

## TRANSLATIONS of the Sirens' Song (*Odyssey* 12.184-191)

### Literal translation (Cynthia W. Shelmerdine):

"Come hither, much-honored Odysseus, great glory of the Achaians,  
Anchor your ship, in order to hear our two voices;  
For no one yet sailed by this place with a black ship  
Before hearing the honeyed voice from our mouths,  
But having delighted and knowing more he goes on.  
For we know all things, as many as in broad Troy  
The Argives and the Trojans labored by the will of the gods.  
And we know as many things as happen upon the much-nourishing earth."

### 1614 George Chapman:

"Come here, thou worthy of a world of praise  
That dost so high the Grecian glory raise,  
Ulysses! stay thy ship, and that song hear  
That none pass'd ever but it bent his ear,  
But left him ravish'd, and instructed more  
By us, than any ever heard before.  
For we know all things whatsoever were  
In wide Troy labour'd; whatsoever there  
The Grecians and the Trojans both sustain'd  
By those high issues that the Gods ordain'd.  
And whatsoever all the earth can show  
T'inform a knowledge of desert, we know."

### 1725 Alexander Pope:

"Oh stay, O pride of Greece! Ulysses stay!  
Oh cease they course, and listen to our lay!  
Blest is the man ordain'd our voice to hear,  
The song instructs the soul, and charms the ear.  
Approach! thy soul shall into raptures rise!  
Approach! and learn new wisdom from the wise!  
We know whate'er the kings of mighty name  
Achieved at Ilion in the field of fame;  
Whate'er beneath the sun's bright journey lies.  
Oh stay, and learn new wisdom from the wise!"

### 1871 William Cullen Bryant:

"O world-renowned Ulysses! thou who art  
The glory of the Achaians, turn thy bark  
Landward, that thou mayst listen to our lay  
No man has passed us in his galley yet,  
Ere he has heard our warbled melodies.  
He goes delighted hence a wiser man;  
For all that in the spacious realm of Troy  
The Greeks and Trojans by the will of Heaven  
Endured we know, and all that comes to pass  
In all the nations of the fruitful earth."

### 1965 Richmond Lattimore:

"Come this way, honored Odysseus, great glory of the Achaians,  
and stay your ship, so that you can listen here to our singing;  
for no one else has ever sailed past this place in his black ship  
until he has listened to the honey-sweet voice that issues  
from our lips; then goes on, well pleased, knowing more than ever  
he did; for we know everything that the Argives and Trojans  
did and suffered in wide Troy through the gods' despite.  
Over all the generous earth we know everything that happens."