

Odysseus describes his visit to the kingdom of the dead:

But now there came the ghost... of Peleus's son Achilles...
and hailed me with a flight of mournful questions:
'...What daring brought you down to the House of Death?—
where the senseless, burnt-out wraiths of mortals make their home.'

The voice of his spirit paused, and I was quick to answer:
'Achilles, son of Peleus, greatest of the Achaeans...
there's not a man in the world more blest than you—
there never has been, never will be one.
Time was, when you were alive, we Argives
honored you as a god, and now down here, I see,
you lord it over the dead in all your power.
So grieve no more at dying, great Achilles.'

I reassured the ghost, but he broke out, protesting,
'No winning words about death to *me*, shining Odysseus!
By god, I'd rather slave on earth for another man—
some dirt-poor tenant farmer who scrapes to keep alive—
than rule down here over all the breathless dead.'

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from Homer's *Odyssey*, Book 11
(11.530-558 in the Fagles translation; 11.467-491 in the Greek original)