

On my way home –
Elated from seeing the victorious Apobates ¹
 His bright armour rivaling the sun,
 His oiled limbs glowing,
Jump from a speeding chariot,
 And then jump on again,
My heart leapt
 I felt proud to be a free man of Athens.

On my way home –
 As I passed by the white notice boards ²
 Hung by the monument to the Eponymous Heroes ³
They had passed the sentence
 That I feared they would
On the ugly little philosopher ⁴
 That I called my friend
 He still owed me a cockerel.⁵
My heart cracked, in the afternoon sun.
 Now I am ashamed to be called an Athenian.

I did not go home –
 But prayed a while
 In the temple of Hephaistos ⁶
Then crossed the Agora again
And climbed the long Panathenaic Way
 That zig-zags up to The Rock ⁷ itself.
I drank at the Mycenaean spring
 But it tasted like aloes ⁸ or of hemlock today.

Abandoning all thoughts of home –
 And what might have awaited me there,
I passed by Wisdom, ⁹
 And chose to follow
 The ancient way of the Erechids.¹⁰
Now I can be truly free
 For a few seconds
 As I fall,
Better this, than a long life,
 However praiseworthy,
 Oppressed by such democracy.

¹ A carving in the Museum of the Stoa of the Attalos

² Athenian equivalent of a newspaper, 400 BC

³ The 10 mythical heroes of Athens

⁴ Socrates

⁵ A reference to Socrates' last words, who said he owed a sacrifice to Asclepius

⁶ The Sun God

⁷ The Acropolis

⁸ A bitter herb

⁹ A reference to the temple of Athena, goddess of wisdom

¹⁰ Early royal dynasty of Athens, Theseus being the last, whose traditional death in times of disaster was to sacrifice themselves, by falling from the rock of the Acropolis.