

# EPIC

After C. P. Cavafy's "Ithaka"

BY SANDRA BEASLEY



As you set out for home—  
back home to your apartment,  
to your vengeful cat, back home  
to a betrothed who never  
was one for textile arts—  
hope that the voyage is a long one.  
Hope that Homer finds you  
on your chosen journey,  
on a bar stool in Ocala  
one March Sunday at noon,  
though it occurs to you—  
after you are served  
the bowl of boiled peanuts—  
that your hunger, in this moment,

is not heroic. One by one  
you shell their bodies, warm  
and soft against your bottom teeth,  
tipping sweet meat into your mouth.  
Did they once have names?  
Did they once have daughters?  
How silly they look, in their little boat  
with its checkered placemat sail.  
You take a swig of a Bloody Mary,  
spiked with ocean and jalapeno,  
the one eye of your forehead pulsing.

You will get back in the car.  
You will drive another 800 miles  
with Aeolus's bagged breath  
stashed in your glove compartment.  
And if you find her poor, home  
won't have fooled you, you  
who have chosen a life

that consists of leaving your life.  
Recall you once sat at a bar  
wiping Cajun broth from your chin  
with a twelfth cocktail napkin.  
*Blame Nobody*, you sang,  
*Nobody—*  
*Nobody—*  
*Nobody did this to me.*

Illustrations by Sauda Mitchell

# RHYMES WITH

BY SANDRA BEASLEY

*Sporange*, promises the dictionary. Or *Blorenge*, a mountain  
in southeast of Wales. Except that I am off Route 301,  
debating between two quarter-bushel bags of oranges  
and deciding to buy them both. Florida, I am a little in love  
with your strange: how you match pastel blue to forest green;  
how your north is more Southern than your south;  
how alligators and crocodiles share the same nine-mile pond,  
brackish on one shore and fresh on the other.  
Navel & Page; Page & Orlando; Orlando & Honeybell;  
Honeybell & Murcott. I bring Temples and Ortaniques back  
to a man who has hand-scrubbed his grandmother's juicer.  
*Wear-Ever*, promises the stamped metal.  
He works for an hour, slicing and pressing. Sometimes  
I must pitch my stance so that I don't fall down the mountain,  
into a valley, into the river of Usk. What two bodies  
couldn't make music, within such an embrace of aluminum?



Sandra Beasley's  
latest collection of  
poetry is *Count the  
Waves*, published  
by W.W. Norton.