

# “Ithaca”

by John Midkiff

- I seek.
- Emerald waves shine, jutting through dissolving white caps,
- Razor sharp tips interrupted only by the solitary white sentinels.
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- I walk.
- An elder kneels before a sentinel, tears flow from him into the sea below.
- The silent guardian does not respond, weather-worn it is still.
  
- I search.
- Number, Name, Letter, evade my pursuit, Ithaca remains lost to me.
- Section 60 appears, the gods show favor. My quest nears end.
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- I find.
- Another sentinel marks this place.10464. Weight bears down on me.
- Approaching my Ithaca, The putrid pull of Styx sweeps me away.
  
- I fall.
- Voices whisper, dull, ceaseless. Sirens beckon. Rogers arrogant, Taylor’s love, Fenn’s support, Wild’s carelessness. Soft song of the past ripples around me
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- I breathe.
- Eyes open, knees wet, trembling. My fists hammer the spiked expanse before me.
- The stalwart guardian looms, my fingers trace the unfeeling surface. It offers no comfort.
  
- I beg.
- The Fates edge rived wrong. Beseeching the God’s my spirit breaks.
- Their names for mine. Olympus does not hear my bargain.
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- I feel.
- The jagged turf sea roots me seeping its wet lifeblood through me. Shivering.
- A hawk screams into the cherry-blossom scented air. My head sinks. This is not my Ithaca.
  
- I freeze.
- The mind screams to flee as the whispers return. Their unrelenting grip holds me
- My warrior brothers reside with noble Achilles now. They beckon me to join.
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- I weep.
  - Tears carve down my face creating an offering. Cool marble presses to my head.
  - We trained for war, I am unprepared for this. I forsake the quest for my Ithaca.
  
  - I want.
  - Desire burns hot. A longing to join the fallen, to end my insufferable loneliness. The
  - warmth spreads. My home is with them. Ithaca has fallen.
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  - I stand.
  - The white sentinels stare back silently stretching out of sight. The final resting place of
  - Heroes. The damp grass clings coolly to my knees. The old man stands.
  
  
  - I hope.
  - The elder nods to me. Understanding forms. Ithaca is not lost. The whispers clear
  - This end is a beginning, struggle on, fight on. My Ithaca lies elsewhere.
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- I wander.