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Dear Reader,

December....The end of a year presents us with a natural invitation to reflection. While we seem to have more things to do than the rest of the year: to shop for presents, to write holiday greetings notes and to meet with friends and family, it's still a time that invites for reflection, and we should accept that invitation.

Reflecting back on how we began the year, what dreams, what hopes, what fears and what promises we made to ourselves, where are we twelve months later? Were we loyal to our dreams, did we make the decisions that would take us closer to our goals? Did we respect our deepest priorities, did we listen to our heart? As I was looking for material for this special issue, I found this story about Ithaca. While it is a very old story, it is as valid today as it was at the time it was created.

So, my end of the year gift to you is this. Stop, Read, Reflect, Enjoy!

Isabel Rimanoczy  
Editor

Quote of the Month

*"Sometimes we have goals. More often, goals have us."*

*Uncle Wilbur*



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## Ithaca: The Ultimate Goal

By Isabel Rimanoczy

**U**lysses' trip back to his beloved home, Ithaca, is the stuff of legend. As he set his goal of

returning to that fascinating place, where both the landscape and the people were so very special, he could not foresee what stood in his way. For him, all the marvels of the world, and his wife, Penelope, awaited him in Ithaca. He had to get back there! So he started his journey. The trip was long, and it took him through unknown lands, uncharted seas, and terrifying obstacles. He entered villages, met merchants, warriors, shepherds and sorceresses. He endured dangerous adventures and challenging moments. As he made his way, he talked to the local people, and was surprised by their many strange habits, and navigated new languages and customs as he strove to understand the details of each land he traveled through. He never had imagined that so different places existed! He heard unbelievable stories, stories of daily life and living myths. He saw blossoming hills, the tallest mountains he could have imagined, fertile valleys and endless deserts. Undaunted by the succession of villages, peoples and challenges, he remembered that his ultimate goal was Ithaca, and the really wonderful things waiting for him there. With that powerful object in mind, he was able to continue his journey, which took him several years.

Then the day arrived. Ithaca! He slowly walked through the island, observed the beautiful landscape, met the local people. It was a beautiful place, no doubt, but reflecting on the places he had been throughout the arduous journey to get there, it seemed not that spectacular. In his mind he had kept the image of a superior place, and now he felt disappointed. What was so different here? Wasn't it just like other places he had passed through? He felt surprise, then rage against those unmet expectations and against those who had encouraged him to go after his goal that was not that special after all. Sadness overwhelmed him. So many years holding on that hope, that goal, such a long journey – just to discover that it was not what he expected, what he had imagined. And then finally he understood. Ithaca *WAS* something superior, something special. It was a goal worth the journey. Ithaca – the ultimate goal – was not a lie: but the magic was not in the island. The magic was not at the point of arrival. The magic was in the journey.



## Ithaca

*By Constantine P. Cavafy (1911)*

When you set out on your journey to Ithaca,  
 pray that the road is long,  
 full of adventure, full of knowledge.  
 The Lestrygonians and the Cyclops,  
 the angry Poseidon -- do not fear them:  
 You will never find such as these on your path,  
 if your thoughts remain lofty, if a fine  
 emotion touches your spirit and your body.  
 The Lestrygonians and the Cyclops,  
 the fierce Poseidon you will never encounter,  
 if you do not carry them within your soul,  
 if your soul does not set them up before you.


Pray that the road is long.  
 That the summer mornings are many, when,  
 with such pleasure, with such joy  
 you will enter ports seen for the first time;

stop at Phoenician markets,  
and purchase fine merchandise,  
mother-of-pearl and coral, amber and ebony,  
and sensual perfumes of all kinds,  
as many sensual perfumes as you can;  
visit many Egyptian cities,  
to learn and learn from scholars.

Always keep Ithaca in your mind.  
To arrive there is your ultimate goal.  
But do not hurry the voyage at all.  
It is better to let it last for many years;  
and to anchor at the island when you are old,  
rich with all you have gained on the way,  
not expecting that Ithaca will offer you riches.

Ithaca has given you the beautiful voyage.  
Without her you would have never set out on the road.  
She has nothing more to give you.

And if you find her poor, Ithaca has not deceived you.  
Wise as you have become, with so much experience,  
you must already have understood what Ithaca mean.

*Cavafy, one of the most prominent Greek poets, was born on April 29, 1863 and died on the same date in 1933 in Alexandria (Egypt).* 



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