

Skyros

How did the goat die?

It stepped too high, too fast.
Thunder threatened from the sea.
It bleated once, twice
as air rushed past its belly,
slope crumbling in its fall.
Lightning struck.

Where did the goat die?

An edge of history named Atsitsa.
Grey stones, red rocks, green waves
still calling out for young Achilles,
his mother's salty tongue.
Flat weeds dried out by long sun.
A rough stretch, full of thunder.

Why did the goat die?

She was chosen.
Or she wasn't.
No one can say for sure
if gods demanded hoof and horn
or if death simply came to her
in that fast summer storm.

When did the goat die?

As rain began to hit him.
As a rooster began to scream.
As last light left his open eye
and journeyed out into the clouds
that gathered over his pale curves
still warm where his blood stilled.

What goat died?

No one's. Everyone's.
The island holds them on dry hills
that cry for rain and thunder.

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He was old. She was young.
It wore a jangling metal bell
someone found at Palimari.

Who saw the goat die?

Everyone. No one.
Thunder moved through olive trees
and rain dropped high and fast.
She was prayer. He was supper.
It gave its unknown name forever
to all who journey here to climb.

for Richard Layzell