

OG Greek Night Coming Soon!



We are planning a Greek Night
February 22nd
Please let us know if this not a good time for
your family...

Hello Everyone

Oldest Group Newsletter February 5, 2007

W. H. Auden's Musee des Beaux Arts

About suffering they were never wrong,
The Old Masters; how well, they understood
Its human position; how it takes place
While someone else is eating or opening a
window or just walking dully along;
How, when the aged are reverently, passionately
waiting
For the miraculous birth, there always must be
Children who did not specially want it to happen,
skating
On a pond at the edge of the wood:
They never forgot
That even the dreadful martyrdom must run its
course
Anyhow in a corner, some untidy spot
Where the dogs go on with their doggy life and
the torturer's horse
Scratches its innocent behind on a tree.
In Breughel's Icarus, for instance: how
everything turns away
Quite leisurely from the disaster; the ploughman
may
Have heard the splash, the forsaken cry,
But for him it was not an important failure; the
sun shone
As it had to on the white legs disappearing into
the green
Water; and the expensive delicate ship that must
have seen
Something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky,
had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on.



Breughel's Fall of Icarus

This week, we looked at three versions of a story.

First, we looked at Breughel's *Fall of Icarus* painted in the mid 1550's, and tried to notice as much as we could about the painting. It takes a while, but look for Icarus's legs at the bottom right of the painting. Notice that while the painting is named for him, he is the least significant object present.

Why is this so?

Next, we looked at Ovid's *Metamorphoses* written in 31 BCE (see the other side of this page) and it became clear that Breughel had based his painting on this text.

Then, we read W. H. Auden's poem on the left, and explored at least one interpretation of the painting.

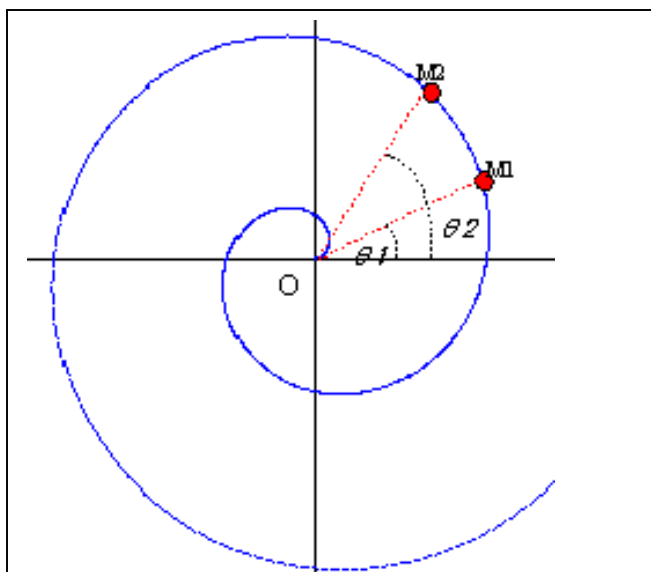
Finally, the kids wrote essays based on these works...

OVID:

The Story of Daedalus and Icarus

Homesick for homeland, Daedalus hated Crete
And his long exile there, but the sea held him.
'Though Minos blocks escape by land or water,'
Daedalus said, 'surely the sky is open,
And that's the way we'll go. Minos' dominion
Does not include the air.' He turned his thinking
Toward unknown arts, changing the laws of nature.
He laid out feathers in order, first the smallest,
A little larger next it, and so continued,
The way that pan-pipes rise in gradual sequence.
He fastened them with twine and wax, at middle,
At bottom, so, and bent them, gently curving,
So that they looked like wings of birds, most surely.
And Icarus, his son, stood by and watched him,
Not knowing he was dealing with his downfall,
Stood by and watched, and raised his shiny face
To let a feather, light as down, fall on it,
Or stuck his thumb into yellow wax,
Fooling around, the way a boy will, always,
Whenever a father tries to get some work done.
Still it was done at last, and the father hovered,
Poised in the moving air, and taught his son:
'I warn you, Icarus, fly a middle course:
Don't go too low, or water will weigh the wings
down;
Don't go too high, or the sun's fire will burn them.
Keep to the middle way. And one more thing,
No fancy steering by star or constellation,
Follow my lead.' That was the flying lesson,
And now to fit the wings to the boy's shoulders.
Between the work and warning the father found
His cheeks were wet with tears, and his hands
trembled.

He kissed his son (*Good-bye*, if he has known it),
Rose on his wings, flew on ahead, as fearful
As any bird launching the little nestlings
Out of high nest into thin air. Keep on,
Keep on, he signals, *follow me!* He guides him
In flight—O fateful art!—and the wings move
And the father looks back to see the son's wings
moving.
Far off, far down, some fisherman is watching
As the rod dips and trembles over water,
Some Shepherd rests his weight upon his crook,
Some ploughman on the handles of the ploughshare,
And all look up, in absolute amazement,
At those air-born above. They must be gods!
They were over Samos, Juno's sacred island,
Delos and Paros toward the left, Lebinthus
Visible to the right, and another island,
Calymne, rich in honey. And the boy
Thought *This is wonderful!* And left his father,
Soared higher, higher, drawn to the vast heaven,
Nearer the sun, and the wax that held the wings
Melted in that fierce heat, and the bare arms
Beat up and down in the air, and lacking oarage
Took hold of nothing. *Father!* he cried, and *Father!*
Until the blue sea hushed him, the dark water
Men call the Icarian sea now. And Daedalus,
Father no more, called 'Icarus, where are you!
Where are you Icarus? Tell me where to find you!'
And saw the wings on the waves, and cursed his
talents,
Buried the body in the tomb, and the land
Was named for Icarus...



Archimedes's Spiral

Things we have been doing:

- ❖ We read and discussed an excerpt from Plato's Republic.
- ❖ We did some math based on Archimedes's book called *The Sand Reckoner* in which he devised a method for forming large letters (*Myriads*).
- ❖ We did timed times tests.
- ❖ In spelling, we looked for Greek roots and did work in small groups to learn words from our writing work.

Did you know a person walking from the center of a merry-go-round at a steady speed along a radius of the floor travels, with respect to the ground, along an Archimedean spiral?