from the

Odyssey

HOMER

Translated by Robert Fitzgerald

756 UNIT 5 • Do heroes have responsibilities?
In the opening verses, Homer addresses the muse of epic poetry. He asks her help in telling the tale of Odysseus.

Sing in me, Muse, and through me tell the story of that man skilled in all ways of contending, the wanderer, harried for years on end, after he plundered the stronghold on the proud height of Troy.

He saw the townlands and learned the minds of many distant men, and weathered many bitter nights and days in his deep heart at sea, while he fought only to save his life, to bring his shipmates home. But not by will nor valor could he save them, for their own recklessness destroyed them all—children and fools, they killed and feasted on the cattle of Lord Helios, the Sun, and he who moves all day through heaven took from their eyes the dawn of their return. Of these adventures, Muse, daughter of Zeus, tell us in our time, lift the great song again.

Note: In translating the Odyssey, Fitzgerald spelled Greek names to suggest the sound of the original Greek. In these excerpts, more familiar spellings have been used. For example, Fitzgerald’s “Kirkê,” “Kyklops,” and “Seirênês” are spelled here as “Circe,” “Cyclops,” and “Sirens.”

1. Muse (myôz) any one of the nine goddesses of the arts, literature, and sciences; the spirit that is thought to inspire a poet or other artist.
2. Troy (troi) city in northwest Asia Minor; site of the Trojan War.
3. Helios (hē’ lē ås’) sun god.
4. Zeus (zōôs) king of the gods.
CHARACTERS

Alcinous (al sin’ ŏ ās)—king of the Phaeacians, to whom Odysseus tells his story
Odysseus (ō dis’ ē ās)—king of Ithaca
Calypso (kə lip’ sō)—sea goddess who loved Odysseus
Circe (sur’ sē)—enchantress who helped Odysseus
Zeus (zōōs)—king of the gods
Apollo (ə pāl’ ō)—god of music, poetry, prophecy, and medicine
Agamemnon (a’ gum’ nān’)—king and leader of Greek forces
Poseidon (pō sē don)—god of sea, earthquakes, horses, and storms at sea
Athena (ə thē’ nā)—goddess of wisdom, skills, and warfare
Polyphemus (pāl’ i fē’ mās)—the Cyclops who imprisoned Odysseus
Laertes (lā ur’ tēz’)—Odysseus’ father
Cronus (krō’ nēs)—Titan ruler of the universe; father of Zeus
Perimedes (per’ ē mē’ dēz)—member of Odysseus’ crew
Eurylochus (yōr’ loch’ ū kēs)—another member of the crew
Tiresias (tī rē’ sē ās)—blind prophet who advised Odysseus
Persephone (par sef’ ē nē)—wife of Hades
Telemachus (tē lem’ ū kēs)—Odysseus and Penelope’s son
Sirens sī’ ranz—creatures whose songs lure sailors to their deaths
Scylla (sil’ ē)—sea monster of gray rock
Charybdis (kā rib’ dis)—enormous and dangerous whirlpool
Lampetia (lam pè’ shē)—nymph
Hermes (hér’ mēz’)—herald and messenger of the gods
Eumaeus (yōō mē’ ās)—old swineherd and friend of Odysseus
Antinous (an tin’ ō ās)—leader among the suitors
Eurynome (yōō rō’ ū mē)—housekeeper for Penelope
Penelope (pē nel’ ē pē)—Odysseus’ wife
Eurymachus (yōō rē’ mā kēs)—suitor
Amphinomus (am fin’ ū mēs)—suitor
“I am Laertes’ son, Odysseus. Men hold me formidable for guile in peace and war: this fame has gone abroad to the sky’s rim.

My home is on the peaked sea-mark of Ithaca under Mount Neion’s wind-blown robe of leaves, in sight of other islands—Dulichium, Same, wooded Zacynthus—Ithaca being most lofty in that coastal sea, and northwest, while the rest lie east and south. A rocky isle, but good for a boy’s training; I shall not see on earth a place more dear, though I have been detained long by Calypso, loveliest among goddesses, who held me in her smooth caves, to be her heart’s delight, as Circe of Aeaea, the enchantress, desired me, and detained me in her hall. But in my heart I never gave consent.

Where shall a man find sweetness to surpass his own home and his parents? In far lands he shall not, though he find a house of gold.

What of my sailing, then, from Troy? What of those years of rough adventure, weathered under Zeus?

The wind that carried west from Ilion brought me to Ismarus, on the far shore, a strongpoint on the coast of Cicones. I stormed that place and killed the men who fought. Plunder we took, and we enslaved the women, to make division, equal shares to all—but on the spot I told them: ‘Back, and quickly! Out to sea again!’ My men were mutinous, fools, on stores of wine. Sheep after sheep
they butchered by the surf, and shambling cattle, 
feasting,—while fugitives went inland, running 
to call to arms the main force of Cicones. 
This was an army, trained to fight on horseback 
or, where the ground required, on foot. They came 
with dawn over that terrain like the leaves 
and blades of spring. So doom appeared to us, 
dark word of Zeus for us, our evil days. 
My men stood up and made a fight of it— 
backed on the ships, with lances kept in play, 
from bright morning through the blaze of noon 
holding our beach, although so far outnumbered; 
but when the sun passed toward unyoking time, 
then the Achaeans,¹³ one by one, gave way. 
Six benches were left empty in every ship 
that evening when we pulled away from death. 
And this new grief we bore with us to sea: 
our precious lives we had, but not our friends. 
No ship made sail next day until some shipmate 
had raised a cry, three times, for each poor ghost 
unfleshed by the Cicones on that field.

The Lotus-Eaters

Now Zeus the lord of cloud roused in the north 
a storm against the ships, and driving veils 
of squall moved down like night on land and sea. 
The bows went plunging at the gust; sails 
cracked and lashed out strips in the big wind. 
We saw death in that fury, dropped the yards, 
unshipped the oars, and pulled for the nearest lee:¹⁴ 
them two long days and nights we lay offshore 
worn out and sick at heart, tasting our grief, 
until a third Dawn came with ringlets shining.

Then we put up our masts, hauled sail, and rested, 
letting the steersmen and the breeze take over. 
I might have made it safely home, that time, 
but as I came round Malea the current 
took me out to sea, and from the north 
a fresh gale drove me on, past Cythera. 
Nine days I drifted on the teeming sea 
before dangerous high winds. Upon the tenth

13. **Achaeans** (a kē’ anz) n. 
Greeks; here, Odysseus’ 
men.

14. **lee** (lè) n. area sheltered 
from the wind.

Historical and 
Cultural Context

What beliefs and values 
are reflected in lines 
65–69?

Epic Hero

What words in line 82 
remind you that this part 
is a flashback?

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we came to the coastline of the Lotus-Eaters, who live upon that flower. We landed there to take on water. All ships’ companies mustered alongside for the mid-day meal. Then I sent out two picked men and a runner to learn what race of men that land sustained. They fell in, soon enough, with Lotus-Eaters, who showed no will to do us harm, only offering the sweet Lotus to our friends—but those who ate this honeyed plant, the Lotus, never cared to report, nor to return: they longed to stay forever, browsing on that native bloom, forgetful of their homeland. I drove them, all three wailing, to the ships, tied them down under their rowing benches, and called the rest: ‘All hands aboard; come, clear the beach and no one taste the Lotus, or you lose your hope of home.’ Filing in to their places by the rowlocks my oarsmen dipped their long oars in the surf, and we moved out again on our sea faring.

Epic Hero
Which characteristics of an epic hero does Odysseus show in this episode?

Critical Thinking

1. Key Ideas and Details: (a) While on Ismarus, in what ways do Odysseus’ men disobey orders? (b) Analyze Cause and Effect: What is the result of this disobedience? (c) Speculate: What lesson might Odysseus take away from this experience? Explain your answer and cite details from the text to support your speculation.

2. Key Ideas and Details: (a) What happens to the men who eat the Lotus? (b) Infer: What does this episode suggest about the main problem that Odysseus has with his men? (c) Evaluate: Do you think Odysseus responds appropriately to the three men who long to stay with the Lotus-Eaters? Why or why not?

3. Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: (a) Note two points at which Odysseus mentions a longing for home. (b) Infer: What significant role might his longing for home play in Odysseus’ epic journey? (c) Connect: What does this aspect of the story suggest about ancient Greek values? Explain.

4. Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: (a) In this episode, does Odysseus prove himself to be a hero? (b) What responsibilities does he demonstrate, if any? [Connect to the Big Question: Do heroes have responsibilities?]
The Cyclops

In the next land we found were Cyclopes,\textsuperscript{15} giants, louts, without a law to bless them. In ignorance leaving the fruitage of the earth in mystery to the immortal gods, they neither plow nor sow by hand, nor till the ground, though grain—wild wheat and barley—grows untended, and wine-grapes, in clusters, ripen in heaven’s rains. Cyclopes have no muster and no meeting, no consultation or old tribal ways, but each one dwells in his own mountain cave dealing out rough justice to wife and child, indifferent to what the others do. . . .

As we rowed on, and nearer to the mainland, at one end of the bay, we saw a cavern yawning above the water, screened with laurel, and many rams and goats about the place inside a sheepfold—made from slabs of stone earthfast between tall trunks of pine and rugged towering oak trees.

A prodigious\textsuperscript{16} man slept in this cave alone, and took his flocks to graze afield—remote from all companions, knowing none but savage ways, a brute so huge, he seemed no man at all of those who eat good wheaten bread; but he seemed rather a shaggy mountain reared in solitude. We beached there, and I told the crew to stand by and keep watch over the ship: as for myself I took my twelve best fighters and went ahead. I had a goatskin full of that sweet liquor that Euanthes’ son, Maron, had given me. He kept Apollo’s\textsuperscript{17} holy grove at Ismarus; for kindness we showed him there, and showed his wife and child, he gave me seven shining golden talents\textsuperscript{18} perfectly formed, a solid silver winebowl, and then this liquor—twelve two-handled jars of brandy, pure and fiery. Not a slave in Maron’s household knew this drink; only he, his wife and the storeroom mistress knew;
and they would put one cupful—ruby-colored, honey-smooth—in twenty more of water, but still the sweet scent hovered like a fume over the winebowl. No man turned away when cups of this came round. A wineskin full I brought along, and victuals in a bag, for in my bones I knew some towering brute would be upon us soon—all outward power, a wild man, ignorant of civility.

We climbed, then, briskly to the cave. But Cyclops had gone afield, to pasture his fat sheep, so we looked round at everything inside: a drying rack that sagged with cheeses, pens crowded with lambs and kids, each in its class: firstlings apart from middlings, and the ‘dewdrops,’ or newborn lambkins, penned apart from both. And vessels full of whey were brimming there—bowls of earthenware and pails for milking. My men came pressing round me, pleading: ‘Why not take these cheeses, get them stowed, come back, throw open all the pens, and make a run for it? We’ll drive the kids and lambs aboard. We say put out again on good salt water!’

Ah, how sound that was! Yet I refused. I wished to see the cave man, what he had to offer—no pretty sight, it turned out, for my friends. We lit a fire, burnt an offering, and took some cheese to eat; then sat in silence around the embers, waiting. When he came he had a load of dry boughs on his shoulder to stoke his fire at suppertime. He dumped it with a great crash into that hollow cave, and we all scattered fast to the far wall. Then over the broad cavern floor he ushered the ewes he meant to milk. He left his rams and he-goats in the yard outside, and swung high overhead a slab of solid rock.

19. victuals (vit’ alz) n. food or other provisions.

20. kids young goats.

21. whey (hwà) n. thin, watery part of milk separated from the thicker curds.

22. boughs (bouz) n. tree branches.

Epic Hero
What character flaw does the hero Odysseus reveal by refusing to leave the cave?

Comprehension
Where is Cyclops when Odysseus and his men enter the cave?
to close the cave. Two dozen four-wheeled wagons, with heaving wagon teams, could not have stirred the tonnage of that rock from where he wedged it over the doorsill. Next he took his seat and milked his bleating ewes. A practiced job he made of it, giving each ewe her suckling; thickened his milk, then, into curds and whey, sieved out the curds to drip in withy baskets, and poured the whey to stand in bowls cooling until he drank it for his supper.

When all these chores were done, he poked the fire, heaping on brushwood. In the glare he saw us.

‘Strangers,’ he said, ‘who are you? And where from? What brings you here by seaways—a fair traffic? Or are you wandering rogues, who cast your lives like dice, and ravage other folk by sea?’

We felt a pressure on our hearts, in dread of that deep rumble and that mighty man. But all the same I spoke up in reply: ‘We are from Troy, Achaeans, blown off course by shifting gales on the Great South Sea; homeward bound, but taking routes and ways uncommon; so the will of Zeus would have it. We served under Agamemnon,24 son of Atreus—the whole world knows what city he laid waste, what armies he destroyed. It was our luck to come here; here we stand, beholden for your help, or any gifts you give—as custom is to honor strangers. We would entreat you, great Sir, have a care for the gods’ courtesy; Zeus will avenge the unoffending guest.’

He answered this from his brute chest, unmoved:

‘You are a ninny, or else you come from the other end of nowhere, telling me, mind the gods! We Cyclopes care not a whistle for your thundering Zeus or all the gods in bliss; we have more force by far.

23. withy (wiði/) adj. made from tough, flexible twigs.

24. Agamemnon (agəˈmemnən) king who led the Greek army during the Trojan War.
I would not let you go for fear of Zeus—you or your friends—unless I had a whim to.

Tell me, where was it, now, you left your ship—around the point, or down the shore, I wonder?"

He thought he’d find out, but I saw through this, and answered with a ready lie:

‘My ship?

Poseidon Lord, who sets the earth a-tremble,
broke it up on the rocks at your land’s end.

A wind from seaward served him, drove us there.

We are survivors, these good men and I.’

Neither reply nor pity came from him, but in one stride he clutched at my companions and caught two in his hands like squirming puppies to beat their brains out, spattering the floor.

Then he dismembered them and made his meal, gaping and crunching like a mountain lion—everything: innards, flesh, and marrow bones. We cried aloud, lifting our hands to Zeus, powerless, looking on at this, appalled;

but Cyclops went on filling up his belly with manflesh and great gulps of whey, then lay down like a mast among his sheep.

My heart beat high now at the chance of action, and drawing the sharp sword from my hip I went along his flank to stab him where the midriff holds the liver. I had touched the spot when sudden fear stayed me: if I killed him we perished there as well, for we could never move his ponderous doorway slab aside.

So we were left to groan and wait for morning.

When the young Dawn with fingertips of rose lit up the world, the Cyclops built a fire and milked his handsome ewes, all in due order, putting the sucklings to the mothers. Then, his chores being all dispatched, he caught another brace of men to make his breakfast, and whisked away his great door slab.
to let his sheep go through—but he, behind, 
reset the stone as one would cap a quiver. 
There was a din of whistling as the Cyclops 
rounded his flock to higher ground, then stillness. 
And now I pondered how to hurt him worst, 
if but Athena granted what I prayed for.

Here are the means I thought would serve my turn:

a club, or staff, lay there along the fold—
an olive tree, felled green and left to season for Cyclops’ hand. And it was like a mast 
a lugger of twenty oars, broad in the beam— 
so long, so big around, it seemed. Now I 
chopped out a six foot section of this pole 
and set it down before my men, who scraped it; 
and when they had it smooth, I hewed again 
to make a stake with pointed end. I held this 
in the fire’s heart and turned it, toughening it, 
then hid it, well back in the cavern, under 
one of the dung piles in profusion there. 
Now came the time to toss for it: who ventured 
along with me? whose hand could bear to thrust 
and grind that spike in Cyclops’ eye, when mild 
sleep had mastered him? As luck would have it, 
the men I would have chosen won the toss— 
four strong men, and I made five as captain. 

At evening came the shepherd with his flock, 
his woolly flock. The rams as well, this time, 
entered the cave: by some shepherding whim— 
or a god’s bidding—none were left outside. 
He hefted his great boulder into place 
and sat him down to milk the bleating ewes 
in proper order, put the lambs to suck, 
and swiftly ran through all his evening chores. 
Then he caught two more men and feasted on them. 
My moment was at hand, and I went forward 
holding an ivy bowl of my dark drink, 
looking up, saying: ‘Cyclops, try some wine. 
Here’s liquor to wash down your scraps of men. 
Taste it, and see the kind of drink we carried.
under our planks. I meant it for an offering if you would help us home. But you are mad, unbearable, a bloody monster! After this, will any other traveler come to see you?’

He seized and drained the bowl, and it went down so fiery and smooth he called for more:

‘Give me another, thank you kindly. Tell me, how are you called? I’ll make a gift will please you. Even Cyclopes know the wine grapes grow out of grassland and loam in heaven’s rain, but here’s a bit of nectar and ambrosia!’

Three bowls I brought him, and he poured them down. I saw the fuddle and flush come over him, then I sang out in cordial tones:

\[33. \text{nectar (nek’ tar) and ambrosia (am brò’ zha) drink and food of the gods.}\]

\[\text{Comprehension}\]
\[\text{What does Odysseus plan to do with the stake that he and his men make?}\]
'Cyclops, you ask my honorable name? Remember the gift you promised me, and I shall tell you. My name is Nohb'dy: mother, father, and friends, everyone calls me Nohb'dy.'

And he said:

‘Nohb’dy’s my meat, then, after I eat his friends. Others come first. There’s a noble gift, now.’

Even as he spoke, he reeled and tumbled backward, his great head lolling to one side; and sleep took him like any creature. Drunk, hiccuping, he dribbled streams of liquor and bits of men.

Now, by the gods, I drove my big hand spike deep in the embers, charring it again, and cheered my men along with battle talk to keep their courage up: no quitting now. The pike of olive, green though it had been, reddened and glowed as if about to catch. I drew it from the coals and my four fellows gave me a hand, lugging it near the Cyclops as more than natural force nerved them; straight forward they sprinted, lifted it, and rammed it deep in his crater eye, and leaned on it turning it as a shipwright turns a drill in planking, having men below to swing the two-handled strap that spins it in the groove. So with our brand we bored that great eye socket while blood ran out around the red-hot bar. Eyelid and lash were seared; the pierced ball hissed broiling, and the roots popped.

In a smithy one sees a white-hot axehead or an adze plunged and wrung in a cold tub, screeching steam—the way they make soft iron hale and hard—: just so that eyeball hissed around the spike. The Cyclops bellowed and the rock roared round him, and we fell back in fear. Clawing his face he tugged the bloody spike out of his eye, threw it away, and his wild hands went groping.
then he set up a howl for Cyclopes
who lived in caves on windy peaks nearby.
Some heard him; and they came by divers ways

to clump around outside and call:

‘What ails you, Polyphemus? Why do you cry so sore
in the starry night? You will not let us sleep.
Sure no man’s driving off your flock? No man
has tricked you, ruined you?’

Out of the cave
the mammoth Polyphemus roared in answer:

‘Nohbdy, Nohbdy’s tricked me, Nohbdy’s ruined me!’

To this rough shout they made a sage reply:

‘Ah well, if nobody has played you foul
there in your lonely bed, we are no use in pain
given by great Zeus. Let it be your father,
Poseidon Lord, to whom you pray.’

So saying
they trailed away. And I was filled with laughter
to see how like a charm the name deceived them.
Now Cyclops, wheezing as the pain came on him,
fumbled to wrench away the great doorstone
and squatted in the breach with arms thrown wide
for any silly beast or man who bolted—
hoping somehow I might be such a fool.
But I kept thinking how to win the game:
death sat there huge; how could we slip away?
I drew on all my wits, and ran through tactics,
reasoning as a man will for dear life,
until a trick came—and it pleased me well.
The Cyclops’ rams were handsome, fat, with heavy
fleeces, a dark violet.

I tied them silently together, twining
cords of willow from the ogre’s bed;
then slung a man under each middle one
to ride there safely, shielded left and right.
UNIT 5 • Do heroes have responsibilities?
So three sheep could convey each man. I took
the woolliest ram, the choicest of the flock,
and hung myself under his kinky belly,
pulled up tight, with fingers twisted deep
in sheepskin ringlets for an iron grip.
So, breathing hard, we waited until morning.

When Dawn spread out her fingertips of rose
the rams began to stir, moving for pasture,
and peals of bleating echoed round the pens
where dams with udders full called for a milking.
Blinded, and sick with pain from his head wound,
the master stroked each ram, then let it pass,
but my men riding on the pectoral\textsuperscript{38} fleece
the giant’s blind hands blundering never found.
Last of them all my ram, the leader, came,
weighted by wool and me with my meditations.
The Cyclops patted him, and then he said:

‘Sweet cousin ram, why lag behind the rest
in the night cave? You never linger so,
but graze before them all, and go afar
to crop sweet grass, and take your stately way
leading along the streams, until at evening
you run to be the first one in the fold.
Why, now, so far behind? Can you be grieving
over your Master’s eye? That carrion rogue\textsuperscript{39}
and his accurst companions burnt it out
when he had conquered all my wits with wine.
Nohbdy will not get out alive, I swear.
Oh, had you brain and voice to tell
where he may be now, dodging all my fury!
Bashed by this hand and bashed on this rock wall
his brains would strew the floor, and I should have
rest from the outrage Nohbdy worked upon me.’

He sent us into the open, then. Close by,
I dropped and rolled clear of the ram’s belly,
going this way and that to untie the men.
With many glances back, we rounded up
his fat, stiff-legged sheep to take aboard,
and drove them down to where the good ship lay.
We saw, as we came near, our fellows’ faces shining; then we saw them turn to grief tallying those who had not fled from death. I hushed them, jerking head and eyebrows up, and in a low voice told them: ‘Load this herd; move fast, and put the ship’s head toward the breakers.’ They all pitched in at loading, then embarked and struck their oars into the sea. Far out, as far off shore as shouted words would carry, I sent a few back to the adversary: ‘O Cyclops! Would you feast on my companions? Puny, am I, in a cave man’s hands? How do you like the beating that we gave you, you damned cannibal? Eater of guests under your roof! Zeus and the gods have paid you!’

The blind thing in his doubled fury broke a hilltop in his hands and heaved it after us. Ahead of our black prow it struck and sank whelmed in a spuming geyser, a giant wave that washed the ship stern foremost back to shore. I got the longest boathook out and stood fending us off, with furious nods to all to put their backs into a racing stroke—row, row, or perish. So the long oars bent kicking the foam sternward, making head until we drew away, and twice as far. Now when I cupped my hands I heard the crew in low voices protesting:

‘Godsake, Captain! Why bait the beast again? Let him alone!’

‘That tidal wave he made on the first throw all but beached us.’

‘All but stove us in!’

‘Give him our bearing with your trumpeting, he’ll get the range and lob a boulder.’

‘Aye He’ll smash our timbers and our heads together!’

I would not heed them in my glorying spirit,
Polyphemus, The Cyclops from Homer’s *The Odyssey*, N.C. Wyeth, Brandywine River Museum.
but let my anger flare and yelled: ‘Cyclops, if ever mortal man inquire how you were put to shame and blinded, tell him Odysseus, raider of cities, took your eye: Laertes' son, whose home's on Ithaca!’

At this he gave a mighty sob and rumbled: ‘Now comes the weird\(^{40}\) upon me, spoken of old. A wizard, grand and wondrous, lived here—Telemus,\(^{41}\) a son of Eurymus;\(^{42}\) great length of days he had in wizardry among the Cyclopes, and these things he foretold for time to come: my great eye lost, and at Odysseus’ hands. Always I had in mind some giant, armed in giant force, would come against me here. But this, but you—small, pitiful and twiggy—you put me down with wine, you blinded me. Come back, Odysseus, and I’ll treat you well, praying the god of earthquake\(^{43}\) to befriend you—his son I am, for he by his avowal fathered me, and, if he will, he may heal me of this black wound—he and no other of all the happy gods or mortal men.’

Few words I shouted in reply to him:

‘If I could take your life I would and take your time away, and hurl you down to hell! The god of earthquake could not heal you there!’

At this he stretched his hands out in his darkness toward the sky of stars, and prayed Poseidon:

‘O hear me, lord, blue girdler of the islands, if I am thine indeed, and thou art father: grant that Odysseus, raider of cities, never see his home: Laertes’ son, I mean, who kept his hall on Ithaca. Should destiny intend that he shall see his roof again among his family in his father land, far be that day, and dark the years between.'
Let him lose all companions, and return under strange sail to bitter days at home.’ In these words he prayed, and the god heard him.

Now he laid hands upon a bigger stone and wheeled around, titanic for the cast, to let it fly in the black-prowed vessel’s track. But it fell short, just aft the steering oar, and whelming seas rose giant above the stone to bear us onward toward the island.

There as we ran in we saw the squadron waiting, the trim ships drawn up side by side, and all our troubled friends who waited, looking seaward. We beached her, grinding keel in the soft sand, and waded in, ourselves, on the sandy beach. Then we unloaded all the Cyclops’ flock to make division, share and share alike, only my fighters voted that my ram, the prize of all, should go to me. I slew him by the seaside and burnt his long thighbones to Zeus beyond the stormcloud, Cronus’ son, who rules the world. But Zeus disdained my offering; destruction for my ships he had in store and death for those who sailed them, my companions. Now all day long until the sun went down we made our feast on mutton and sweet wine, till after sunset in the gathering dark we went to sleep above the wash of ripples.

When the young Dawn with fingertips of rose touched the world, I roused the men, gave orders to man the ships, cast off the mooring lines; and filing in to sit beside the rowlocks oarsmen in line dipped oars in the gray sea. So we moved out, sad in the vast offing, having our precious lives, but not our friends.