

“Happy the Man, Who Likes Ulysses”
By Joachim du Bellay (trans. by Richard Wilbur)

Season 15, Episode 6

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Original French:

Heureux qui, comme Ulysse, a fait un beau
voyage,
Ou comme cestuy-là qui conquit la toison,
Et puis est retourné, plein d'usage et raison,
Vivre entre ses parents le reste de son âge !

Quand reverrai-je, hélas, de mon petit village
Fumer la cheminée, et en quelle saison
Reverrai-je le clos de ma pauvre maison,
Qui m'est une province, et beaucoup
davantage?

Plus me plaît le séjour qu'ont bâti mes aïeux,
Que des palais Romains le front audacieux,
Plus que le marbre dur me plaît l'ardoise fine:

Plus mon Loire gaulois, que le Tibre latin,
Plus mon petit Liré, que le mont Palatin,
Et plus que l'air marin la douceur angevine.

English Translation by Richard Wilbur:

Happy the man who, journeying far and wide
As Jason or Ulysses did, can then
Turn homeward, seasoned in the ways of
men,
And claim his own, and there in peace abide!

When shall I see the chimney-smoke divide
The sky above my little town: ah, when
Stroll the small gardens of that house again
Which is my realm and crown, and more
beside?

Better I love the plain, secluded home
My fathers built, than bold façades of Rome;
Slate pleases me as marble cannot do;

Better than Tiber's flood my quiet Loire,
Those little hills than these, and dearer far
Than great sea winds the zephyrs of Anjou.

NOTES/NARRATION:

The page features a large, faint watermark in the center. The watermark consists of a circular outline containing a quill pen nib pointing towards the bottom left, with the word "WRITE" written in a stylized font across the middle of the circle. The entire page is covered with horizontal lines for writing, with the watermark overlaid on the central portion.

Recited By:

Date Recited: