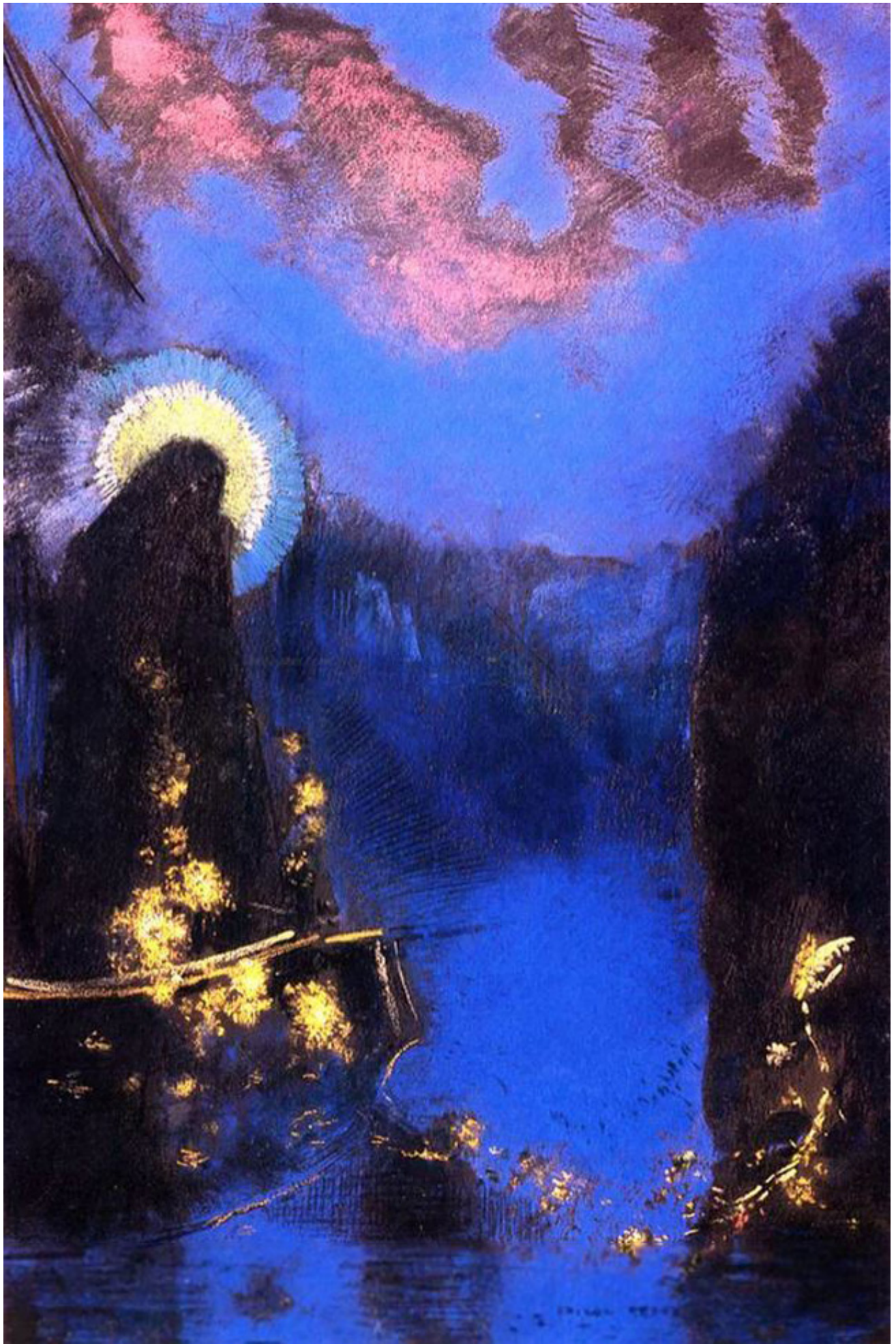


# Whither Thou Goest

by [Romain P. A. Delpeuch](#) (April 2023)



## *The Boat*, Odilon Redon, 1898

One single thought, one single face—a lie?  
For months and years, one motive to go on  
despite the tragedies unfolding 'round,  
despite the emptiness that grows within.  
À quoi tient une vie? À pas grand-chose.  
A mediated nothingness to power  
obsessions, reveries, instincts debased—  
unanswered questions: can contact be made?  
Who's making it, then? Who's initiating  
attraction? What can be repaired? Restored?  
Reversing otoplasty? Scratching ink,  
unspoiling skin? Unstraightening teeth to un-  
commodify a smile? Exorcisms—  
to suck the lies out of the soul, to cleanse  
the body from its drugs and parasites.  
Who's gonna be the priest to drain the dross?  
Who's going to rebuild the fleshly temple,  
to turn this den of thieves into the shrine  
it always was designed to be? "With men  
it is impossible, but not with God."  
But here, it's only men. They do their best;  
they do their worst. They disappoint both ways.  
The scars, the wear and tear, are here to stay.

## [Table of Contents](#)

**Romain P. A. Delpeuch** is the author of *Hypnagogia* (Terror House Press, TBA). His poetry and short fiction appear in *New English Review*, [Terror House Magazine](#), [The Ekphrastic Review](#), [Apocalypse Confidential](#), [Ekstasis](#), [D.F.L. Lit](#), *JOURN-E* (vol. 1, no. 2), [Atop The Cliffs](#) and [The Decadent Review](#).

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