men.
And I deserted them.
It was they who deserted you.
I had promised
to lead them home.
Eurylochus, Polites, Craiton.
Do not feel too sorry for them.
They were not worth much.
They were only little men.
That's why I loved them.
As long as you live,
they will never be completely dead.
Come now.
Come with me.
Ulysses.
What are you doing, Ulysses?
Do you really think
you can leave me?
I left you a long time ago.
The day my men died
in a storm.
And do you think your journey
will last any longer than theirs?
You will not hold me here.
Listen to me.
I shall give you something that will
make you forget all your petty dreams--

your miserable kingdom,
your wife who grows old.
Remain
and this very night
Olympus shall
welcome a new god--
Ulysses.
Immortal?
This is my gift.
The greatest gift
that had ever been offered to a man.
No, there are greater gifts--
to be born and to die
and in between to live like a man.
To live like a man,
filled with petty fears?
Only the fearful
can know the value of courage.
And old age?
That poor flesh will rot one day.
And at the end,
nothing but death.
This is the terrible
heritage of man.
I accept that inheritance.
I no longer see myself
falling in battle
or in the fury of a storm.
It will take much less.
A puff of cool air,
a sudden chill one night.
But even so, this--
this vulnerable mass of fears
has dared to battle with a god
and has not yet been defeated.
If it should be that one day
men shall speak of me,
I hope they say with pride
that I was one of them.
Their pride will not serve to warm you
in the kingdom of darkness.
I offer you centuries of light.
I do not think
it will sadden me too much

to close my eyes
when the time comes.
Then let the dead
tell you how very happy they are.
Agamemnon, Ajax,
Achilles--
all my dead comrades.
Achilles,
still sour faced
and brooding.
What other face would you expect
a dead man to wear?
Can death
have any sting for you?
Achilles must surely be honored
as a mighty prince among the dead.
Spare me these consolations,
Ulysses.
I would prefer to be a slave
among wandering barbarians
rather than the king
of all the dead.
My life was
short and glorious,
but my death is long
and oppressive.
Ajax...
I grieve for having
helped kill you.
What do the living
know about grief?
Only we who are dead
know what it means.
Come, Ulysses,
Olympus awaits you.
Go with Circe to Olympus.
The world has loved me.
All the world
loved Agamemnon,
except the woman
whom he loved.
When I returned to my home,
she embraced me.
And when I closed my eyes

in a brief moment of pleasure,
her waiting lover plunged a knife
deep into my throat.

Stay with Circe, Ulysses.

Come.

Eurylochus.

Do you not know me?

I should have destroyed
our ship that night,
instead of leaving
without you.

- You suffered?

- No.

But I'm suffering now.

Come, Ulysses.

Ulysses.

- Mother!

- Go away you! I have not called you.

Mother.

You are dead.

- I died waiting for you.

- Go away, I tell you!

You have been away too long,
my son.

- I know.

- Return to Ithaca.

Penelope is still waiting for you.

Treachery and deceit
menace your home.

I will, Mother.

I will.

Mother. Mother!

Headstrong mortal,
proud of that short dream
which you calla lifetime,
enamored of your weaknesses
and your miserable sins,
and fascinated by death.

Against such obstinacy,
even the gods have no power.

Go then, if that is your choice.

The sea is awaiting.

- There he is!

- Where?

Behind the rocks.
Alcinous, king of Phaeacia,
hear me out.
All that I am is back in my mind--
my name, my place, my origin.
I am Ulysses, son of Laertes,
king of Ithaca,
conqueror of Troy.
There across the wide
and dark sea is my home,
the house I built,
my son.
My wife.
I have been making my way
to them these many years
but the anger of the gods.
pursued me.
Many disasters smote me.
Sirens and tempests beset me.
I was bewitched
and my men were drowned.
But I am here,
undestroyed,
looking out across the sea
at my homeland.
I beg, O brother,
King Alcinous,
a ship to bring me
back to Ithaca.
Ulysses, king of Ithaca
and our neighbor,
we will give you a ship.
And we hope it will carry you safely
and happily back to your kingdom.
Nausicaa.
I take your tears with me.
In a world of anger and hate...
they're part of the love I found.
Apollo, protector of Ithica
bless tomorrow's games
and accept the sacrifice.
We have honored the god.
Apollo will be favorable tomorrow.
If I win the games,

I shall sleep in the bed of Ulysses.
And to thank the god
for this magnificent victory
I shall cut the throat
of every goat on the island.
You were born to be a leader,
Eurymachus.
And for this you are prepared to risk
everything on one day.
I do not envy the winner.
Evidently you do not think it worth much
to become king of Ithaca.
The new king of Ithaca
should learn to sleep lightly.
What does that mean?
There will be daggers
behind every column,
poison in every goblet,
a plot in every smile.
Come now, Ulysses is
at the bottom of the sea
or maybe on some beach
with his bones rotting in the sun,
food for the hawks by now.
The thought of Ulysses
doesn't trouble me.
To whom do you refer then?
Telemachus.
Telemachus is only a boy.
Have you seen the look
in his eyes?
What do you mean?
As soon as the wedding is over,
there should be more
than goats sacrificed.
Don't you agree?
Penelope.
Forgive this intrusion.
I have so much to say to you.
What can we have
to say to each other?
I know that you are sad
and disturbed, afraid.
But I want to tell you that you--

you need have no fear.
That I shall bring you happiness.
You?
Do you doubt
that I shall win tomorrow?
That will depend on your skill.
But if you win, I shall not complain
of having to choose a man like you.
Now at last you speak
like a woman who's truly alive,
the woman you were meant to be.
The woman I love.
If you really love me, Antinous,
I ask you one favor.
One promise.
Anything you wish.
You have only to ask.
Save my son's life.
Telemachus?
He must not die.
I promise you
not a soul shall touch him.
I shall treat him
as if he were my own son.
If only I could believe you.
You must believe...
as you must believe
that I love you.
I entrust him to you, Antinous.
Penelope, there is a beggar here
from the island of the Phaeacia.
He wishes to talk to you
about Ulysses.
Too many people in these past years
have come to this house
saying always the same thing,
hoping for hospitality.
But he says he was a companion
of Ulysses in the war.
If you really knew my husband,
tell me about him.
Why don't you speak?
Who are you?
I'm a friend of Ulysses.

We were comrades
before the walls of Troy.
Many a night
as we waited between battles
our thoughts full of sadness
he spoke of you.
And what did he say?
"Dark, she is,
and beautiful in her youth,"
he said.
"And full of soft woman's laughter.
And such a way she has
of brushing her hair absently
when she works
at her spinning wheel
or watches
her sleeping child."
Sometimes he spoke of this
infant son Telemachus
who sucked his thumb
and smiled and slept
on the day the swift ships
sailed to Troy.
Sometimes he spoke
of the day of his farewell,
how he held you
in his arms
on the beach
by the waiting ships.
And you whispered,
"I shall be here
when you return."
Will you return?
Very often,
with falling stars
above our heads
and the doomed walls
of Troy across the plain
and all we loved
far away across the sea...
he spoke of this house...
and of this very room
where you'd be waiting for him.
For too many years

I have waited.
At first there was only
news of the war,
and the war went on
for months.
Slowly the months
became years.
And I spent the years
asking myself,
"Where is he now?
Is he with his soldiers?
Maybe there are other
women there too,
beautiful women full of life.
Maybe he has forgotten me."
But Penelope remains faithful.
It is so easy for Penelope
to remain faithful.
And then one fine day comes the news
that the war is finished,
everyone is happy.
All the others returned
to their homes.
The kings and the soldiers.
But he? No.
He alone among them all
Then once again
begins the waiting.
Again the months,
again the years.
And years are made
of thousands of hours,
of days, of nights.
The nights.
And you lie there alone
in your empty bed
and wait.
You are right.
It's possible for a man
to come back too late.
Wait, do not go yet.
I spoke to you
with bitterness just now
because tomorrow

I must choose a new husband.
Against my will
I am here tied to a promise,
and I know that no one
can free me.
Perhaps you could free yourself.
I? How do you mean?
Remember the contest when
you and Ulysses were married?
Do you remember how
that arrow from his bow
whistled through 12 axes
to reach the target?
Yes, and I was the prize.
The was heavy, that bow,
impossible to bend.
Only Ulysses could bend it
with the help of the goddess Athena.
I thank you, stranger.
Go to the kitchen.
They will make you welcome there.
Is there something else
you have need of?
My need was answered
when I saw your face
and spoke to you.
You are welcome in my house.
Thank you, Penelope.
Argos!
You recognized me.
Quiet, Argos.
Quiet.
Yes, old dog,
we both have changed, huh?
Do you remember how we hunted
the hills from dawn till dusk?
You were always
the first in the pack.
Quick on the trail,
sharp to the kill.
Now you're almost too weak
to hold up your head,
but you recognized me,
didn't you?

Yes, at least that's something
of a homecoming.

He recognized you.

- Who are you?

- Telemachus.

My son.

Father.

Father.

- Father!

- Shh, quiet.

No one must know I'm here.

I cannot wait to tell.

I'll tell them all. I'll make them
quake with fear and tremble.

Tell no one.

Not until we're ready.

Why these strange clothes, Father?

Why do you come dressed like a beggar
into your own house?

When I set foot here,
the gods advised me to do this.

And gave me other
counsel besides.

It is Mother.

She is desperate.

- We'll tell her you've come back.

- No.

Not even she must know yet.

Not until tomorrow.

Then will I know
if she still loves Ulysses
in the way she did when I left
the port of Ithaca.

- Leucanthus, bring some more wine.

- In a moment.

What do you want?

How did you get in here?

As any beggar would,
by the servants' gate.

Well, you'd better go before I set
the dogs on you. Go on, get out.

Let me ask alms
of these noblemen here.

No.

Telemachus is my friend.
He won't object.
Telemachus has nothing more to say
in this house. Get out.
Let him stay, Leucanthus.
Let him stay.
You, come here.
Come here.
Alms for a child of misfortune,
O noble illustrious friend?
Alms for a child of misfortune?
Why don't you go and ask
your noble friend Telemachus?
He may not be with us
much longer.
Beggars were always welcome
in the house of Ulysses.
Not only unwashed,
but insolent.
You speak as if
you're already master here.
Surely, Prince,
we are both just guests in this house.
Get away, you filthy bundle of rags.
Alms for a child of misfortune?
Here.
Here, are you thirsty?
Well, drink.
Give him another drink.
Thank you, my lords.
May the gods reward you.
Here, take this.
It's all I can do for you now.
You're kinder than the others,
young man.
Run away from here as fast as you can
before it's too late.
What are you saying?
Are you mad?
Go on, get out.
Until the games are over,
Amphinomus,
I am the one to decide
who will be ordered from this house.

He's quite right, Amphinomus.
You presume too much.
Delighted to see you,
Telemachus.
What is the meaning of these axes?
It is the queen's own wish.
She will explain it herself.
Where is the queen?
Be patient, Antinous.
She is preparing herself,
as befits a bride.
When the heart is full of love,
there is no room for patience.
Well said, Antinous.
You have expressed
what we're all thinking.
The queen.
May the gods protect you.
Your beauty shines down upon us
like the sun
from heaven, Penelope.
The day has arrived,
and I am ready to fulfill
my obligation.
I will marry the winner
of the games.
We have waited long
and anxiously for this.
For your contest,
I have selected a game
that has been long forgotten.
This is the bow of Ulysses.
I shall marry the man
who can bend it
and send this arrow
through the holes in the axes.
This is not part
of Apollo's games.
If you are afraid of failure,
you may withdraw from the contest.
I have no fear, Penelope.
I accept the challenge.
I was the first to pass through
these doors many years ago

to ask for the hand of Penelope.

I have a right to be the first

to bend the bow of Ulysses.

You may also be

the first to leave.

I cannot bend it.

Let me try.

I cannot bend it.

Not even a little.

You're too fat, Leodes.

This bow has been cursed

by the gods.

Here, let me try now.

There's something strange here.

Apollo is offended.

He has taken away our strength.

How can Apollo take away

what you never had?

Give me that bow.

- Come on, Antinous.

- Come on, you can bend it.

- Come on, Antinous.

- Come on.

Let him try it again.

He can do it.

- He'll make it this time.

- Yes, Antinous, come on.

This time he'll do it.

He can't do it.

It's beyond human power.

- He's almost got it.

- He'll make it.

- This is a trick.

- Like the tapestry, Penelope.

- Yes, like the tapestry.

- I do not accept this.

I still hold you

to your promise, Penelope.

May I have the queen's

permission to draw the bow?

A beggar competing with princes?

Can I do worse than you?

- What insolence!

- It's incredible.

Did you hear? The beggar wants
to compare his strength with ours.
Penelope, would you like
to have this beggar for a husband?
Have no fear, my queen.
I can make no claim on you.
I already have a wife.
If you desire it, stranger,
I give you my approval.
You can't allow it, Penelope.
It's an insult to all of us.
This is a farce.
Get out.
Get away.
- Come now, hurry.
- This farce has lasted long enough.
- Incredible.
- Impossible.
It's Ulysses!
- Ulysses!
- Take my queen to safety.
No, let me stay.
Father.
The other door.
Antinous,
first among the suitors,
first in pride,
first in arrogance.
You will be the first served today.
Take these weapons.
No, Eurymachus!
Here, Crotone, kill him.
Don't kill me, Ulysses!
Telemachus!
No no, Ulysses.
Have Pity!
Too late.
I warned you before.
I never make a present
of a man's life a second time.
Athena, I thank you.
Divine friend and goddess...
benefactress of our house,
you who have soothed

my waiting hours
and protected my Ulysses,
I thank you for his return.
Many terrible things have
happened to me, Telemachus,
but none more terrible than to bring
death into my house
on the day of my homecoming.
You are not to blame, Father.
Tell the servants to purify
this room with fire.
And may the revenge of the dead
never overtake us.
Yes, Father.
His revenge has been just, Athena,
but terrible.
The Ulysses you bring back to me,
my protectoress, is an angry man,
forced to kill ruthlessly.
O divine Athena,
did his long road back to me
have to be so bloodstained?
My road had to be long
and bloodstained.
Ulysses.
There was no other way
to bring me back to you.
Such wasted time.
So many years.
So many years of our youth
squandered in the savagery of war...
in lost and confused wanderings
and in roaming.
I was so lonely.
I promise you.
I'll make up for it
in the tranquil years
that lie ahead.
Yes, together!
Ulysses!