

Odyssey 12.201-12.225

Michael Kelley, '18

Just as we left the island in our wake,
I spied the mist and mighty swell, and heard
The roaring of the sea. At such a sign,
Oars flew from frightened hands, and slipped into
The tide with splashing sound. Our ship stayed put,
But, making rounds, I roused my comrades o'er the ship,
Approached each man with tender speech, and spoke,
“Now now, old friends, we are well-versed in woes!
Indeed – this misery is dwarfed by that
One time the Cyclops caged us in his cave —
That hollow den — with overbearing force.
But, even then, by me, my excellence,
My plan, my mind, we made it out alive.
I do believe someday we'll reminisce
On these things, too. But come on, now! Let's all
Obey whatever I command—take heed!
You all will sit in rows and strike
The dive-deep surf of salt, in case
Zeus grant, perhaps, that we escape and flee.
But you, o steersman, I entreat you thus—
Take it to heart when you direct the helm
Of this our hollow ship—avert the mist
And stay these waves outside our walls. Do sail
Abreast the cliff—let not your eyes desist—
Lest you, the ship hard-hurting off that way,
Propel us straight to terrible dismay.”
I spoke and swiftly did they heed my speech,
But not a word I spoke of Scylla, that
Unconquerable calamity, lest they –
My comrades – filled with fear because of me,
Cease rowing and safeguard themselves inside.