

## MYTHICAL JOURNEYS

**Mythical Journeys** was commissioned by the Upper Midwest Flute Association and the Minnesota Guitar Society in 1991, and premiered in that year by Barbara Leibundguth, flutist with the Minnesota Orchestra, and Alan Johnston. It is a musical response to two modern Greek poems:

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### *From Mythical Story*

We did not know them  
  it was hope deep down that said  
We had known them since early childhood.  
We saw them perhaps twice and then they took to the ships;  
cargoes of coal, cargoes of grain, and our friends  
lost forever beyond the ocean.  
Dawn finds us beside the weary lamp  
drawing on the paper, with great effort and awkwardly,  
ships mermaids or sea-shells;  
at dusk we go down to the river  
because it shows us the way to the sea;  
and we spend the nights in cellars that smell of tar.

Our friends have left us  
  perhaps we never saw them, perhaps  
we met them when sleep  
still brought us close to the breathing wave  
perhaps we seek them because we seek the other life  
beyond the statues.

George Seferis, trans. Edmund Keeley and Philip Sherrard

### Ithaka

When you set out for Ithaka  
ask that your way be long,  
full of adventure, full of instruction.  
The Laistrygonians and the Cyclops,  
angry Poseidon--do not fear them:  
such as these you will never find  
as long as your thought is lofty, as long as a rare  
emotion touch your spirit and your body.  
The Laistrygonians and the Cyclops,  
angry Poseidon--you will not meet them  
unless you carry them in your soul,  
unless your soul raise them up before you.

Ask that your way be long.  
At many a summer dawn to enter  
--with what gratitude, what joy--  
ports seen for the first time;  
to stop at Phoenician trading centres,  
and to buy good merchandise,  
mother of pearl and coral, amber and ebony,  
and sensuous perfumes of every kind,  
sensuous perfumes as lavishly as you can;

to visit many Egyptian cities,  
to gather stores of knowledge from the learned.  
Have Ithaka always in your mind.  
Your arrival there is what you are destined for.  
But do not in the least hurry the journey.  
Better that it last for years,  
so that when you reach the island you are old,  
rich with all you have gained on the way,  
not expecting Ithaka to give you wealth.  
Ithaka gave you the splendid journey.  
Without her you would not have set out.  
She hasn't anything else to give you.

And if you find her poor, Ithaka has not deceived you.  
So wise have you become, of such experience,  
that already you will have understood what these Ithakas mean.

Constantine Cavafy, trans. Edmund Keeley and Philip Sherrard