

A Blossom of the Sea

Their wasting of my substance day by day,
Their insults to my queen Penelope,
Their ambush laid to intercept and slay
Telemachus returning from his quest.
To him I told a fiction interspersed
With truth, of how I came to Ithaca;
And he related how Phenician men
Had borne him from his father's royal dome
And sold him here a slave in foreign land.
Feasting and quaffing purple wines we sat
While fled the night's ambrosial hours away.
But with the morning came Telemachus.
Glad was the welcome that Eumæus gave,
As might a father give a tender son
After long absence home returning safe;
And I rejoiced to see him well-beloved.
But when his lodge the faithful swineherd left
To bear the queen a message from her son
No longer I my feelings could restrain;
But all the longings of my lonely heart
Came swelling as a sea within my breast.
In close embrace I clasped my gallant son,
A helpless babe when twenty years before
I left him smiling in his mother's arms,
But now a youth to cheer a father's heart
With pride and hope. With intermingled tears
We sat while fled the waning hours of day,
Recounting all our many bitter woes
And plotting death for all the suitors proud.