



**Update Page for Class of 4/10/23**

Course materials and info page: <https://sacks-richard.com/omeros-at-du-materials>

**For our fourth class (that of 4/10)**, we'll continue our exploration of *Omeros*, first spending some more time on Achille's ancestral journey and return in book 3. We'll then turn our attention to books 4 and 5 which feature a character named Catherine Weldon and also the narrator's 2<sup>nd</sup> visit with his father along with the European journey the narrator then takes at his father's urging. As per the schedule on the syllabus, for class on 4/10 please read through chapter 43 (the final chapter of book 5 which ends on page 219). As usual, here are some passages you might find productive/provocative to think about, though I again hasten to add that any passage is fair game for our discussion. You'll see that I've continued the approach providing one question for each chapter to help us maintain our bearings as we wrestle with the narrative and poetic complexities of the poem. Note that the first question (the one for chapter 32) repeats last week's question for that chapter.

**Chapter 32)** What do you make of **32.1 (pp 165-166), the narrator's visit with his mother** who, because of her dementia, is living in the "Marian [nursing] Home" (32.1.6/p165) and has "entered a dimension / where every thought was weightless, every form clouded / by its ephemeral halo" (32.1.13-15/p165) as "untranslatable / answers accompanied these actual spirits" (32.2.12-13/p167)

**Chapter 33)** What do you make of **33.1 (pp. 169-170), the opening section of book 4 "along the coast of my new empire"** (33.1.11/p169), the final two stanzas of which begin "From the provincial edge of an atlas, from the hem / of a frayed empire, a man stops (33.1.28-33/p170)?

**Chapter 34)** What do you make of **34.1-2 (pp. 174-175), which evidently involve the narrator "when I looked through the glass" (34.2.11/p175) at a museum exhibit**, and immediately after which Catherine Weldon first appears?

**Chapter 35)** What do you make of **35.3 (pp. 180-182), which moves from "Catherine Weldon / like Achille on the river" (35.3.3-4/p180) to "our final letter" (35.3.66/p182)?**

**Chapter 36)** What do you make of the **progression of chapter 36 (pp. 182-188), as it moves from the narrator's encounter with Winslow Homer's *The Gulf Stream* (36.1.26ff./pp183-184) to his second visit with his father (36.3/pp185-188)?**

**Chapter 37)** What do you make of **37.2 (p. 191), the middle section of the first stop (Lisbon) of our European journey**, in which "Across the meridian, I try seeing the other side, / past rusty containers, waves like welts from a lash" " (37.2.1-2/p191)?

**Chapter 38)** What do you make of **38.2 (195-196), the middle section of the second stop (London) of our European journey**, with the bargeman watching "London gliding with the Thames around its neck" (38.2.2/p195)?

**Chapter 39)** What do you make of **39.1 (pp. 198-199), the first section of the third stop (Ireland) of our European journey**, with "Silence ... in flower" (39.1.6/p198), "in a nation / split by a glottal scream" (39.1.35-36)?

**Chapter 40)** What do you make of **chapter 40 (pp. 201-205), the last chapter of our European journey**, which moves from "the Aegean coast" (40.1.2/p201) on a "scorched deck [with] Odysseus" (40.1.15/p202) to the question of "what power lay in the work / of forgiving fountains with naiads and lions" (40.3.32-33/p205)?

**Chapter 41)** What do you make of **41.2 (pp. 207-208) in which "I re-entered my reversible world"** (41.2.1/p207)?

**Chapter 42)** What do you make of **42.1 (pp. 210-212, which very suddenly places us in a Toronto hotel contemplating "a young Polish waitress"** (42.1.4/p210) "with that nervous / smile of the recent immigrant that borders on tears" (42.1.11-12/p211)?

**Chapter 43)** What do you make of **chapter 43 (pp. 213-219, the final chapter of book 5 and of the Catherine Weldon sequence**, as it moves from her memory of "the power of a globe that lay in a girl's palm / to shake the world to whiteness (43.1.6-7/p213), to her section-long speech of 43.2 which ends "I walked like a Helen among their dead warriors" (43.2.33/p216), and finally to what seems to be the continuation of that speech in 43.3.1-12/p217) as she fades away in "the winter of the Ghost Dance" (43.3.28/p218)?