



The Odyssey

Homer

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The Odyssey Homer

"The thing that best distinguishes this from all other translations of Homer is that it alone equals the original in its ceaseless pour of verbal music. . . . Pope worked miracles in highlighting the play of vowels through his lines. . . . Every word is weighted, with a pressure of mind behind it. This is a poem you can live your way into, over the years, since it yields more at every encounter." -- "On Reading Pope's Homer" *New York Times*, 6/1/1997

When Alexander Pope's majestic translation of Homer's Odyssey appeared in 1726, his translation of the Iliad had already been acclaimed by Samuel Johnson as "a performance which no age or nation could hope to equal." For the Odyssey, Pope was aided by William Broome and Elijah Fenton. While other translations have since appeared, Pope's is unrivaled in its melodious beauty. Illustrated beautifully by Flaxman, this is the tale of Odysseus's return from the war at Troy, seeking Ithaca his home and Penelope his wife. Along the way he encounters the murderous Cyclops, the treacherous Circe, and the nymphs, gods, and goddesses who variously assist and impede his homeward journey. Many are his travails and dramatic his final homecoming wherein he joins battle with Penelope's erstwhile suitors. As with the Iliad, Pope, who had two collaborators on this project, renders Homer into a muscular and euphonious English poetry worthy of reading aloud. This is the Odyssey that has formed generations of British and American culture through a beautiful poetics that lends itself to easy recollection. With a clean and crisp text illustrated by the inimitable line drawings of Flaxman, this edition finally gives to audiences a fitting rendering of this monument of English verse which captures uniquely the song of Homer himself.

"For Homer to take his place among our classics it must be the case that a rendering could exercise the same spell over the collective ear as English-language poets. You could not memorize Fagles, or Lattimore - or Hobbes, a few phrases apart - while Pope, even at his least Homeric, is memorable. . . . Pope is not superseded." -- David Ricks, Kings College, London, *Classics Ireland*, vol. 4, 1997

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