

“Son of Laertes, versatile Odysseus,
70 after these years with me, you still desire
your old home? Even so, I wish you well.
If you could see it all, before you go—
all the adversity you face at sea—
you would stay here, and guard this house, and be
75 immortal—though you wanted her forever,
that bride for whom you pine each day.
Can I be less desirable than she is?
Less interesting? Less beautiful? Can mortals
compare with goddesses in grace and form?”

80 To this the strategist Odysseus answered:

“My lady goddess, here is no cause for anger.
My quiet Penelope—how well I know—
would seem a shade before your majesty,
death and old age being unknown to you,
85 while she must die. Yet, it is true, each day
I long for home, long for the sight of home. . . .”

D EPITHET

Reread Odysseus’ answer to Calypso in lines 81–86. Why do you think he is referred to in line 80 as “the strategist Odysseus”? Explain.

With Calypso’s help, Odysseus builds a raft and sets out to sea. For 17 days he sails until he is in sight of Scheria. For 3 more days he is pummeled by storms and finally swims for the island. He makes it safely ashore and crawls to rest under some bushes.

A man in a distant field, no hearthfires near,
will hide a fresh brand in his bed of embers
to keep a spark alive for the next day;
90 so in the leaves Odysseus hid himself,
while over him Athena showered sleep
that his distress should end, and soon, soon.
In quiet sleep she sealed his cherished eyes.