

2021

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Recommended Citation

Mangone, Elizabeth (2021) "Home from the House of Death: A Poem Found in Homer's Odyssey," *The Echo*: Vol. 2021 , Article 27.

Available at: <https://scholarexchange.furman.edu/echo/vol2021/iss2021/27>

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Home from the House of Death: A Poem Found in Homer's Odyssey

Elizabeth Mangone

This poem is built using found words and phrases from Homer's Odyssey

The fire in all its fury burns the body down to ashes.
Rugged will and lion heart sifting away
like a shadow, dissolving
like a dream.

Two vultures hunched on either side of us,
bearing endless torture.

The water vanishing, swallowed down, laying bare the caked black
earth.

In the swift ship at the water's edge we went, sped by our rowing
first, then by a fresh fair wind.

Earth be my witness now,
in the dark, cascading waters of the styx,
I cry out to the everlasting gods in hope,
as clear and sharp as a swallow's cry,
holding them spellbound down shadowed halls.

In the swift ship at the water's edge we went, sped by our rowing
first, then by a fresh fair wind.

And in the cruel blue sea, I make my fury,
In the house of death with its all-embracing gates.
As only a priest, a prophet for this mob.

In the swift ship at the water's edge we went, sped by our rowing
first, then by a fresh fair wind.

While the Beggar King of Ithaca,
delights in the grand feasts of the deathless gods on high:
cheese and luscious honey and heady wine,
the thousands raise unearthly cries,
wailing convulsively, streaming live warm tears.

In the swift ship at the water's edge we went, sped by our rowing
first, then by a fresh fair wind.

Between the mixing bowl and the silver studded throne,
the rasping doors groan as loud as a bull can bellow,
bringing them all to a hushed,
stunned
silence.

Did you think we would not make it home from the house of death?