

CAROL BARNETT

ITHAKA

for Barítone and Guítar

Text by Constantine Cavafy

For the Theofanis G. Stavrou festshrift project

c. 8 minutes

PROGRAM NOTE:

I first read Cavafy's *Ithaka* in the early 1970s as an undergraduate at the University of Minnesota, high on spring, new fields of knowledge, fascinating classes and charismatic professors. It was one of two modern Greek poems that inspired *Mythical Journeys*, my duo for flute and guitar. Now I have set the text again, in honor of my Russian history professor, Theofanis G. Stavrou, on his retirement. The music is in 6/8 and 9/8, the traditional meters of voyaging. The voyage has been one of adventure, of instruction, and I have entered into ports seen for the first time with much gratitude, much joy.

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Σὰ βγῆς στόν πηγεμό γιὰ τήν 'Ιθάκη, νὰ εὔχεσαι νά 'ναι μακρὺς ὁ δρόμος, γεμάτος περιπέτειες, γεμάτος γνώσεις. Τοὺς Λαιστρυγόνας καὶ τοὺς Κύκλωπας, τὸν θυμωμένο Ποσειδώνα μὴ φοβᾶσαι, τέτοια στὸν δρόμο σου ποτέ σου δὲν θὰ βρῆς, ἄν μεν' ἡ σκέψις σου ὑψηλή, ἄν ἐκλεκτὴ συγκίνησις τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ τὸ σῶμα σου ἀγγίζη. Τοὺς Λαιστρυγόναςκαὶ τοὺς Κύκλωπας, τὸν ἄγριο Ποσειδώνα δὲν θὰ συναντήσης, ἄν δὲν τοὺς κουβανῆς μὲς στὴν ψυχή σου, ἄν ἡ ψυχή σου δὲν τοὺς στήνη ἐμπρός σου.

Νὰ εὔχεσαι νά 'ναι μακρὺς ὁ δρόμος. Πολλὰ τὰ καλοκαιρινὰ πρωιὰ νὰ εἶναι ποὺ μὲ τὶ ευχαρίστηση, μὲ τὶ χαρὰ θὰ μπαίνης σὲ λιμένας πρωτοΐδωμένους νὰ σταματήσης σ' ἐμπρεῖα φοινικικά, καὶ τὲς καλὲς πραγμάτειες ν' ἀποκτήσης, σεντέφια καὶ κοράλια, κεχριμπάρια κι ἔβενους, καὶ ἡδονικὰ μυρωδικὰ κάθε λογῆς, ὅσο μπορεῖς πιὸ ἄφθονα ἡδονικὰ μυρωδικά σὲ πόλεις αιγυπτιακὲς πολλὲς νὰ πᾶς, νὰ μάθης καὶ νὰ μάθης ἀπ' τοὺς σπουδασμένους.

Πάντα στὸν νοῦ σου νά 'χης τὴν 'Ιθάκη. Τὸ φθάσιμον ἐκεῖ εἶν' ὁ προορισμός σου. 'Αλλὰ μὴ βιάζης τὸ ταξίδι διόλου. Καλύτερα χρόνια πολλὰ νὰ διαρκέση καὶ γέρος πιὰ ν' ἀράξης στὸ νησί, πλούσιος μὲ ὅσα κέρδισες στὸν δρόμο, μὴ προσδοκώντας πλούτη νὰ σὲ δώση ἡ 'Ιθάκη.

Ή Ἰθάκη σ' ἔδωσε τ' ώραῖο ταξίδι. Χωρὶς αὐτὴν δὲν θά βγαινες στὸν δρόμο Ἄλλα δὲν ἔχει νὰ σὲ δώση πιά.

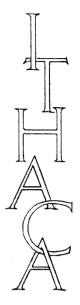
Κι άν πτωχική τήν βρῆς, ή Ἰθάκη δὲν σὲ γέλασε. Ἔτσι σοφὸς ποὺ ἔγινες, μὲ τόση πείρα, ἤδη θὰ τὸ κατάλαβες οἱ Ἰθάκες τὶ σημαίνουν. When you set out on your journey to Ithaca, pray that the road may be long, full of adventures, full of knowledge. Laestrygonians and Cyclopes, angry Poseidon, do not fear them, for such things you will never encounter on your way if your thought remains lofty, if a noble emotion touches your spirit and your body. The Laestrygonians and Cyclopes, furce Poseidon you will not encounter, if you do not harbor them within your soul, if your soul does not raise them up before you.

Pray that the road may be long. May the summer mornings be many when with intense pleasure and joy you will enter harbors seen for the first time; stop at Phoenician market places, and buy good merchandise, mother of pearl and coral, amber and ebony; and pleasurable perfumes of every kind abundant pleasurable perfumes, as many as you can; travel to many Egyptian cities to learn endlessly from the learnéd.

Always keep Ithaca in your mind. Arriving there is your ultimate purpose. But do not hurry the journey in the least. Better that it last for many years, and that finally you anchor at your island old, blessed with all that you have gained on the way, not expecting Ithaca to give you riches.

Ithaca gave you the splendud journey. Without her you would not have set out. She has nothing more to give you.

And if you find her poor, Ichaca has not deceived you. Wise as you have become, with so much experience, you must have understood already what Ichacas mean.



CONSTANTINE P. CAVAFY

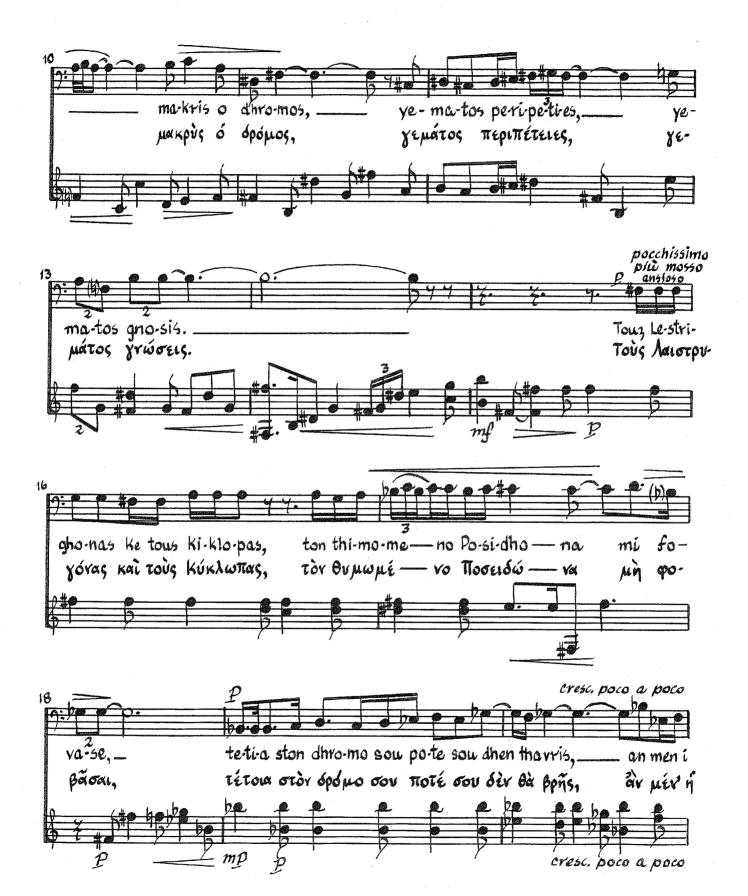


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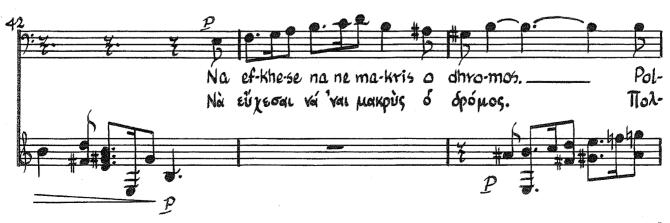


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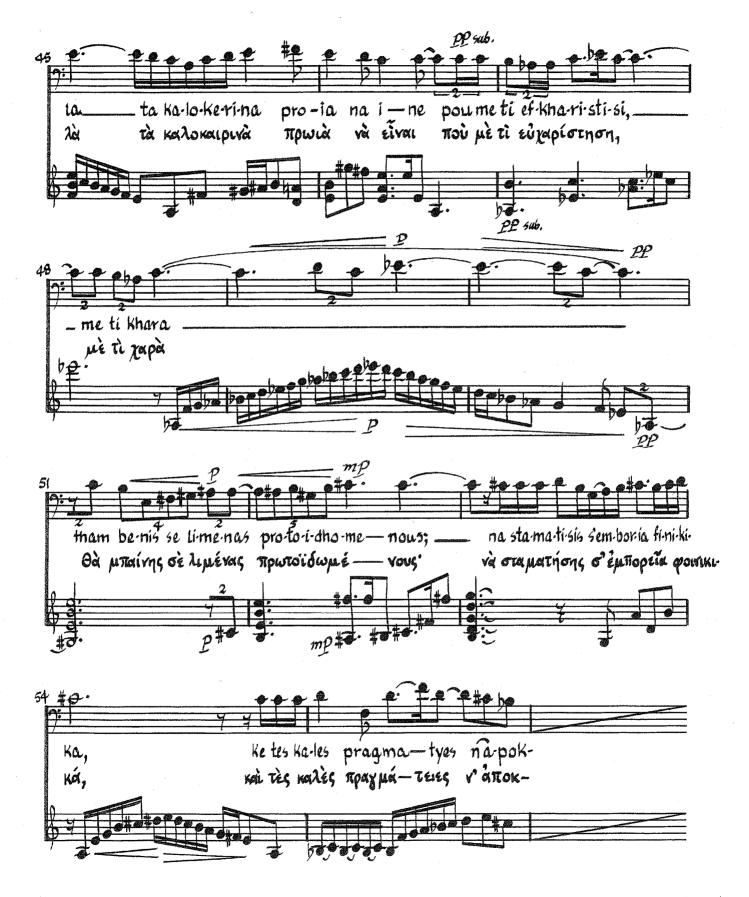






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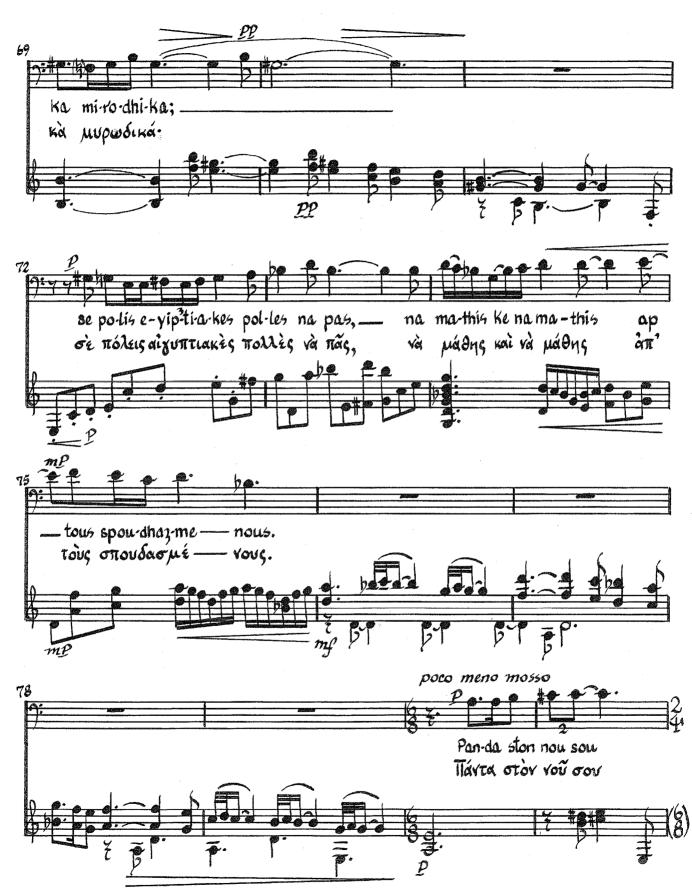








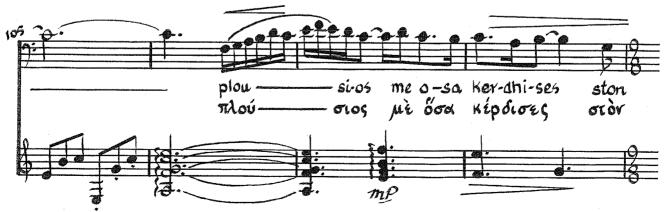












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