

## THE MEDITERRANEAN

---

Robert Ellrodt

Seated on a bare rock, I watch the waves  
Which splash upon it in thick coming drops  
Laden with memories of the distant past.  
By these Mediterranean shores, Ulysses  
Sailed, defying allurements and the gods,  
Phoenicians founded cities, plied their trade,  
The fleets of Rome and Egypt clashed, Lepanto  
Saw Turks and Christians fight for world empire.  
The blue Mediterranean nowadays  
Is starred with boats and rafts about to sink  
With human creatures flying from Africa  
In deluded hope of deliverance  
From famine, misery, sickness, tyranny.  
Its streams, declared by Shelley crystalline,  
Wash their carcasses in their coils, together  
With the dead fish and dolphins human greed,  
Cruelty and carelessness yearly create.

---

**Robert Ellrodt** is emeritus professor of English literature at the Sorbonne (Paris 3). He has published many books on Renaissance and Romantic poetry, notably *Seven Metaphysical Poets*.