

I dragged it from the flames, my men clustering
round
as some god breathed enormous courage through us
all.

Hoisting high that olive stake with its stabbing point,
straight into the monster's eye they rammed it hard—
I drove my weight on it from above and bored it
home

as a shipwright bores his beam with a shipwright's
drill

that men below, whipping the strap back and forth,
whirl

and the drill keeps twisting faster, never stopping—

So we seized our stake with its fiery tip

and bored it round and round in the giant's eye

till blood came boiling up around that smoking shaft

and the hot blast singed his brow and eyelids round
the core

and the broiling eyeball burst—

He listed as he spoke and then fell flat on his back,
His thick neck bent sideways. He was sound asleep,
Belching out wine and bits of human flesh
In his drunken stupor. I swung into action,
Thrusting the stake deep in the embers,
Heating it up, and all the while talking to my men
To keep up their morale. When the olivewood stake
Was about to catch fire, green though it was,
And was really glowing, I took it out
And brought it right up to him. My men
Stood around me, and some god inspired us.
My men lifted up the olivewood stake
And drove the sharp point right into his eye,
While I, putting my weight behind it, spun it around
The way a man bores a ship's beam with a drill,
Leaning down on it while other men beneath him
Keep it spinning and spinning with a leather strap.
That's how we twirled the fiery-pointed stake
In the Cyclops' eye. The blood formed a whirlpool
Around its searing tip. His lids and brow
Were all singed by the heat from the burning eyeball
And its roots crackled in the fire and hissed
Like an axe-head or adze a smith dips into water
When he wants to temper the iron—that's how his eye
Sizzled and hissed around the olivewood stake.
He screamed, and the rock walls rang with his voice.

his massive neck askew. All-conquering sleep
took him. In drunken heaviness, he spewed
wine from his throat, and chunks of human flesh.
And then I drove the spear into the embers
to heat it up, and told my men, 'Be brave!'
I wanted none of them to shrink in fear.
The fire soon had seized the olive spear,
green though it was, and terribly it glowed.
I quickly snatched it from the fire. My crew
stood firm: some god was breathing courage in us.
They took the olive spear, its tip all sharp,
and shoved it in his eye. I leaned on top
and twisted it, as when a man drills wood
for shipbuilding. Below, the workers spin
the drill with straps, stretched out from either end.
So round and round it goes, and so we whirled
the fire-sharp weapon in his eye. His blood
poured out around the stake, and blazing fire
sizzled his lids and brows, and fried the roots.
As when a blacksmith dips an axe or adze
to temper it in ice-cold water; loudly
it shrieks. From this, the iron takes on its power.
So did his eyeball crackle on the spear.
Horribly then he howled, the rocks resounded,
and we shrank back in fear. He tugged the spear
out of his eye, all soaked with gushing blood.