Excerpt from Book 5 of *the Odyssey*

*Odysseus has been shipwrecked on Calypso’s island. He has spent years with Calypso yet still yearns to be home with his wife Penelope.*

Calypso sat down face-to-face with the king

and the women served her nectar and ambrosia.

They reached out for the good things that lay at hand

and when they’d had their fill of food and drink

the lustrous one took up a new approach. “So then,

royal son of Laertes, Odysseus, man of exploits,

still eager to leave at once and hurry back

to your own home, your beloved native land?

Good luck to you, even so. Farewell!

But if you only knew, down deep, what pains

are fated to fill your cup before you reach that shore,

you’d stay right here, preside in our house with me

and be immortal. Much as you long to see your wife,

the one you pine for all your days … and yet

I just might claim to be nothing less than she,

neither in face nor figure. Hardly right, is it,

for mortal woman to rival immortal goddess?

How, in build? in beauty?”

“Ah great goddess,”

worldly Odysseus answered, “don’t be angry with me,

please. All that you say is true, how well I know.

Look at my wise Penelope. She falls far short of you,

your beauty, stature. She is mortal after all

and you, you never age or die …

Nevertheless I long—I pine, all my days—

to travel home and see the dawn of my return.

And if a god will wreck me yet again on the wine-dark sea,

I can bear that too, with a spirit tempered to endure.

Much have I suffered, labored long and hard by now

in the waves and wars. Add this to the total—

bring the trial on!”