He sat there, the sun playing on his old body making his blood warm as it once was in his youth. As he watched the lambs play, the years slipped away from him, and he was once again a young man tending his father’s flock in the hills of the old country. He remembered the cave where the sheep gathered for shelter, and the swift, cold, brilliant waters from the melting snows flowing past the mouth of the cave.

How wise he had been, he thought, for buying that land. His father would be quarreling yet over the rights to the cave if he had not bought it. He remembered the field in which he had approached the neighbor. “How much do you want for the land and cave?” he had asked.

“Two hundred drachmas,” the neighbor replied, knowing full well he was asking too much.

“Here,” he said, and to the startled man he counted out the money. They shook hands and walked away. Now there would be no more quarreling.

He remembered scurrying home over the rocks and ledges to tell his father he had bought the land.

“How much?” his father had asked.

“Two hundred drachmas,” he had answered.

“You fool!” his father had shouted. “It’s not worth half that. He fooled you.”

“But now it’s your land and you won’t have to quarrel over it any more,” he had replied. How pleased he had been at his wisdom when two weeks later his father refused to sell the land for four hundred drachmas.

The old sheep were grazing nearby now. He rubbed the wrinkled skin on his browned hand to increase the flow of blood. The young lambs were running and jumping with all four legs in the air. First, one would jump on the dead old oak tree, then the other would follow. How like his children they were, he thought, when they were little, playing at his feet. He used to watch them with half-closed eyes, pretending to be asleep. “Baa,” one of them would cry when he was hurt or pushed. “Baa,” and their mother would come running to them to succor the hurt.

“How pretty she was,” he mused. “How pretty and how shy. And now she’s gone, and I’m waiting to go too.” With a sharp pang, the present focused itself on him. He had worked hard and become successful in this new land, and he had watched his children grow and marry and their children, and now he was ready for rest. Like the old oak yonder, which spent its life giving shelter until its rotted trunk was felled by the winds, his body too was decaying and crying for its own. His time was upon him, and he awaited the wind.