

Blood Axis

"The Voyage"

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Thus with stretched sail, we went over sea till day's end
Sun to his slumber, shadows o'er all the ocean
Came we then to the bounds of deepest water
Covered with close-webbed mist, unpierced ever
With glitter of sun-rays
Nor with stars stretched, nor looking back from heaven
Swartest night stretched over wretched men there
The ocean flowing backward, came we then to the
place
Aforesaid by Circe
Here did they rites, Perimedes and Eurylochus
And drawing sword from my hip
I dug the ell-square pitkin;
Poured we libations unto each the dead
First mead and then sweet wine, water mixed with
white flour
Then prayed I many a prayer to the sickly death's-
heads;
As set in Ithaca, sterile bulls of the best
For sacrifice, heaping the pyre with goods
A sheep to Tiresias only, black and a bell-sheep
Dark blood flowed in the fosse
Souls out of Erebus, cadaverous dead, of brides
Of youths and of the old who had borne much;
Souls stained with recent tears, girls tender
Men many, mauled with bronze lance heads
Battle spoil, bearing yet dreary arms
These many crowded about me; with shouting
Pallor upon me, cried to my men for more beasts;
Slaughtered the herds, sheep slain of bronze;
Poured ointment, cried to the gods
To Pluto the strong, and praised Proserpine;
Unsheathed the narrow sword
I sat to keep off the impetuous impotent dead
Till I should hear Tiresias
But first Elpenor came, our friend Elpenor
Unburied, cast on the wide earth
Limbs that we left in the house of Circe
Unwept, unwrapped in the sepulchre, since toils urged
other
Pitiful spirit

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