

Expanding Katabasis Handout

1. GA, Apuleius, 4.18-20 (selections with katabatic language)

ex disciplina sectae servati noctis inlunio tempore, quo somnus...
 ianitorem ipsum gladio conficit...asportari quantum quisque poterat auri vel argenti...
 aedibus fidelissimorum mortuorum occultare prope rursusque concito gradu
 recurrentes sarcinas iterare... taedis, lucernis, cereis, sebaciis, et ceteris nocturni luminis
 instrumentis clarescunt tenebrae... iam faucibus ipsis hiantis Cerberi reluctabat.

According to professional practice, we waited **until the time of night** [when it was] **moonless**...he dealt with **the doorman** similarly with his sword...however much **gold** or **silver** as it was possible to carry...to quickly conceal it in the rooms of the most **trustworthy dead** and rush back at a quick pace to **repeat** loads...with torches, lamps, candles, tapers, and the other instruments of light the shadows of the night were illuminated...now he was struggling with the gaping jaws of Cerberus in front of him.

2. GA, Apuleius, 3.9

Evictus tandem necessitate succumbo, et ingratis licet arrepta pallio retexi corpora. Di boni, quae facies rei! Quod monstrum! Quae fortunarum mearum repentina mutatio! Quamquam enim iam in peculio Proserpinae et Orci familia numeratus, subito in contrariam faciem obstupefactus...

Finally, overcome, unavoidably I yielded, and unwillingly with the blanket grabbed, I uncovered the bodies. Good gods, what a sight! How wonderful! What a sudden change of my fortunes! One moment I am already in the possession of Proserpina and counted among the household of Orcus, suddenly in another situation entirely I am dumbfounded...

3. Georgics, Vergil, 4.453-66

Non te nullius exercent numinis irae;
 magna luis commissa: tibi has miserabilis Orpheus
 haudquaquam ob meritum poenas, ni fata resistent,
 suscitatur et raptam graviter pro coniuge saevit.
 Illa quidem, dum te fugeret per flumina praeceps,
 immanem ante pedes hydram moritura puella
 servantem ripas alta non vidit in herba.
 At chorus aequalis Dryadum clamore supremos
 impleverunt montes; flerunt Rhodopeiae arces
 altaque Pangaea et Rhesi mavortia tellus
 atque Getae atque Hebrus et Actias Orithyia.
 Ipse cava solans aegrum testudine amorem
 te, dulcis coniunx, te solo in litore secum,
 te veniente die, te decedente canebat.

It is not for no reason that divine anger vexes you,
 You atone for great transgressions: it is Orpheus, the pitiable man,
 Not at all deserving of [these] hardships, not that the fates might've stopped them,
 He raves and rages deeply for his taken wife.
 That one, while she was fleeing you headlong alongside the river,
 This girl, about to die, did not see before her feet the massive serpent
 Guarding the banks in the high grasses.
 But the chorus of dryads filled up with a scream
 equal to the highest mountains; the citadels of Rhodope
 wailed and the heights of Pangea and the land of warlike Rhesus
 and the Getae, the Hebrus, and Orithyia of Acte.
 [Orpheus], consoling sick love with his hollow lyre,
 Was singing about you, sweet wife, you alone on the shore,
 [only of] you day in and day out.

4. Metamorphoses, Ovid, 10.11-16

Quam satis ad superas postquam Rhodopeius auras
 deflevit vates, ne non temptaret et umbras,
 ad Styga Taenaria est ausus descendere porta;
 perque leves populos simulacraque functa sepulcro
 Persephonen adiit inamoenaque regna tenentem
 umbrarum dominum.

After the Rhodopean Poet had wept [for her] enough
 To the high heavens, lest he might not disturb even the shades,
 To the styx he dared to go down to the Taenarian gates
 And Through the weightless masses and the shades having been buried
 In their tomb, he addressed Persephone and the King of Shadows
 Holding his gloomy kingdom.

5. Frogs, Aristophanes, 125-140 selections

Δ :μηδέν ἔτι πρὸς ταῦτ', ἀλλὰ φράζε τῶν ὁδῶν ὅπη τάχιστ' ἀφιζόμεθ' εἰς Ἄιδου κάτω: καὶ μήτε
 θερμὴν μήτ' ἄγαν ψυχρὰν φράσης...

Ἥ: βούλει κατάντη καὶ ταχεῖαν σοὶ φράσω;

Δ: νῆ τὸν Δί' ὡς ὄντος γε μὴ βαδιστικοῦ.

Ἥ: καθέρπυσόν νυν ἐς Κεραμεικόν.

Δ: κᾶτα τί;

Ἥ: ἀναβάς ἐπὶ τὸν πύργον τὸν ὑψηλόν—

Δ: τί δρῶ;

Ἥ: ἀφιεμένην τὴν λαμπάδ' ἐντεῦθεν θεῶ, κᾶπειτ' ἐπειδὰν θῶσιν οἱ θεώμενοι 'εἶναι,' τόθ' εἶναι
 καὶ σὺ σαυτόν.

Δ: ποῖ Ἥ: κάτω.

Δ: ἀλλ' ἀπολέσαιμ' ἂν ἐγκεφάλου θρίω δύο. οὐκ ἂν βαδίσαμεν τὴν ὁδὸν ταύτην.

Dionysus: No more of these things. But tell me—by which of the roads will we go down to Hades quickest? And show me one that’s not too hot or cold....

Heracles: Do you want me to tell you of a downhill and quick one?

Dionysus: By Zeus, yes, as I’m not really much of a walker.

Heracles: Alright, now sneak on down to Ceramicus.

Dionysus: then what?

Heracles: Climb up the high tower

Dionysus: Then what do I do?

Heracles: Watch the racing torch from there, and then whenever the observers [shout “aaaand they’re off], then you go too.

Dionysus: Where?

Heracles: Down.

Dionysus: But then I would definitely bust my brains out. I don’t think I should go that way.

6. GA, Apuleius, 6.17

Nec cunctata diutius pergit ad quampiam turrim praealtam indidem sese datura praecipitem; sic enim rebatur ad inferos recta atque pulcherrime se posse descendere. Sed turris prorumpit in vocem subitam, et ‘Quid te’ inquit ‘Praecipitem, o misella, quaeris extinguere? Quidque iam novissimo periculo laborique isto temere succumbis? Nam si spiritus corpore tuo semel fuerit seiugatus, ibis quidem profecto ad imum Tartarum, sed inde nullo pacto redire poteris.

Without delay she went to a certain very high tower about to throw herself off headlong from the very same place; as it occurred to her as the most straight forward and favorable [way] that she could herself descend to hell. But the tower broke out in a sudden voice, and “Why do you” it asked “wish to kill yourself by jumping, o miserable girl? Why now do you fall without reason with this newest danger and this labor? For if your soul becomes severed from your body, you will go very certainly to Tartarus, but you will not be able to return through any agreement.

7. Aeneid, Vergil, 6.126-29

Talibus orabat dictis, arasque tenebat, cum sic orsa loqui vates: “Sate sanguine divom, Tros Anchisiade, facilis descensus Averno; noctes atque dies patet atri ianua Ditis

With such words he was praying, and he was holding onto the altar, when the Sibyl beginning spoke: Holy offspring, son of Anchises, easy is the descent to Avernus; both night and day the doors of black Dis lie open.

8. GA, Apuleius 9.10 (almost 11) [translation cf. Sonia Sabnis, *Intende Lector*]
iter arduum scrupis et cuiusce modi stirpibus infestum

A steep road littered with sharp stones and all kinds of stumps.

9. GA, Apuleius 6.20-1 selections

Nec morata Psyche pergit Taenarum sumptisque rite stipibus illis et offulis, infernum decurrit meatum transitoque per silentium asinaria debili et amnica stipe vectori data, neglecto superi natantis mortui desiderio, et spretis textricum subdolis precibus, et offulae cibo sopita canis horrenda rabie, domum Proserpinae penetrat... longe vegetior ab inferis recurrit.

Not delayed, Pysche proceeded to Taenarus and taking religious alms and some bites to eat, hastened going [down] to hell and she passed by in silence a disabled donkey driver, having given her alm to the ferry driver, ignored the plea of the swimming dead, and having rejected the cunning requests of the fates, and having lulled to sleep the horrible rage of the dog with the nourishment of a snack, she entered the house of Proserpina...she returned back from hell way more quickly.

10. GA, Apuleius, 9.31 [Translated by E.J. Kenney]

tunc unum Larem varie dispergit venditionis incertae licentiosa fortuna.

Fortune, irresponsible as ever, through the unpredictable operation of a sale scattered the whole establishment to the four winds.

11. Tacitus, *Dialogus de Oratoribus* 23

Nolo inridere "rotam Fortunae" et "ius verrinum" et illud tertio quoque sensu in omnibus orationibus pro sententia positum "esse videatur."

I do not want to mock "Fortune's wheel" and "Verrine soup", and that [same ending] in every third clause in every speech [of Cicero's] "it seems to be" placed before [the end] of the thought.

12. GA, Apuleius 9.31 [Translation by E.J. Kenney]

Die sequenti filia eius accurrit e proximo castello, in quod pridem denupserat, maesta atque crines pendulos quatiens et interdum pugnis obtundens ubera; quae nullo quidem domus infortunium nuntiante cuncta cognorat, sed ei per quietem obtulit sese flebilis patris sui facies, adhuc nodo revincta cervice, eique totum novercae scelus aperuit, de adulterio, de maleficio, et quemadmodum larvatus ad inferos demeasset. Ea cum se diutino plangore cruciasset, concursu familiarium cohibita tandem pausam luctui fecit: iamque nono die rite completis apud tumulum sollemnibus familiam supellectilemque et omnia iumenta ad hereditariam deducit auctionem.

The next day the miller's daughter, who was married and lived in a nearby village, arrived in mourning, tearing her disordered hair and beating her breast. She already knew the whole story, but not from any messenger; her father's ghost had appeared to her in a dream in pitiable guise, with the noose still around his neck, and had told her all about her stepmothers crimes, her adultery and witchcraft, and how the evil spirit had possessed and carried him down to hell. For a long time she tortured herself with weeping, but finally, restrained by the friends who rallied around her, she allowed her grief to subside. When after the canonical nine days the ceremonies

at the tomb had been dutifully performed, as heiress to the estate she put everything, slaves, plants, and animals, up for auction.

13. MT, Chaucer, 2125-2131

O noble Ovyde, ful sooth seystou, God woot,
 What sleighte is it, thogh it be long and hoot,
 That Love nyl fynde it out in som manere?
 By Piramus and Tesbee may men leere;
 Thogh they were kept ful longe streite overal,
 They been accorded, rownyng thurgh a wal,
 Ther no wight koude han founde out swich a sleighte.

O noble Ovid, you speak the full truth, God knows,
 What trick is it, though it be long and painful,
 That love will not find out in some manner?
 By Piramus and Thisbe can one learn;
 Though they were kept full long and strictly in every way,
 They are agreed, whispering through a wall,
 Where no one could have found out such a trick.

14. MT, Chaucer, 2227-2235

Pluto, that is kyng of Fayerye,
 And many a lady in his compaignye,
 Folwyng his wyf, the queene Proserpyna,
 Which that he ravysshed out of [Ethna]
 Whil that she gadered floures in the mede --
 In Claudyan ye may the stories rede,
 How in his grisely carte he hire fette --
 This kyng of Fairye thanne adoun hym sette
 Upon a bench of turves, fressh and grene,

Pluto, who is King of Fairyland,
 With many a lady in his company,
 Following his wife, the queen Proserpina,
 Whom he kidnapped out from Etna
 While she gathered flowers in the meadow.
 In Claudian you can read the stories,
 How in his grisly chariot he fetched her
 This king of Fairyland and then sat himself down
 Upon a bench made of turf, fresh and green...

15. MT, Chaucer 1709-1716

Thus been they wedded with solempnitee,
 And at the feeste sitteth he and she
 With othere worthy folk upon the deys.
 Al ful of joye and blisse is the paleys,
 And ful of instrumentz and of vitaille,
 The mooste deyntevous of al Ytaille.
 Biforn hem stode instrumentz of swich soun
 That Orpheus, ne of Thebes Amphioun,

Thus they were wedded with solemnity
 And at the feast he and she sit
 With the other worthy folk upon the dais
 The palace is all full of joy and bliss
 And full of instruments and food
 The most delicious of all Italy.
 Before them stood instruments of such sound
 That neither Orpheus, nor Amphioun of Thebes,
 Ever made such a melody.

16. Kate Bush, "Running up that Hill (A Deal With God)"

It doesn't hurt me
 Do you want to feel how it feels?
 Do you want to know, know that it doesn't hurt me?
 Do you want to hear about the deal that I'm making?
 You, it's you and me

And if I only could
 I'd make a deal with God
 And I'd get Him to swap our places
 Be running up that road
 Be running up that hill
 Be running up that building
 See if I only could, oh

You don't want to hurt me
 But see how deep the bullet lies
 Unaware I'm tearing you asunder
 Oh, there is thunder in our hearts.