

The Punishment

The fate of the suitors
Was not as Homer told.
After having strangled
The smart-ass son,
They gang-banged Penelope,
And then for variety
Raped Eurycleia.
They hunted down Eumaeus
With his own hounds,
Cut off his balls
And tossed them to the pigs.
Next, for a kick,
At a drunken feast
They pulped an old beggar
And found it was Odysseus
By his scarred thigh.
To round off the job
They soaked his old dog
In olive oil, and put a torch to him.
By this time the pickings
Were getting pretty slim,
So they burnt down the house
With the servants in it,
And headed for their homes.
Zeus, the all-seeing,
With a grim smile,
Unleashed the subtle Erinye of boredom.

John Ower

Innocents and Minotaur

They lead the annual sacrifice of virgins
To the labyrinth.
The slender youths and maidens came decked
With fresh flowers, and in their brightest raiment.
They carried jars of wine, ripe olives,
Cheeses, fresh loaves and baked lamb.
It was as if their expedition
Were a picnic in the fields.
They tittered and they flirted until even the grim guards
Could not help but smile
At their silliness.
After they had disappeared
Through the black doorway
The sound of their games of hide-and-peek
And tag in the corridors, echoed to the light.
Then fell the usual dead quiet.
Two days later, much to the astonishment
Of the authorities, the whole lot emerged.
It was apparent from their flush
That all had had their first drink too many
And their first fling at love;
For the rest they did not look
Any worse for wear.
Laughing, they tore apart an officer
Who tried to detain them.
They were permitted to depart, unmolested.
An official expedition,
Working from the blueprints
And armed to the teeth, made it to the centre
After ten hours.
There lay the Minotaur in the party scraps
Where he had flopped upon his face.
He had been bound hand and foot
And then slyly strangled
With strands of blond hair.

John Ower