

Homeric Similes from *The Odyssey of Homer*

A gull patrolling between the wave crests of the desolate sea will dip to catch a fish, and douse his wings; no higher above the whitecaps Hermes flew... (*MPT*, p. 652)

A man in a distant field, no hearth fires near, will hide a fresh brand in his bed of embers to keep a spark alive for the next day; so in the leaves Odysseus hid himself.... (*MPT*, p. 654)

...straight forward they sprinted, lifted it, and rammed it deep in his crater eye, and I leaned on it turning it as a shipwright turns a drill in planking, having men below to swing the two-handed strap that spins it in the groove. So with our brand we bored that great eye socket while blood ran out around the red-hot bar. (*MPT*, pp. 665-6)

In a smithy one sees a white-hot axehead or an adze plunged and wrung in a cold tub, screeching steam—the way they make soft iron hale and hard—just so that eyeball hissed around the spike.” (*MPT*, p. 666)

A man surf-casting on a point of rock for bass or mackerel, whipping his long rod to drop the sinker and the bait far out, will hook a fish and rip it from the surface to dangle wriggling through the air; so these [men snatched by Scylla] were borne aloft in spasms toward the cliff.” (*MPT*, p. 683)

Think of a man whose dear and only son, born to him in exile, reared with labor, has lived ten years abroad and now returns: how would that man embrace his son! Just so the herdsman clapped his arms around Telemachus and covered him with kisses... (*MPT*, p. 691)

Salt tears rose from the wells of longing in both men, and cries burst from both as keen and fluttering as those of a great taloned hawk, whose nestlings farmers take before they fly. So helplessly they cried, pouring out tears... (*MPT*, p. 694)

...like a musician, like a harper, when with quiet hand upon his instrument he draws between his thumb and forefinger a sweet new string upon a peg; so effortlessly Odysseus in one motion strung the bow. (*MPT*, p. 702)

And the suitors mad with fear at her [Athena's] great sign stampeded like stung cattle by a river when the dread shimmering gadfly strikes in summer, in the flowering season, in the long drawn days. (*MPT*, p. 705)

After them the attackers wheeled, as terrible as falcons from eyries in the mountains veering over and diving down with talons wide unsheathed on flights of birds, who cower down the sky in chutes and bursts along the valley—but the pouncing falcons grip their prey, no frantic wing avails, and farmers love to watch those beaked hunters. (*MPT*, p. 705)

Think of gold infused on silver by a craftsman, whose fine art Hephaestus taught him, or Athena; one whose work moves to delight: just so she lavished beauty over Odysseus' head and shoulders. (*MPT*, p. 707)

...and he wept at last, his dear wife, clear and faithful, in his arms, longed for as the sun-warmed earth is longed for by a swimmer spent in rough water where his ship went down under Poseidon's blows, gale winds and tons of sea. (*MPT*, p. 709)

Homeric Similes from *The Odyssey of Thompson*

A child lost in a department store will wander, wide-eyed, howling and crying in fear of never seeing his mommy again. Just so those seventh graders entered my classroom on the first day of school.

Like starving dogs will ravage one another over a scrap from the master's table, ripping flesh and gnashing teeth in a fierce and slobbering display; so too will junior high school students battle over a Skittle.

Just as metal filings are drawn to one another by opposing charges, dumb to other natural wonders that may surround them, so too are Holden, Oscar, and Nathaniel magnetically attracted to each other in their little huddle even after the bell has rung.

In the vacuum of space where sound cannot travel, the overwhelming silence and emptiness causes even the bravest astronaut to shudder; such is my first period class whenever I ask for volunteers to speak aloud.

Stampeding elephants raging through the jungle will loudly stomp and tear at green trees and roots, bellowing and trumpeting, a thunderous and fearful cacophony punctuated by the shrieks of startled birds and the terrified cries of smaller creatures. This is just like the sound of students who have first lunch storming down the hallways past my room as they return to class.

As a mother silverback gorilla will attack any man who comes between her and her baby, crashing and tearing about the jungle in a frantic rampage all mortals dread to see and hear, so Julius tears about the classroom before the bell, pummeling Nate, smashing into Myrinda, and grabbing Zack in a mighty hug, all the while roaring and screaming in an extremity of insane hyperactivity.

A rudderless ship will sail off course, winding into deadly straits and rocky grottoes at the will of the wind; such was my sixth period class last Friday when the substitute teacher tried to regain control.

Like a cheetah that stalks the grasslands and then viciously attacks and dismembers an antelope, slitting the belly with razor claws, gaping and crunching on flesh and bones, I took my revenge on those students in sixth period who gave the sub a hard time.