

# The unknown shore

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## Abstract

Informing my own life, and all my work as a therapist, is a consciousness of the 'life journey' towards individuation. I see this as the soul's true destination – its homecoming. The 'way' is 'long', as Cavafy writes in his wonderful poem, *Ithaka*. It requires we find the courage to face the unknown and confront existential realities – dread of death, uncertainty, loneliness – with an always tenuous grasp on meaning, knowing we are free, yet wishing we were not. This poem represents my own felt experience of the journey, using Homer's *Odyssey* as a metaphor.

## Keywords

Odyssey, life journey, individuation, uncertainty, freedom, dread.

### The unknown shore

Approaching an island  
Of unknown rocks  
And rearing cliffs,  
I am Ulysses,  
Anticipating the next terror.

My ship cleaves  
The running waves,  
Dipping long and deep  
Into foam at leeward,  
While above me  
Curves the white canvas.

It seems forever  
That I have stood  
Alone at this wheel,  
On this sloping deck,  
Feeling the great, gray rollers  
Slide below me,  
And the cold wet wind at my back.

I watch the waves,  
The ship,  
The approach of the unknown shore,  
No Sirens can distract me,  
I am bound to this voyage.