

Athena: Laertes' son, constantly I see you tracking down some enemy, intent on capturing him, and now you are at Ajax's shoreline barracks, the rearguard of the army, and still you are sniffing and gauging the man's fresh tracks, checking to see if he's in or elsewhere. Well, you've proved yourself an unerring Spartan tracking-dog – he's in, just back, his head dripping sweat, his butchering hands likewise. No need now for you to poke about the entrance here. Tell me why this obsession of yours – I know and will counsel you.

Odysseus: Athena! My special deity! I hear you clearly, invisible as you are. Your voice seized my heart like the bass-mouthed Tyrrhenian trumpet. Yes, you are right – I am spidering in on a man I detest, Ajax the Shield-Bearer! Long time he's been my prey, no other. This night he has dealt us an unseen blow, if indeed he was the perpetrator (for we know nothing for sure, can only speculate). I took this burden upon myself. Just now we discovered all our beasts, our booty, savagely slaughtered, their guardians too. All say that man's to blame. One of our spies saw him cavorting across the plain, his weapon spattered anew with blood, and reported this to me. Right then I sprang to the chase – some things I can guess at but others terrify me and I can't make sense of it all. But your timing is exquisite – you interpret for me both past and future.

Athena: Yes, Odysseus. For some time I have been your guardian and a zealous admirer of your huntsmanship.

Odysseus: Beloved lady, are my labours to the purpose?

Athena: Yes, it was he who did all this.

Odysseus: For what reason? It's inconceivable.

Athena: He was tormented with fury over Achilles' armour.

Odysseus: Why then did he come down on the cattle?

Athena: He thought he was drenching his hands in the blood of you soldiers.

Odysseus: Was such a fate his hope for the Argives?

Athena: Yes, and he would have achieved it but for me.

Odysseus: What sort of bold, outrageous venture was this?

Athena: That of a nighttime, stealthy, one-man assault on you all.

Odysseus: And did he get close? Did he reach his goal?

Athena: As far as the city's Twin-Chiefs' Gates.

Odysseus: And how did he stay his madman's hands from slaughter?

Athena: I stopped him from his outlandish pleasure when I cast a distressing resolve into his eyes and turned him instead towards the flocks and the cattle, guarded and as-yet unapportioned. Leaping into their midst, he wrought havoc on the horned beasts, slaughtering in a circle, at one time convinced that he was killing the two sons of Atreus, at another that he was making a murderous descent on other commanders.

As he rushed wildly about, gripped by his insane sickness, I urged him on, hurling him into meshes of grief. Then, after he had quit this toil, he trussed with fetters the surviving cattle and all the sheep and brought them to his tents, as though they were men, not horned prey. And now, bound as they are in his hut, he tortures them.

To you too I will reveal this all-too-manifest sickness. See it and howl it to all the Argives. Wait for him here. Take heart, don't anticipate mishap – I shall divert his gaze from your face.

You, who are binding your captives' hands with cords, I summon you. It is you I call, Ajax. Come out.

Odysseus: What are you doing, Athena? Don't call him out!  
Athena: Stand your ground! Be quiet! Are you a coward?  
Odysseus: God forbid! But let him remain indoors.  
Athena: What are you afraid of? Was he not a man before this?  
Odysseus: Yes, but a foe to this man [points to himself], and he still is.  
Athena: So, is not mocking a foe the sweetest mockery?  
Odysseus: Still, I'm happy to let him stay within.  
Athena: Are you loath to get a good look at a madman?  
Odysseus: I wouldn't be loath to look at him in his right mind.  
Athena: But he won't be able to see you now.  
Odysseus: How can that be if he sees with those same eyes?  
Athena: I shall shade his eyes, though they still have the power of sight.  
Odysseus: Well, all is possible in the hands of a skillful god.  
Athena: Stand there quietly and wait.  
Odysseus: I will. But I wish I were somewhere else.  
Athena: Ajax, again I call you. Why so little reverence for your ally?  
Ajax: Athena! Welcome! Welcome, child of Zeus. And in good time. I will adorn you with booty of pure gold, the fruits of this hunt.  
Athena: I am glad to hear it. But tell me, did your sword get a good dousing in Argive army blood?  
Ajax: Such is my boast, I can't deny it.  
Athena: And did you turn your hand against the sons of Atreus?  
Ajax: Yes! they'll never dishonour me again.  
Athena: So, they are dead. Do I understand you?  
Ajax: Yes, dead! Let them steal my armour now.  
Athena: Good. What about Laertes' son? What fate did you dole out to him? Or did he escape?  
Ajax: You're asking the whereabouts of that conniving fox?  
Athena: I am. I mean your adversary Odysseus.  
Ajax: Lady, he is sitting in my hut, the sweetest prisoner of all. I plan to delay his death.  
Athena: So you can do what? What further gain do you have in mind?  
Ajax: Lash him to a column in the yard.  
Athena: What misfortune, then, are you planning for the wretch?  
Ajax: I'll whip his back red-raw, then I'll kill him.  
Athena: No, don't maltreat the wretch in such a way.  
Ajax: Athena, I am your servant in all else, but this is the penalty he'll pay, no other.  
Athena: Well then, since this deed will cause you such pleasure, go to it, spare nothing in your plans.  
Ajax: I'm off to my work. I hope you will always stand by me, such a trusted ally.  
Athena: Do you see, Odysseus, how great divine power is? What man has been found to be more prudent, better at doing what needs to be done, than this one?  
Odysseus: I know of none. Deeply I pity the wretch, though my enemy, entangled as he is in such misfortunes. And I am concerned with his fate no more than with my own. For I see we mortals are nothing but phantoms, insubstantial shades.  
Athena: With this in mind, speak no arrogance to the gods, suppress all boasts should you prevail over another by physical violence or the power of wealth. One day may provide

mortal man with much, one day may deprive them of everything. Prudent men the gods love; they hate the sinful.

Chorus: Ajax, lord of sea-girt Salamis,  
I celebrate your triumphs and your fame,  
But when Lord Zeus deals such a blow as this  
Or savagely the Greeks malign your name,  
Then like a wild-eyed dove I'm gripped with dread;  
This night a tale of shame has lashed our ears –  
Your shining sword there in the pasture fed  
On Danaan booty – bullocks, heifers, steers.  
Such words Odysseus dares disseminate  
And now the Greeks believe them, and they start  
To revel in the news and mock your fate.  
An easy target is a noble heart.  
All lies! Yes, envy always seeks the bold,  
Yet weak folk prove a hazardous defence  
Without such men. The humble may behold  
Success when backed by men of influence,  
Who may behold it too when humble souls  
May aid them. But those folk with little wit  
Cannot anticipate the glorious gods  
Of mighty men. But, lord, we are not fit  
To save ourselves when they their clamour make.  
But when they flee your sight, like birds of the air  
Who, when some vulture nears them, quail and quake,  
They clatter, but at your appearance dare  
Do naught but cower, dumb. Did Artemis,  
Bull-Hunter, born of Zeus, cause you to slay  
The common stock because you once did miss  
Some victory-tribute? (O, alas the day  
When Rumour, mother of my shame, ran mad)  
Did she feel cheated of some glorious plunder?  
Did Ajax spear some stags of which she had  
No part? Did Ares, Mover of War's Thunder,  
Take keen offence that his supportive sword  
Has been rebuffed, this midnight artifice  
His dark revenge? Sir, of your own accord  
You never would have gone so far as this  
From your true self, a butcher on the loose,  
Slaughtering cattle. No, it's from on high,  
This sickness. May Apollo or Lord Zeus  
Remove this rumour. But if they all lie,  
The mighty kings, that spawn of Sisyphus,  
Degenerate beast, then, lord, lie hid no more,  
Reject this vile report. Be ruled by us  
In this, and leave your hut here by the shore.

Too long have you been absent from the fray.  
Abort this evil! Blaze it heaven-high!  
In every glen your foes' abuse holds sway.  
You're mocked and none else feels it more than I.

Tekmessa: Shipmates of Ajax, Erechtheian natives all, how we grieve, we to whom the far-off House of Telamon is so dear! Ajax, great, mighty, powerful Ajax, lies prostrate with the pain of a colossal sickness.

Chorus: What heavy burden has disturbed our rest tonight? Child of Teleutas the Phrygian. Speak! Fierce Ajax loves you, his war-won bride, and you share his bed. You must know – tell us!

Tekmessa: How can I speak the unspeakable? You will learn of a calamity as bitter as death. Gripped by madness, renowned Ajax has done a deed of shame this night. Look in the tent and you will see his victims, his mangled sacrifices – a bloodbath indeed!

Chorus: Your report of that hot-headed man, bruited by the mighty Danaans, is unbearable, yet inescapable. And still the news is gaining ground and spreading. I shudder at what's to come. That man of fame will be executed now that, in madness, he has slaughtered beasts and herdsmen with his blood-black blade.

Tekmessa: Oh God! He came to me from there, from there, where he bound the beasts before dragging them hither. Some he slaughtered in the tent, the rest he ripped apart after shattering their rib-cages.

Two white-footed rams he took captive – one he slaughtered, slicing off its head and ripping out its tongue, the other he fettered upright to a column where, taking a large thong used for bridling horses, he lashed it with the shrill double lash, reviling it with words of hate, words which came from some demon, no man.

Chorus: The time has come to slip away from here, faces covered, and to grasp the oars in our ships and put out to sea. The twin-ruling Atreidai are issuing such angry threats against us. I have no stomach to undergo a death by stoning alongside that man who is in thrall to a destiny of horror.

Tekmessa: That is no longer true. His rampage was sightless and like the piercing South Wind. He has now ceased and, again in his right mind, he knows a new pain. Seeing his own misfortunes, caused by himself and himself alone, heightens his already heavy anguish.

Chorus: But if he has ceased, I now sincerely hope all is well. His mad deeds over, there will be less rumour.

Tekmessa: Given the choice, would you abandon your friends and enjoy life yourself, or would you share that grief with them?

Chorus: Lady, misfortune doubled is a greater misfortune.

Tekmessa: Then we are in distress now he is no longer plagued.

Chorus: What do you mean? I don't understand you.

Tekmessa: When he was plagued with that mad sickness, he reveled in his evil plight, yet bringing distress on us, who were sane, but now that he has ceased his slaughter and recovered from that sickness, he is utterly prostrate with bitter grief. We too, no less than before. That, surely, is double the grief.

Chorus: You are right. And I fear this blow has come from some god. It must have – his spirits are no more gladdened than when he raved.

Tekmessa: You must believe what I say.

Chorus: How did this evil thing first steal over him? Tell us – we share his grief.

Tekmessa: I'll tell you everything as though you yourself were there. At dead of night, when the torches no longer blazed, he grasped his two-edged sword and set off on a fruitless quest. I took him to task with "What are you doing, Ajax? No messenger has summoned you, no trumpet-call. Why are you leaving unbidden, when the entire army's asleep? He replied tersely with that oft-repeated phrase: "Woman, it is to women's credit that they keep silence." I knew better than to continue, and he darted off. What transpired out there I cannot say but when he returned to the hut he was hauling bulls which had been tethered together, sheepdogs, sheep... Some he beheaded, others' throats he slit, wrenching back their necks. Spines were chopped. Descending on the flock, he reviled those captives which still lived as though they were human. Finally he dashed out the door and hurled words into the empty air, some aimed at the Atreidai, some concerning Odysseus, and he laughed hugely at the great vengeance he had inflicted on them. Then back into the house he dashed again, where gradually he returned, though barely, to his wits. He looked around the doom-laden dwelling, pounded his head and bellowed. On the fell ruins of the slaughtered sheep-corpses he fell, his hand tightly clenched in his hair. For the longest time he slumped there, silent. Then he fiercely threatened me should I not reveal to him everything which had transpired, and asked me how he came to be in such a plight. Friends, I was afraid – I told him all I knew of what had happened. Instantly he let out a series of pitiful wails – I had never heard anything like them before, since he had always held that such expressions of grief fitted only base, wretched souls, and, eschewing shrill howls, would, like a lowing bull, groan his misfortune in hushed tones. Now here he was, lying in abject wretchedness, refusing food and drink, sprawled where he had fallen among the slaughtered beasts. He was clearly on the verge of doing a dreadful deed – his words and groans signified as much.

Friends, this is why I came to you. Go in, lend him aid if you can: men in such turmoil may be persuaded by the advice of friends.

Chorus: Tekmessa, Teleutas' child, so he has been driven insane by his misfortune – dreadful fate!

Ajax: Ah! Ah!

Tekmessa: More grief will follow, I suspect. Listen to that anguished cry!

Chorus: He is sick, it seems, or else grieving for his past sickness.

Ajax: Child! Child!

Tekmessa: Oh God! Eurysakes, he groans your name. What could he purpose? Where are you? Oh God!

Ajax: I want Teuker. Where is he? Will his plundering last forever while I perish?

Chorus: He appears lucid. Open the doors. Perhaps the sight of me will bring moderation.

Tekmessa: See, I am opening the doors. You should see the evidence of his deed and his state of mind.

Ajax: Oh shipmates, the only loyal friends I have left, see, I am surrounded by a whirlwind of slaughter.

Chorus: Alas, you are all too accurate. This deed was clearly the result of a deranged mind.

Ajax: My allies, my skilled sailors, who swiftly crossed the wide sea, you are my only hope – no-one else can save me from calamity. Destroy me.

Chorus: Don't speak like that! Don't add more pain to the woe this outrage has brought.

Ajax: Do you see the bold, stout-hearted soldier, a man who never trembled in the thickest of battles? Now he has turned his dread hand on defenceless beasts! God, the humiliating laughter this will bring!

Chorus: Don't, lord Ajax, I beg you, don't talk like that.

Ajax: Leave the hut. Go back. Ahhh!

Chorus: For God's sake, give way. See sense.

Ajax: I am fated, I, who let go those men who dishonoured me and descended instead on horned bulls and splendid goats, plunging my hands in their dark blood.

Chorus: Why grieve over what's done? The past cannot be revoked.

Ajax: Laertes' son, you're always scheming, you, the source of all evil, the foulest villain in the army – doubtless you are howling with laughter, pleased as can be.

Chorus: The gods decide who laughs and who weeps.

Ajax: Would I could see him, distressed as I am. Oh!

Chorus: Utter no boasts. Do you not see how disastrous is your state?

Ajax: Zeus, father of my fathers, I failed to destroy that vilest of villains and the two leaders of the army. So now devise death for me!

Tekmessa: Include MY death in your prayers too. How can I live when you are gone?

Ajax: Darkness, you are my light! Hell, you shine brightest of all. Take me, take me, I am a pitiful wretch. No longer do I deserve to look to the race of gods or men for help. Zeus' powerful daughter maltreats me. I am doomed. Where may I go? Where reside? Friends, all is lost, retribution is at hand, I am surrounded by my mute spoil, the whole army is ready to destroy me utterly.

Tekmessa: Oh God, that such an honourable man would say such things, things he never deigned to utter before.

Ajax: Roiling straits, sea-shore caves, marine groves, how long now have you held me in Troy! But no longer – not alive, anyway! Know this for a fact! You neighbouring Scamandrian streams, pleasing to the Argives, no longer will you see this man whose like (I shall say it with pride) Troy has never seen coming from the land of Greece. But now I am prostrate, totally without honour.

Chorus: I can't stop your words, but neither can I bear them – the distress you suffer is so great.

Ajax: Aiai! Who would have thought my name would so fit my sorrows? It is appropriate that I cry 'Aiai' two or even three times, considering the calamity I have met with. My father in the land of Ida won the greatest prizes the army could bestow and returned home with every glory possible. But I, this same man's son, came to this same land of Troy no less endowed with strength, performed deeds just as great, but here I am, dishonoured by the Argives. Yet this much I think I know – if Achilles were alive and intended to judge whose valour should merit his armour, no-one but I would have grasped them and kept them. But now the Atreidai have given their voice to a villain, and rejected the mighty man who stands before you. And if my eyes and wits had not been wrenched away from true judgment, never would they so throw their vote against another man. But that fierce-eyed, iron-souled goddess, Zeus' daughter, perverted my aim as I was preparing to deal with those two, inflicting me with a ravaging sickness. The result? I steeped my hands in the blood of these beasts. They escaped to taunt me. Of course, it was against my will, but if a god inflicts injury, even a base man may escape a better. What am I to do now? The gods hate me, the Greeks loathe me, All Troy, even its plains, despises me.

Shall I sail home across the Aegean, abandoning the navy and the Atreidai? How shall I face my father Telamon? How will he be able to lay eyes on me, deprived as I am of my prize – the prize he once held, a glorious crown of valour? It can't be done! Then shall I seek the Trojan battlements, face the enemy alone, perform some deed of bravery and so die? But that might give some gratification to the Atreidai. No, that's not the way! I must seek out some exploit which will prove to my aged father that he did not sire a coward. A man who sees nothing but misery in his life must not hope to live long. What joy can a day-to-day existence bring, always flirting with death? I would set at nought any mortal who is encouraged with empty hopes. A noble man must live admirably or die admirably. I will say no more.

Chorus: Ajax, no-one could ever say that you ever uttered untruth. You always speak from your heart. But cease these thoughts – let your friends counsel you.

Tekmessa: Lord Ajax, man has no evil but inexorable fate. I am the daughter of a free man, as wealthy as any in Phrygia, but now I am in bondage. The gods, it seems, willed it – or rather your mighty hand. Therefore, since I am your bedfellow, I wish you well, and I beg you, by Zeus of the Hearth-Side and by the bed you share with me – do not compel me to be reviled and enslaved by one of your foes. If by your death you abandon me, be assured that that very day shall I be forcibly whisked away by the Argives, child and all, and condemned to the life of a slave. Some lord will speak stingingly, causing me pain: “Look, there's Ajax' concubine. He was his army's greatest bulwark, but now she has exchanged a life of happiness for one of abject slavery.”

That's the sort of thing he'll say. A plague of ill fortune to me, but those words will be your shame and your family's shame. Don't shame your father by abandoning him in his old age; your mother too, racked with years, a mother who prays constantly that you may return home alive. And, Lord, pity your child who, lacking you to foster him, will instead be raised by hated guardians. That's the sad legacy you will leave him and me should you die. I no longer have any refuge but you. You destroyed my fatherland with your spear. Fate also took my mother and the father who begat me to dwell as pitiful souls in Hades. With you gone, what country would I have? What possessions? My safety is with you alone. Keep me in your remembrance – all men have memories of anything precious. Joy will always engender joy, but he who relinquishes his memory of all sweetness loses his nobility.

Chorus: Ajax, have compassion in your heart, as I do. Respect what your consort says.

Ajax: She shall earn my approbation as long as she has the courage to do my express command.

Tekmessa: In all things, dear Ajax, will I obey you.

Ajax: Bring me my son. Let me see him.

Tekmessa: Out of fear I removed him hence.

Ajax: In the midst of my pain? What are you saying?

Tekmessa: Yes, I feared his death at your hands.

Ajax: A worthy result of my misfortune!

Tekmessa: That at least I took pains to prevent.

Ajax: I applaud the deed, the foresight you showed.

Tekmessa: How then may I help you out of this misfortune?

Ajax: Give him to me. I wish to speak with him face to face.

Tekmessa: He's nearby. The servants are taking care of him.

Ajax: Why then is he being held back?

Tekmessa: Child, your father calls you. Whoever is leading him, bring him back here.

Ajax: What, is he crippled? Or dumb?

Tekmessa: This servant here is bringing him to you.

Ajax: Bring him, come on. He won't be frightened when he sees the evidence of this recent slaughter, not if he is truly my son. Soon he must be schooled with his father's harsh code, to wrangle wild horses, to be my natural copy. Child, may you be more fortunate than your father, but in all else a perfect replica, in no way dishonorable. But how I could envy your complete ignorance of this tragedy. Life is at its sweetest when one is not sensible to one's surroundings – until one can distinguish joy from pain. When you gain this understanding, in the face of your enemies you must show what sort of man sired you! Meanwhile take nourishment from the soft breezes, feed your tender soul, be your mother's delight. No Greek, I know, will harm or dishonour you, even when I am gone. I will entrust you to Teuker, a staunch guardian and zealous tutor, though at present he is far from here, stalking the enemy. Fellow-warriors, sea-dwellers, to you all I assign this duty – enjoin Teuker to take the child to my home, make him known to Telamon and to my mother Eriboia that he may be a comfort to them always in their old age until they descend into the Underworld, and let no-one, neither official arbitrator nor the man who causes my death, award my armour to the Achaeans. Boy, take the broadshield – it is named for you – take it by its oft-stitched handle and wield it. It is made from seven oxhides and it is indestructible. The rest of my armour consign to the grave. Quickly, take the boy. Close up the hut. No public weeping! Women are overfond of tears. Quick, shoot the bolts. A wise doctor will not chant spells over a wound which requires the knife.

Chorus: I fear your intentions, your sharp tongue upsets me.

Tekmessa: Lord Ajax, what are you planning?

Ajax: Don't deign to judge me, ask no questions. Discretion is best.

Tekmessa: I will despair! I beg you in the name of your son, in the name of the gods, don't betray us.

Ajax: Temper your grief. Do you not know that I am no longer accountable to the gods?

Tekmessa: Don't blaspheme! Ajax: I'm not listening. Speak to those who are.

Tekmessa: Can I not win you over? Ajax: Your cries of woe are excessive.

Tekmessa: Yes, lord, because I am shaking with fear. Ajax: Leave me now!

Tekmessa: In the name of the gods, be mollified. Ajax: Your notions are foolish, if you think you can school me now.

Chorus: Famed Salamis, foam-beaten, wealthy, here

In Ida's meadowlands I, wretched, stand,

By time disabled; endlessly I fear

The moment when I reach grim Hades' strand.

See, ruthless Ajax, gripped by some heaven-sent

Delusion, now is near. He crossed the sea

A mighty lord, but lo! his mind's now bent

On one sole thing, a dreadful grief to me.

His former valorous deeds are now as naught

(The pitiless kings have turned their backs on all)

His grey-haired, ancient mother will have bought



A wealth of tears, when on her ears there fall  
This news of anguished sickness. Then her tone  
Shan't be that of the plaintive nightingale  
But rather, keening with a piercing moan,  
She'll beat her breast, claw at her looks so pale.  
Better this raving man abide in Hell –  
This noblest of the war-torn Greeks, his power  
Now gone, his mind adrift. No-one can tell  
His mood from day to day – nay, hour to hour.  
Poor Telamon, what madness shall you hear  
Has been inflicted on your hapless son!  
None of the House of Hades had to fear  
A fate like this before till this man, none.

Ajax: Time, far-reaching, interminable Time, brings forth everything previously hidden, then once more masks them from the world. Hope is ever-present, but terrible oaths, stubborn wills may still fail. Yes, I, once the most dogged of men, a man of iron, am now become effeminate when I look at this woman. It tears me apart to leave her a widow, surrounded by foes, and to make my son an orphan. I shall leave to bathe in the shoreline meadows, to wash this blood from my hands and thus escape the goddess's heavy wrath. And I shall find a remote spot and there I shall bury my sword, most detested of weapons, laying it so deeply in the earth that no man may find it. Night! Hell! Possess it there forever! Ever since I acquired it, a gift from Hector, my most deadly enemy, I have gained nothing of value from the Argives. But the proverb is true – a foe's gift is no gift and bereft of benefit. In future I will know better and give way before the gods. I will school myself always to pay respect to the Atreidai. They are our leaders, we must submit to their will. Yes, even the mighty and the powerful yield before authority. Snowbound winter gives way to the abundance of summer. Gloomy night quits heaven's vault, so that Day, with her white steeds, may shed her light on earth. Strong winds lull the groaning sea. All-conquering Sleep fetters but then releases – He does not hold us forever in his power. I too must see reason. For lately I have learned that we must only hate our enemy up to a point (he may one day prove a friend), and that we may give limited service to a friend, since he may not always remain so. Most men have little faith in the haven of friendship. This I have learned well. Go in, woman, and entreat the gods that all that my heart holds dear shall be resolved. Comrades, you too must tell Teuker, should he come, to look after my welfare and be your staunch friend. I am about to leave on my assigned journey. Do as I say and perhaps you will find that I elude my present misfortunes.

Chorus: I'm thrilled with joy unbridled! I vibrate with ecstasy!

O Pan, Sea-Rover, leave your rocky ridge and come to me!  
Quit snow-bedashed Kyllene, Lord of Gods, you who entrance  
With choric footsteps you devised in Crete! I want to dance!  
Famed Lord Apollo, leave your isle! In unison shall we  
Cavort with utter ravishment in perpetuity!  
The Warrior-God has now released the sharp pain from my eyes.  
Then, Zeus, return to our swift ships the brightness of your skies.  
Ajax's grief is now as naught, and, with due worshipping,  
He has performed the sacred rites. Time quenches everything.

All's possible, for Ajax has transcended misery,  
Swallowed his anger at our kings and ceased his enmity.

Messenger: Friends, first I must tell you that Teuker is newly arrived from the Mysian cliffs. When he approached the generals he found himself vilified by the whole Greek army. Learning of his long journey, they circled him, and every one of them bombarded him with insults, calling him the brother of a madman who plotted against his army and saying that his one and only destiny was death by stoning. They went so far as to draw their swords from their sheaths, but when the brawl was at its height it was quelled when a group of elders took counsel. Where is Ajax? I must tell him the news. Those in power must be appraised of everything.

Chorus: He is not indoors. He just left, but not before he coupled new resolutions to new methods.

Messenger: O no! This mission of mine was a slow one, or else I myself was too slow.

Chorus: How have you failed in your office?

Messenger: Teuker forbade the man to leave the hut until he himself arrived.

Chorus: He has gone. He has turned his reason to greater profit – to reconcile with the gods and cease his wrath.

Messenger: Your words are sheer folly, if Kalchas is a wise prophet.

Chorus: What? How does he know of this matter?

Messenger: This much I know. I was with him. He left the elders council meeting and stood apart from the Atreidai. In amity he clasped hands with Teuker and implored him to confine Ajax by any means possible this very day in his tents and not to let him leave if he ever wished to see him alive again. For this one day, he said, would divine Athena's wrath have dominance over him. The outrageous, the senseless collapse in the face of severe calamity god-sent, said the prophet – it affects all those mortals who have immortal longings. As soon as this man set out from home, he was proved a man of folly when his father said these wise words: "Child, " he said, " by all means yearn for success in combat but always with God's will." But he replied with arrogant folly: "Father, even a man of naught may gain power with the help of the gods but I have learnt that I have snatched glory without their blessing." Such a boast was his. Next, when divine Athena urged him on, inciting him to steep his hands in enemy blood, he spoke these dreadful and shocking words: "Lady, stand by the other Greeks. Help THEM! Where I am found, the battle-line will never crack." These words earned him the goddess's implacable wrath – the thoughts behind then were not apt for a mortal. But if he survives this day, perhaps we will save him." These were the prophet's words. At once Teuker sent me from the assembly with these letters for Ajax' salvation. But if we have lost him, the man is as good as dead – if Kalchas is a man of wisdom.

Chorus: Unhappy Tekmessa, born of misfortune, greetings! Listen to this man's frightening words. They touch the quick, they please no-one.

Tekmessa: Why do you summon me from my dwelling – me, a wretch lately rescued from constant misfortunes?

Chorus: Hear this man. He brings news of Ajax which it pains me to hear.

Tekmessa: Oh no, what does he say, fellow? We are not lost, surely?

Messenger: Your fortune's state I know not, but for Ajax's, if he is abroad I have little hope.

Tekmessa: He IS abroad. Your words wound me.

Messenger: Teuker was enjoined to keep him indoors. He must not go out alone.

Tekmessa: Where is Teuker? Why does he say this?

Messenger: He's just arrived, and fears Ajax's absence will prove fatal.

Tekmessa: Oh no! Who told him so?

Messenger: The prophet, the son of Thestor. This day will decide whether he lives or dies.

Tekmessa: Oh God! Friends, save me from a harsh fate. Some of you urge Teuker to come here with all speed, others scout the glens both east and west – find out where his ill-fated journey has taken him. I know now that he has betrayed me and cast me out of his former favour. God, what am I to do, child? I must not sit idly by. I too shall pursue him however I may. Let us go, let us set to work, this is not the time for inaction as long as we have the will to save the man even as he is bent on his own destruction.

Chorus: I am ready to go and will show it by more than mere words. My swift actions and speedy feet shall keep pace with them.

Ajax: The Killer stands where he can do the most damage (if one cares to take the time to philosophize). He is a gift from Hector, my most implacable enemy, a man I loathe to look upon. Here he is, planted in the earth of our enemy Troy, newly sharpened on an iron-consuming whetstone. I looked after him well and planted him there myself – he will be most compassionate to me and dispatch me quickly. That's how well-prepared I am. When this is over, o Zeus, grant me, in fairness, a boon – a small favour, I beg. Send a messenger to Teuker, let him know of my tragic fate that he may be the first to lift me up from where I fell on the blade, new-spattered with blood. Let no foe find me first, let no dogs rip me apart, then toss me aside, a prey to birds. This I beg of you, o Zeus. I also call upon Hermes the Guardian to lay me decently in the earth when I have swiftly plunged, with never a tremble, onto this blade, my ribs run through.

I also call upon those attendant creatures, ever-maiden, ever observant of man's misfortunes, the holy, long-striding Furies – see how the Atreidai have destroyed me. As you see me here cut down by my own hand, sweep that destructive twosome from the earth, give malignancy an equally malignant fate. Swift and avenging, go, Furies, indulge yourselves, spare not one soldier.

And you, Sun, high heaven's charioteer, when you reach my native land, pull on your gold-studded reins and announce my tragic death to my aged father and the wretched lady who nursed me. Ah, poor soul, when she hears the news, the shriek she gives voice to shall be heard city-wide. But there is no profit in these idle lamentations. I must finish my task with some dispatch. Death, death, approach and look on me. But no – in THAT place I shall meet YOU, and talk with you.

Clear light of day, steed-driving Sun, you too I address, and so an end. O light, o holy plain of my own dear Salamis. O ancestral home. O famed Athens, o childhood friends. Springs, streams, Trojan plain, farewell, my nurturers all. These are Ajax's final plaintive words. The next ones I shall utter shall be to those below the earth.

Hemichorus: Pain piles pain on pain! Where have I not been? Yet nowhere yields me success in my search. Listen, that noise again!

Hemichorus: We are at the ship's company.

Hemichorus: What news?

Hemichorus: We have searched the entire area west of the fleet.

Hemichorus: And?

Hemichorus: We found much labour, but nothing to see.

Hemichorus: Nowhere do the sun's rays pick out the man we seek.

Chorus: Who is there among the hardworking sailors, now searching night and day, who of the Olympian goddesses or the Bosphorus' streams, who knows where silent-hearted Ajax roves and will tell us? How dreadful that, after so much toilsome wandering, I can reach no successful conclusion to my search.

Tekmessa: Oh God!

Chorus: That cry from the wood – whose voice was it?

Tekmessa: Ahh!

Chorus: It's the ill-fated Tekmessa, his bride won in combat. She is deeply stirred by her pity.

Tekmessa: I am lost, destroyed, my life is over, friends.

Chorus: What is the matter?

Tekmessa: Ajax lies nearby, newly slain, impaled on his sword.

Chorus: Then we will never reach home. Lord, you have slaughtered our shipmate. Alas, poor lady!

Tekmessa: Wailing is apt in such an extremity as this.

Chorus: Whose hand dispatched the hapless man?

Tekmessa: His own. That much is clear. His piercing sword impacted in the earth bears witness.

Chorus: Alas! Drenched in blood. All alone. Far from his friends! I can say nothing. I know nothing – I have been remiss. Intractable, disgraced Ajax – where does he lie?

Tekmessa: No, you must not look on him! My cloak here shall hide him from men's eyes since no friend of his would wish to see the black blood oozing from his nostrils, the result of his ghastly self-slaughter.

God, what am I to do? What friend shall take you up? Where is Teuker? How fittingly should he come now, if he come at all, to assist in his fallen brother's burial. Ill-starred Ajax, what a change in your fortune! Even your enemies might grieve your downfall.

Chorus: Poor wretch, you were born, in your stubbornness, to a vile fate of endless pain. Night and day you roared out your dire hatred for the Atreidai, savage and deadly in your passion. Then came the true starting-point of your woes – the contest for Achilles' armour.

Tekmessa: Alas!

Chorus: It brings intense pain to your heart, I know.

Tekmessa: Alas!

Chorus: Lady, I acknowledge your need to reiterate your grief – so newly bereft of such a dear husband.

Tekmessa: You can merely imagine my grief. I feel it all too sharply.

Chorus: That I concede!

Tekmessa: O child, what slavery will we now undergo, what masters set over us!

Chorus: O God, in your cry of woe you hint that that ruthless pair, the Atreidai, plan something unspeakable. Heaven forbend!

Tekmessa: It is Heaven that brought us to this point.

Chorus: Indeed the gods are the creators of this unbearable pain.

Tekmessa: But it was Zeus' daughter, the dread goddess Athena, who planted the seed of this affliction on Odysseus' behalf.

Chorus: This man of much torment shows malicious exultation in the gloom of his soul, roars his laughter at Ajax's madness and grief, and the twin rulers, the Atreidai, hear him. Tekmessa: And now they too laugh and revel in his downfall. Perhaps, though they didn't miss him when he lived, they will grieve his death when they have need of his spearmanship. Men of evil never know that they possess something of value till they lose it. His death has brought to me bitter sorrow, to them delight, to Ajax himself content. Yes, he has got what he yearned for – his own demise. Why should they laugh? His death was caused by the gods, not them. So let Odysseus exult – in nothing! To then Ajax no longer means anything, but to me has left grief and woe.

Teuker: Alas!

Tekmessa: Quiet! I think I hear Teuker's voice raised in anguish at this sorry sight.

Teuker: Dearest Ajax, beloved brother, is the rumour true?

Chorus: He is dead, Teuker, yes.

Teuker: O what grievous misfortune!

Chorus: Most true. Teuker: Alas!

Chorus: Give yourself up to your grief! Teuker: O the rashness of this deed!

Chorus: Too, too rash, Teuker! Teuker: Alas! What about the boy? Where in all of Troy can he be found?

Chorus: He is in the tent, unattended. Teuker: Bring him here right now, lest some enemy grab him like the cub of a lioness bereft of her mate. Go, quick, bring him. It's human nature to mock the dead.

Chorus: Before he died, Teuker, Ajax left instruction that you must be the boy's guardian, as now you are.

Teuker: O the most painful sight my eyes have ever seen! Of all the journeys I have ever taken, this one grieves my heart the most, dearest Ajax – this one, a journey of pursuit and hunt, has brought me face to face with your fate.

Swift report, as coming from some deity, penetrated the entire Greek army that you were dead. I heard it and though far away I wailed in my misery, but now I see you I am destroyed. Alas!

Come, uncover him! I wish to see everything! O unbearable sight! See what your keen daring has led to! What great pain your death has engendered in me. Where can I go? Who will take me in? Me, who was no use to you in your distress? Perhaps Telamon, your father and mine, will welcome me with kindness and grace when I return alone. Why should he not? He who, even when in good fortune, never shows delight. What will he spare me? Not his condemning tongue, not on me, a spear-won bastard, a man who betrayed you, dearest Ajax, through craven cowardice – or maybe guile, employed to claim your position and your house. He will say such things – this choleric man, harsh in his latter years, quick to quarrel over nothing. In the end I will be driven away, thrown off his land, indicted as a slave, no longer a free man. That will be my welcome at home. In Troy I have many enemies, few friends. This is my lot now you are gone. God, what am I to do? How shall I be able to pull you off this piercing bright sword, on whose murderous point you breathed your last? Were you able to see that Hektor, even in death, would in time cause your death? Consider the fate of these two men – Hektor, fated to be thong-bound behind a chariot's rail and then mangled over and over until he breathed his last breath, Ajax falling on the very sword which he had as a gift from Hektor. Surely it

was a Fury who forged that sword, Hades, that cruel craftsman, who forged that thong. Such things, indeed all things, I would say are wrought on men by the gods. Whoever does not agree with this, let him be content with his views as I am with mine.

Chorus: No more! Tell us how you will bury him and perchance what words you will intone over his corpse. I see a foe of his. Perhaps he is here to laugh at the pains he has inflicted, evil man.

Tekmessa: Whom do you see from the Greek forces?

Chorus: Menelaus, the cause of our expedition.

Tekmessa: I recognize him easily.

Menelaus: You, I order you not to take up the corpse. Leave it be!

Tekmessa: On whose behalf are you so prodigal with your tongue?

Menelaus: My own, a leader of the army.

Tekmessa: Why don't you tell us the reason for what you propose?

Menelaus: We brought this man from his home in the hope of his aid and loyalty, but found him more of an opponent than the Phrygians. He made a night foray, bent on slaughtering the entire army with his sword, and if a god had not quashed this enterprise, we would all have been victims of the fate he has been assigned and destroyed by the foulest of deaths, and he would still live. But that god turned his violence away from us and caused it to fall on sheep and bulls.

Therefore no man may have the power to lay his body in a tomb. No, cast out onto the pale sand he will be carrion for seabirds. Furthermore, don't indulge your fierce passion; maybe we couldn't rule him when he lived but now he is dead we will have complete control over him, whether you wish it or not. He would never listen to me in life. Yet it's a wicked man who makes a decision to disobey his commanders. Good laws cannot be passed without attendant fear; the army cannot be wisely led without the barrier of awe and reverence. Though a man has grown to great strength of body, he may expect to be laid low, even if the blow is but a small one. Believe me, a man who lives by a code of awe and respect will endure. But where a city may insolently run rampant, that city, though she once sailed before a fair wind, one day plummets to the bottom of the sea. No, let me see an appropriate sense of awe, and while we do as we please, let us not expect remission of our sins. Circumstances have reversed. In times past this man was a man of insolence and rage, but now it is I who am the imperious one. I am warning you not to inter this man lest you end up in a tomb yourself.

Chorus: Menelaus, don't make wise judgments only to commit an indignity to the dead with your next breath.

Teuker: Never again, gentlemen, shall I be surprised when a man of low birth transgresses, as long as those who SEEM high-born transgress so with their tongues. Start again! Did you say that YOU brought this man here to be an ally of the Greeks? Did he not sail here himself, master of his own will? YOU his commander? YOU give orders to those he brought from Salamis? You came here as Sparta's leader, with no hold over us. You have no more right to have rule over him than he over you. As the governor of others you came here, not as commander of that whole army. You were not Ajax's general. Command those you're here to command, employ that arrogance of yours to keep THEM in check! And even if you or that other general forbid it, I will bury the man as is fitting – I fear not your reproof. He did not go to war on your wife's behalf like those other battle-weary warriors, but because of the oaths by which he was bound. Nothing to do

with you! He never rated nobodies! What's more, come with even more heralds, your general too, and I won't give your empty word house room, not while you're in this mood.

Chorus: I don't like such words in tragic situations. Harshness stings, be it never so just.

Menelaus: The archer, it seems, is presumptuous.

Teuker: Archery is a fine craft.

Menelaus: You'd be full of bravado with a shield in your hand.

Teuker: Unarmed I could handle you in full armour.

Menelaus: A proud boast indeed!

Teuker: A just man is allowed proud thought.

Menelaus: Is it just for this man to destroy me?

Teuker: Destroy? Amazing words! So a dead man lives?

Menelaus: A god saved me. Otherwise I would be dead.

Teuker: If you were preserved by gods, don't be irreverent now.

Menelaus: Would I criticize the laws of heaven?

Teuker: Yes, if they're forbidding the burial of the dead.

Menelaus: If they are my enemies. Why not?

Teuker: Did Ajax ever oppose you in battle?

Menelaus: We loathed each other. You know that!

Teuker: And you cheated him. You were caught tampering with the votes.

Menelaus: It was the judges' decision, not mine.

Teuker: You would be a cheat many times over if you could get away with it.

Menelaus: Those words will cost someone dear.

Teuker: No more so than us, I wager.

Menelaus: Let me tell you one thing – that man must not be buried.

Teuker: And I tell YOU he shall be buried.

Menelaus: I once saw a man, all bluster, urging his men to put to sea in foul weather. In the eye of the storm, though, he went very quiet – hiding under his cloak, he allowed any of his company who wished to trample on him. Thus may a great storm, bursting from the tiniest cloud, blow on you with your vicious tongue and put an end to your crowing.

Teuker: Yes, and I once saw a man, all folly, play the dictator in the midst of his friends' miseries. And someone, somewhat like myself, with an anger like mine, told him: "Don't insult the dead, man. If you do, you will pay for it. Thus he warned the villain face to face. It seems to me I see him here – yes, here he is. It's you, nobody else. How do you like my riddle?"

Menelaus: I'm leaving. It's downright wrong to punish with words when one can do it with deeds.

Teuker: Off with you then. To me the worst thing of all is to listen to an idiot spouting nonsense.

Chorus: I predict great strife and conflict. Quickly, Teuker, with all the speed you can muster, dig in the earth where he will rest in a dark tomb and be remembered by all mortals.

Teuker: In good time here come his dear ones, his wife and child., to prepare his poor corpse for burial. Approach, child, stand close. Be a suppliant, lay a hand on the father who begat you. Sit here in supplication and hold this store of offerings, a lock of my hair and of your mother's and of your own. And if anyone from the army separates you with

violence from this corpse, may he receive an equally vile death and remain unburied, destroyed root and branch, cut off just as I cut off these hairs. Take it, child. Stand guard. Let no-one remove you hence. Prostrate yourself and stand your ground. The rest of you, stand firm like men, not women, and protect him while I go to prepare the tomb against their wishes.

Chorus: Will our years of roving never cease, these years of constant pain,  
Of war's distress, oppressive shame, here on the Trojan plain?  
That man who taught the Greeks the art of conflict in the field –  
Would he had vanished into air or in the earth been sealed.  
Pain fathers pain. He brought grim death to many a mortal man,  
Deprived them of the joys of wreaths, of wine, the pipes of Pan,  
Of blessed sleep, love's ecstasy. Forgotten here we stay,  
Hair damp with heavy dew, Troy's legacy for many a day.  
Stout Ajax was our shield against the onslaught of the foe;  
Now he's laid low by cruel Fate. What's left is merely woe.  
O spirit me away to that high woodland promontory,  
To Sunion, and let divine Athena speak to me!

Teuker: I have just seen our commander-in-chief Agamemnon hurrying here. Hot-foot I turned back. I do not think we will like what he says.

Agamemnon: They tell me you have the gall to fling oh-so-clever remarks in our faces with (so far!) impunity. Is this so? Yes, it's you I mean, son of a concubine! Had you had a high-born mother, what lofty, high-stepping bluster would you have displayed, a nobody championing a nobody. You aver that Menelaus and I did not come to Troy as generals or admirals of the Greeks or of you – and Ajax sailed here, so you say, as an independent commander. Are we to hear these proud, these villainous words from a slave? What sort of man is this for whom you howled your arrogant endorsement? What's he seen, what battles has he fought, that I have not? Is he the only man in the Greek army? It seems our decision to hold a contest for the arms of Achilles will be a bitter one for us if everywhere we go Teuker reproaches us. You'll never be content with your defeat, you'll never accept the decision of a multitude of judges – no, when your luck runs out you'll bombard us with curses, stab at us when our backs are turned. Well, this way there can be no justice – not when we ostracize those who prevail by right and promote those at the rear to a place at the front. Such actions must be stopped! Men of muscle and bulk don't assure themselves the greatest security. No, men of wisdom are the ones who prevail wherever they are. Look at the heavy-sided ox – mastered by the tiniest whip he ploughs a straight furrow. Such medicine, I suspect, will temper YOU if you don't acquire some sense. This man is no more – he's already in Hades – but you are still displaying a bold arrogance and a loose tongue. Get some reason! Know your place! Summon someone else, a free man, to plead your case before us. You see, when you speak I'll not be paying attention – I have no time for your barbaric tongue.

Chorus: Get some reason yourselves, both of you. That's my best advice.

Teuker: God, how easily can respect for the dead vanish and earn one the name of traitor if this man can remember you, Ajax, and have not one good word to say of you – you who put your life on the line over and over again for him in battle. It's all gone, cast aside. Your words are all nonsense – you clearly remember nothing of the time you were penned in your defenses, as good as dead after the rout, and Ajax came alone and rescued



you, with flames already licking the ship's top quarterdeck and Hektor leaping over the ship's top quarterdeck and over the trenches and onto the hulls. Who won the day then? Was it not this man, the man you say went nowhere you didn't? Did he not save your hide that day? And what of the time he fought Hektor in single combat, chosen by lot, not by an order? The lot he cast was no skulker – no, this clod of wet earth was eager to make an agile leap from the plumed helmet. He did all this, and I was with him, I, the slave, the whelp of an alien mother. You villain, what is your motive for your loud words? Are you not aware that your father's father was old Pelops, a barbarian? A PHRYGIAN? Or that you father Atreus served up to his brother a most unholy repast, that of his own children? HIS mother was a Cretan, whose own father, having caught her in adultery, ordered her to be cast into the sea and consumed by the noiseless fishes. With such an ancestry do you dare reproach me with mine? My father is Telamon, once a top-rank fighter in our army, and his life-mate, my mother, was a queen, the daughter of Laomedon. She was given him as a special gift by the son of Alcmene. Would I, so nobly born, discredit one of the same bloodline, whom you, with not so much as a blush, would banish without benefit of a tomb? Listen, if you cast him out you cast us out too – all three of us will lie beside him. Better that I perish fighting for his rights in the presence of all than for your wife – or do I mean your brother's wife? What's more, don't concern yourself with me, watch out for yourself. If you cause me any grief, you'll regret your rashness towards me.

Chorus: Lord Odysseus, you come right on cue. That is, if you're here not for wrangling but for reconciliation.

Odysseus: Gentlemen, what's the matter? Long before I got here I could hear the sons of Atreus quarrelling loudly over the valiant man's corpse.

Agamemnon: Indeed you did, Lord Odysseus – we have just now heard this man fling the foulest words at us.

Odysseus: Which were...? I pardon any man who trades insult for insult.

Agamemnon: My insults were foul, but no fouler than his to me.

Odysseus: What wrong did he do you?

Agamemnon: He says he will not allow this corpse to go unburied – no, he will defy my orders.

Odysseus: Will you let an honest friend give you a word of advice, as he always has done?

Agamemnon: Of course. I would be lacking in good sense if I denied that you were the greatest friend the Greeks possess.

Odysseus: Then hear me. Don't heartlessly cast this man aside without a burial. Don't let violence prevail, and don't let your hatred cause you to uproot justice. Ever since I won Achilles' armour this man has been my greatest enemy in the whole army, but despite this rancour, I would be doing him a great disservice if I didn't say he was the greatest man I'd ever seen of all the Greeks who came to Troy – barring Achilles. It would not be right to dishonour him so. Thus you would be destroying the laws of the gods, not Ajax at all. One must not wrong a good man in death, even a hated one.

Agamemnon: Are you on his side, Odysseus?

Odysseus: Yes, I am. I hated him, though, when there was a time for hatred.

Agamemnon: All the more reason to crush him now that he is dead!

Odysseus: Don't revel in ill-gotten gains, son of Atreus.

Agamemnon: Pity is not easy for a king.

Odysseus: It is well said that one should respect one's friends.

Agamemnon: A good man heeds the powerful.

Odysseus: Pause a moment. One prevails over friends by being prevailed upon.

Agamemnon: Don't forget what sort of man you are favouring.

Odysseus: An enemy, yes, but a noble one.

Agamemnon: What would you do? Revere the corpse of a foe?

Odysseus: His virtue much outweighs his enmity with me.

Agamemnon: That shows your inconstancy.

Odysseus: There are many men who change from friendship to hatred.

Agamemnon: You recommend these men as friends?

Odysseus: I don't recommend a stubborn one.

Agamemnon: So you would reveal us cowards here and now.

Odysseus: No, as men of principle in the eyes of Greeks everywhere.

Agamemnon: So you urge me to let burial take place.

Odysseus: Yes. After all, I too shall come to this pass.

Agamemnon: So shall we all. Every man fights his own battles.

Odysseus: Whose battle should I fight but my own?

Agamemnon: Then it will be seen as your business, not mine.

Odysseus: As you wish. Everywhere you will be seen as righteous.

Agamemnon: Be assured I would give you even more support, but this man will be my eternal foe in this world and the next. Do what you will.

Chorus: Odysseus, he's a fool who says you are not a perceptive man.

Odysseus: May Teuker know that henceforth he that was my enemy is now as much my friend. I would like to help you bury this man, to share your grief, to leave no task undone that we mortals owe the finest men.

Teuker: Worthy Odysseus, I applaud your sentiment wholeheartedly. You have confounded my assumptions. Though you were Ajax's bitterest enemy among the Greeks, you alone stood by him, refusing to inflict indignity on his corpse while you lived. Meanwhile this general and his brother came here, raving, quite set on banishing him to a tombless ignominy. May the Holy Father of us all, there in Olympus, and the Furies, who never forget a wrong, and all-powerful Justice mete out vile destruction to vile men – they who planned ungodly banishment for him. But, scion of old Laertes, I'm loath to let you partake in the burial as it may displease my brother. In all else, however, be our assistant. If you wish, bring another warrior with you – it will not bother us. We will do our part. We know you for a good man.

Odysseus: I was willing to participate. But if you are against it, I will respect that and leave.

Teuker: Enough. We have wasted much time. Some of you, prepare a hollow grave, others place a high tripod of holy water around the fire as is fitting. One squadron bring his glorious armour from the tent. You, child, as a token of your love for your father, come close and, as much as you are able, help me raise him up. His lungs, still warm, yet pump out his dark life-blood. Come, all who claim you were his friends, come quickly, apply yourselves to honouring him – while he lived, there was no-one greater.

Chorus: Many are the things mortal man must see and understand. Until they do, no-one can predict what the future holds.

