

PROMETHEUS AT COLONUS

by

Elena Liapopoulou Adamidou

(Two concentric circles. The inner circle is lit by thin rays of sunlight breaking the darkness and creating shadows. There is a huge tree full of leaves, and its spread roots are visible. OEDIPUS and PROMETHEUS are here, and all around them are rocky surfaces. The outer circle is shrouded in darkness, no rays of sunshine touch it. ANTIGONE dwells here. She cannot be seen, only heard. OEDIPUS is old and dressed in dim and gloomy white; PROMETHEUS is naked, covered by the scars of his suffering and his chains; Antigone is also naked.)

ANTIGONE

Complicit in staying. Accused of fleeing the image
A woman of meanings. A savior of symbols.
Right in here sane enough, enough of an illusion, a reality seeker, desperate enough.
Right in that night. Or was it day? Did I sleep? If never asleep did I ever dream?
What did I dream about? Is it a nightmare that keeps me awake?
Or do I long for a nightmare so much that I am bound to consciousness?
A blind man out of my sight. I closed my eyes. Nothing. Darkness.
I opened them. Still nothing. As if never opened.
Nothing. I saw nothing. I saw him. The other. I saw them both.
My footsteps were ticking as time was running by us.
Is it now that I am starting to remember? Or is it the now that I am remembering?
(She starts walking around them and she continues to do so as they speak.)

PROMETHEUS

Wind walks alongside with us;
Hunted fugitives of time; are we not?
They will not let us die. We belong to the past; they are not done with it yet.
The past is their only future; the only thing they feel like changing.
Nobody ever changed the present anyway.
It is the present; the only place in time we can reside; the only space we fit in.
They would never dare to search for us there.
Here- Now. They found us a home.

(As Prometheus grasps no reaction, he resumes his thoughts in a strange kind of joyful wonder.)

Up there, I had the entire sky to myself
And a sky is too much for one man alone to handle.
Up there in the finest heights of confinement
My blue plain void filled with
Trivial ideas, distractions, my solid soil
What melodious balm is to heal in harmonic notes my torment?
When I am free
What tasty delights are to fill my eternally wounded insides?
When I am free

What sanctuary of fabric shall invite my body into its premises?
A dead man bound to immortality
Give him the rich man's bliss
Delicious treats, delicate music, or dazzling cloth-
Isolation; isolated from the world in the world.
I have no nation. Find me new ways to control my desires.
When I am free towards what great journeys am I to embark?
Towards what exotic planes of ethereal hope?
When I am free what other pure white mountain peaks await my ascendance?
Never worrying about how I could make the rock crack and break.
I could never allow the possibilities to be endless.
No artificial chaos between two choices.
The artificial order of either this or that; the glory of free will.
And every single time my only company, this blessed beast
Took a mouthful of my everlasting suffering
Just when it reaped through my insides knifing with its well-sharpened beak my guts
the blood pouring down my thighs
—at least I knew where it came from—
this red veil of relief warmed me up nicely and I was to boil in happiness evermore.
You see, I finally had a reason not to try anymore, a reason to give up.
I did not want it to stop for, as long as I could take it, I could never be
the one to blame. The more lasting the torture the faster its acceptance comes.
I had no other choice. I tried and I failed. But I survived.
And never was time such a shrewd co-conspirator
Centuries, so many of them were there
To mark my gutless history of heroic endurance.

(Oedipus loosens his arms and when he finally opens his fists, his eyes drop
out of his two hands like a pair of cufflinks falling from their two separate
bronze vintage cases.)

Aren't you going to pick them up? Why did you throw your eyes away?

OEDIPUS

They are all I have; my last offer. Someone will come and pick them up, someone who needs
to see. But then again why would they? They already have their own flawless set of
blindness.

Leave them alone down there! They are my eyes and they belong to me.(pause)

Forget it; forgive me. Forget it you cannot forgive me.

You cannot even avenge the night. And I forgive you.

I am too old you know. The old have seen plenty and are excused.

The young ones have seen only so few and are forgiven.

But you are not young, are you? What are you? What's your category?

And yes the unborn are scorned for their luck and the dead are never spoken of.

(Oedipus starts coughing or laughing or coughing to cover up his laughter or
laughing so as not to cry)

PROMETHEUS

Do you hear it? Please tell me you do

Of course you do. Yes you can hear it. The only sound that defeats silence.

The only time silence is heard. I am not talking about doubts. Not again. Not yet.

The birds are so real they are dangerous.
Their sadism, their chirping, their songs
their wings, their feathers, their clouds, their sky, their freedom
Their communities so high above, free. In pairs, free. Alone, free
Their prey, the seeds, the worms, our desires—
They could make better men.

Never saw it again. My once only company; Blessed beast—
Maybe it found a way inside me. Maybe that is how I survive
The vulture quality beneath the human skin.

I look at sparrows now. Always ready to fly away. They linger awhile
With every little leap my heart falls onto my stomach
They love how it all carries on all around. Just like me and that's our secret.
But they leave and I stay and I must carry on without secrets.

(Oedipus stares at him with his non-existent eyes. Prometheus becomes more
self-conscious and starts moving around trying to get rid of his gaze while
avoiding looking at him. He adjusts his chains like an awkward naked dandy.
He carries on with what sounds like a defense attacking itself.)

I had to say what it was said to me to say. All I had to do was speak
and speaking unrestrictedly is an affirmation of your freedom, is it not?
I needed to confirm I was free when I wasn't as I needed to confirm I was alive.
While bound I was free to say anything I wanted. I still am. Right?
I had the chance to betray justice's promises.

And so I did and rather bravely, I must confess.

When your abductor and savior solicits your words as ransom what else can you do? Why go
on suffering when you can speak? Speak! Be free
Speak! Be alive. Be good. Be surrounded. Be here. Be everywhere. Be dispersed.
All scattered. Speak! Talk, announce, discuss. Disgust. Spit it out—
A name; That's all he asked for. What it is with a name that it can never be unsaid—
Spit your feelings out till there is nothing inside you.

Empty your lungs. Empty your guts. Get them ready for the vultures.

When rebellion is held captive by the shackles of agony

When silence is resistance, when speaking up is a mad traitor's act

What kind of Titan can you be? A world made for small people.

They carry gracefully the unnoticeable and impalpable chains of pride
and pure dignity as they know their ability to occupy no space
must be admired in the most respectful way.

To exist in an easy life one must covet enslavement to be free.

They can move now, you know, go everywhere their desires lead them.

But they do not know how to walk yet. They are in the process of learning

So you will see them staggering and stumbling and abruptly stopping motionless still
and tumbling against each other and falling down

and as they are so submissively passive

They will crawl or walk on their knees; No strength to get back up.

They have no destination. They never gaze at the horizon

and the sky fails to recognize their faces as their heads are always lowered down
and looking into nothingness pretty much like you.

No strength to get back up. No reason to fight it.

Shh you will—

OEDIPUS

Do not long for—

PROMETHEUS

Let me finish. Please! (silence) It's not your turn. Everyone gets his.
They all do. You won't miss out.
Your words are set for another time. Timed to go off.
You will pass through the syllables.
Be patient. Patience makes a man's death seem sweet—
At least to those for whom death is not sweet already. Silence I said,
You will wake them up. You know what comes next
Mothers, fathers, families, friends, enemies, whatever the label
Crowds. Talking, hands moving, eyes rolling, time not passing, and opinions and personal
stories and noise and silence crying in the corners of their mouths.
All their sayings, all they share: butterflies, tales of farewells.
Their state of affairs is always on the move. Always in the mood for oblivion.
Let them sleep. Let them dream. Let their delusional sun do all the work
Let them confide in its ominous light. Just another nightmare, let them say.
I say, let them, for they need permission to open their eyes.
Look around you. It does not take eyes to see it, really.
It invades your body worse than the vulture feasted on mine.
Look at me now that I am unbound.
It took only a few sentences to sentence me to immortality.
What I've sacrificed for them! What I've given them!
And all they've got to offer is imitation and mimicry.
All so the same, a mere insult to the Seasons that flow and follow one another towards
change. Nature delights over our impotence.
And all winters and every autumn
And each spring and any summer hand over courage, life, freedom
And they turn them down. This fresh breed of slaves is arrogant
And never wants to appear needy. No one owes anything to one another anymore.
Self-satisfaction they call it and independence.
Their once unbreakable law of give-and-take now subservient to a new state of greed.
Take what's not given for as long as nothing is taken from you.
That is how it works now. Or maybe that is how it has always been.
Has it always been so intimately lonely among humans?(Antigone sneezes.)
I've been alone. (She sneezes again.) Alone as all the sane in the asylum of reason.
I lived forever. I must know. I must remember.
But then again indifference towards the other has the undefeatable power
to remain and prevail gone and forgotten.
You do good to another human being and it will be there
a doubt-proof signed agreement between your boosted ego
and your pathetic selective memory. Memory. I miss my sky. I miss my pain.
No. No more. The more you live the less you know and the less you remember.
Back then I could still not remember and be happy about it.
Guilt bears no merry memories of itself and should hunt for none; I know this; I must
know— Yet how can I forget when I can never stop needing, desiring, wanting, living to
remember? No. I will never get used to living.
Hate will seem like a child's laughter. I hate it when children cry.
The only tears that will not dry out. They taste like broken glass.
Aqueous constraints of being. One breed after the other.
They keep crying. They keep coming. I will keep crying as they laugh.
No hell of horror like this one.

And they've left me forever here as a protector and worshiper of a forsaken dystopia. How can you protect and how can you worship something you long to destroy?

OEDIPUS

Do not long for what you already have.

Bliss achieved so easily in an instant is misery in disguise.

(Prometheus starts walking around, examining and observing the place like a restless child.)

Destruction is here. It has always been here

but now you just cannot ignore the monumental ruins that it bore.

This city gives birth to heroes aborted by life and nails their feet to its rotten roots

these alien origins of your body's home — yet all of us are homeless—

Under the dust of ruins how strong can it be!

Always sheltering in crude cages of so tender motherly affection

The Weak that empowered it.

A penal colony for the innocent. Once an empire. All empires

Dejection. A dismay. A disease aspiring to be a pandemic—

Anguish and fiestas and despair and funfairs and fear and fireworks and fury and feasts and famine. And families;

Family. Finally, the sound of home. The savagery in it; unspeakable; unheard of.

Is a son's ungratefulness more unacceptable than a father's curse against him?

What happens to the bastards of this world? Who is to put a curse on them?

Away with them. Away with you. I give my curse as my gentlest blessing—

For any sister is her brother more irreplaceable than her offspring?

Parents give up everything that exists to them for their children

and children unwillingly give up inexistence for their parents.

Which is deemed the larger sacrifice?

These parents, these martyrs, these saints, these insane manslayers.

My boys, my sons, my brothers towards where did I our blood flow?

In what swamps did our mother leave us to swim?

A wasteland of martyrdom. A wasteland of questions.

Questions, questions, questions and answers

And new questions and more invincible dilemmas—

Ravishing plagues. I cannot take the symptoms anymore

I've been through a lot. My body is tired. My body is already sick.

And all the people I sickened, all my people, are my afflictions.

And my mind dusty somewhere among ruins and affection.

Are you here with me? Am I?

(Prometheus settles himself on a stony throne adorned by an army of lithops in between sunshine and shadows yet still avoids looking at Oedipus)

These empires. Wait. No.

Yes, there is no cure. Or maybe there is and maybe it is the opiate of compromises.

It has worked for generations now.

Sooner or later all reigns of power are treated with deaths.

Anyway, I tell you, do not trust their city's glory and allow this leeriness to steer no excuses for anyone, for any of them.

No excuses. No compromises.

My actions are my own fault, my own burden, my own responsibility, my own guilt, My only possession. And as it is mine and mine alone

I can share it with whomever I desire. The choice of what my share will be is still mine. And now I choose not to behold the smallest portion of it, as I once did.
Life is but a prophecy only to the irresponsible ones.
I did not see it back then when I had eyes
But I see it now while I miss them.

And you see, I need you and you need me.
You do and you cannot stand alone in here lest you be corrupted, lest you be infected.
I do not miss them.

Invisible to myself but not to others
“How many times do I have to blink to be normal?
How much beauty should I take in? How much misery?”
They end up mad anyway. The new norm of sanity.
The clash of their eyelids will not let me forget
I have to be here for them. But where are they?
No. I do not miss them. No sight is superior to darkness. Are you listening to me?
No. Maybe I miss the eyes of others
Can you imagine a world deprived of mirrors?
We’d have to depend on each other’s eyes. How do I look?
(Prometheus manages to contain his hysterical laughter.)

No. Never mind.
In a world where the others are you but you can never be them or one of them
Yet you are amongst them
No question of difference, no uniqueness.
Go away, save yourself, push to the outsides
Let what’s left behind burn to the ground and sink to the bottom and
Let the sun hang itself and the moon howl and
All children scream depraved for their lost innocence and
Men and women stone themselves to death with grazing stars and
All animals speak in tongues and unleash their instincts free and
The skies open and close and
Then open and close again revealing this world’s manic breathing rhythms and
All the flimsy cells from within multiply innumerable and wither at once and
Yes let finally everything in here vanish away for good.
You are me, and I want to be with you to avoid being myself with myself
Myself, my shell, my soul, my sale.
Open me up. Buy me. Take me. I do not belong here anymore.
An exile within its borders, within its limits, within its walls, and they are
Narrowing tight around me and caving in on me and crashing my bones to ashes
I do not know why I returned. Yet this place would make a great grave. This I know.
And I have no place to go back to.
Am I with you still? Did you leave? Did I? I am here. I am.
There is so much darkness in this world that can terrify any blind man with its light.
Please take me away from here.

PROMETHEUS

(Prometheus looks deeply into the two empty ditches of Oedipus in which velvet blue irises once used to blossom. He draws his hands from his face all the way down to his chest, and when they reach his knees, he all of a sudden

gets up, stands up straight, but lets his mourning laments crawl back down to his feet and infiltrate the ground of the sacred grove.)

O this unfair and this fate
Their hips and breasts and necks and ankles and wrists
In all their lust are showered
I am so calm a man when in moves and dances they haze my eyes
But beware! The reasons for our suffering start to fade and steam inadequate
Fogs to and fro and up and down. Until they are all around in rooms with no corners
Everywhere is their hiding spot and they are unfound.
And then we are left with our bodies. But our bodies ache when we cannot but pain be
— Make it stop—

OEDIPUS

What is this? Is that why I am here? Is that why we are here? Mercy? Pity?
Your threats of faint predicaments of care and compassion are
like a razor blade over a drained man's veins. You cannot punish me.
I am in the dark. Punishment is of a lesser eternity to condemnation.
Dignity, pride, and this thorny honor; they are all there is.
Nothing else can raise the sun for us.
Once they're taken from you, once you give them away,
you go asking to be heard. Your word is your apology.
Now I can only wish I could no longer hear. (silence)
Time makes men of action—wait—and
leaves beggars to what's unchanged. I've aged. Never beg; no need.
Invoke no more for they may pity you and you may be heard and
I am in truth afraid of the pity of others and this world is made for silence.

PROMETHEUS

(sitting on the rock)
And then we think, we try, we cover it up, we cover it up
(Oedipus smiles in dismissal and turns his back on him)
And we think! Listen to that!
(Oedipus puts his hands on his face, where his eyes used to be, shutting them
with a second layer of darkness.)
Wasted lives after wasted lives; Years after years
Years and months and days and moments and seconds
And who's counting?
Is it day or is it night? Let the light decide. And if it doesn't, who cares?
Time truly does have an unbreakable spine. It will move on.
It will still pass. It will still slip right through your fingers.
But it lingers awhile. It always does.
And we still get to sleep at nights
Never tired. Just because time has come
Our time to rest because we think because we know and we can tell
wrong from right, good from bad, black from white,
our mother from a lover, a punch from a mere touch,
fine whiskey from refined art, purpose from hope, despair from humanity.

Our first cry sets the currency. We pay with the inevitable. We cannot back out now.

(Oedipus walks back and forth with his hand on his face murmuring incoherently.)

We wait like virgins in a whorehouse
In grim anticipation and impatient for our future
And when it comes

(Prometheus joyfully starts following Oedipus.)

we get along with it
Not getting what we are doing, why we are doing it
But life never lets us get off that easily
For always waiting. No time to wait. But no. They are greedy with time.
They want more than we could ever have. We spend more than they are offered.
We thrive in every then. No time now.

(Prometheus seems to be enjoying the whole thing. He grabs Oedipus' shoulders from the back and stops him. Prometheus hugs him tightly and then pushes him away but he continues to follow him around.)

Make haste. Faster. Move! Time to move on. Time has stopped.
Its freedom, the dirt on the floor, the stains on the sheets
Disgusting sentiment of preceding proceedings, of presences.
Astounded pretenders we wonder
There must be something purer and cleaner in it. There must be!
If we could just carry on a bit more
Maybe then the clocks will start ticking again
Maybe then and if we could just.
Who are we I ask you
And you will still look to me for the answer
And all because I've probably missed the question mark.
We are still afraid of ourselves next to each other.
We are so alone we couldn't but be our own victims.
Still never are you your own master. No space for out of place victims.
There is a way to be. Included. Belonging.
Heads up. Aspirations looking down. Eyes glowing all the way down to their necks.
No sorrow. Regrets expired.
There is justice for our kind no matter what they say
And this is it.

(Prometheus leaves him alone and Oedipus relaxes. He stands with his back to Prometheus, who sits on the rock.)

And we enjoy it
For we think, we know, we can tell
We are fair and fateless
And I ask you
Who can defeat the defeated?
I am one of these proud losers
walking beside the winners, the victors, the well-adjusted of this deadbeat world
And I can never be ashamed of it.

At times they are so helpless they scare me

(Prometheus stands up and picks up one of the rocks around him.)

Should I spare them? Should have expectations for them? Should I let them live?
But then they'll say I'm a heartless judge.
And judging is abhorrent. Everyone excels at it.

You cannot fail. Is that what I'm doing? Being a successful man at last.
How mortal that would make me.

(Prometheus throws the rock into the darkness and moves to get rid of all the other rocks as he speaks, leaving his throne untouched.)

And so the heavy blade drops sharp, and there, under the guillotine of trust,
All I can see is skulls, all I can see is masks
Something is missing. It's not meant to be the body. No meaning.
The body is there at last separated from its abuser.
At times these human things, my executioners, smile.
What if I hugged them?
What if I fell in love with them? Worshipped their eyes? Stroked their cheeks?
Their hair? Their hands? A handshake? Kiss their hands?
What a holy sell-out of ego that would be. Handing it over with your lips?
Your ego is no longer in your hands.
Your two grey cloudy hands resounding in furor their cyclone of barrenness.
Your hands are your lips. They speak. They kiss. They bite. They smile.
What a submissive release! A disarming defense.
They are never going to hit you, never going to harm you. Harm you? No need.
They are already shutting your mouth with their filthy hands.

(He sits on the only rock left.)

This pregnant beauty of life. The human contact exclusive.
Life seems like a sweet surrender.
Tartarus' salty mouth hollers at us with fervor and then the foam of death
through Its teeth and on the highest waves of life
smothers us as if we are the most deceitful sand and
blasts us as if we are the hardest of rocks.
Being victimless and as such empty;
the rarest of sights; just like hurriedness in humiliation.
This sea of suffering is sleepless, slow and swaying. It carries our drops of flesh.
It never yields. And I begged for more and we beg for more
And there is always more. More blood to spill. More to be red. And ready not to be.
That is how it will always be. As if it was never again before.
And then

(Prometheus gets back up.)

We ask ourselves who says
We are not to blame for all we deem so natural we can dissolve in
(Oedipus turns around, crawls to his knees but Prometheus kicks him away
stray creature that he is.)
We prodigies of a terror-stroke future
(Oedipus crawls back. Prometheus pushes him away.)
We shipwrecks of our tyranny's frail miracles
(Oedipus comes back. Prometheus shoves him off.)
We deeply asleep over crossbeam beds of betrayed secrets
(And again Oedipus crawls back. Prometheus pushes him away.)
We hayraisers in death-veiled valleys
We wayfarer corpses
(Oedipus now holds on to his leg as tight as words on meaning. Prometheus
tries to break free but he cannot anymore.)
And then there will be no then

Or maybe it was never there.

If Truth has a heartbeat
If all are innocent of permanence in resistance
Justice serves harsh penalties on us—
Resist life
Resist all it entails and all it includes and excludes and vilifies and beautifies
Its highways, its low standards, its slow streams, its fast impunity lanes
Resist its remedies, its comfort, its small talk, its pep talk, and its pat on the back
Its what ifs of tomorrow, its shoulds and should-nots of present, its slips of the past
Resist its theories, its rules, its laws, its morals of habit, its otherness, and its oneness
Resist your greatest loves, your doubts, your heroes,
your meek passions, your lousy limits, your nights out, your coffee breaks,
Resist your strengths, your senses. Resist this condition.
Resist yourself. Resist it all. Its best bit. Resist its death if you wish—
But no. We are fair and fateless. And we serve justice.

All a wrath around the same reaction to the before
towards an afterward foreknown yet presumably never anticipated.
What comes before birth, what comes after death;
comfort in confinement, in blank waiting, and in the suspense of forgetfulness.
And so it is wonderful how few the instants of life are.
Too soon yet late. So slow. No, never fast unless asleep. All days.
Each day, night fall dies. It is how — I say it for one last now—it is; as it was.
May these ways be molded to change, you and I will perish.
We are impelled to be and deceived into becoming
We leave as we come;
Inexistent but to ourselves, the gods,
Present but to our fellow temporaries
Deluded we once were—

OEDIPUS

(Crawls away and stands up)

Never...Always...This blaze of belief will end you sooner or later.

PROMETHEUS

Once the all-knowing air you dare not breathe mournfully outruns the labyrinth of thought
towards the heart-bound path laid wide open by the lungs,
it no longer asphyxiates you.
It is there, unprotected, easily disputed, unwarily adopted, gone missing
and abducted by the winds. At last, not yours. You are but a free, breathless fool released into
the wild vortex of doubt and realized marvels.

(long pause, then taking a deep breath)

Every single one of my sayings that makes my lips bounce and my tongue dance is unknown
and so I cannot but be sure of it. I cannot—

OEDIPUS

Well, at least our torture belongs only to us. It is flawed. It is human.
It is not all done. It comes with breaks, and it will end. Till then let it go.
Leave us and them be. Don't let them leave. How else could we be?

No comings. No goings. Trapped and safe, we endure this happiness of being.
(The inner circle is slightly dilated.)

PROMETHEUS

(in a calm tone gleaming with anger that has long passed its phase of maturity)

They are surely yours— Blindness and nonsense; now you can again be a true leader with what's left to be yours.

(Prometheus kneels and kisses Oedipus' hands.)

OEDIPUS

(Oedipus withdraws, Prometheus grabs his hands and holds onto them again. Now Oedipus gasps as heavily as the realization of his own self collapsed on his timeworn back and, as if to verify the Prometheus' statement, speaks in a breathless voice)

I was a king once. I used to have pure-blooded power in my hands.
A man can defy death no more eagerly than he can defy his kingdom.
Now my death is my kingdom and here I am as you are; an immortal. (silence)

(Prometheus leaves his hands and crawls towards the rock.)

And if we run who would care enough
To stop us and hold us and welcome us?
Eternal escapes exhaust the heart.
There is no Mother Land for the destitute.
There never was and if there is to be
It is then we shall cease being
And I fought hard for this Mother's touch all my life.

(Prometheus stands up and circles around him.)

Here. In here. Stuck in here. We stay.
Here, where the sand and salt
Never leave your lips alone
They seduce you towards the sea
And drown your dreams in blue realities
Here, where the sun
In striking rays annoys our windows, our patience, our expectations
So much light in here. Such is the warmth. So safe it must be
But so it must lead your hands to murder your eyes

(Prometheus invades the illusory drawn circle and starts trying to undress Oedipus as he speaks. Oedipus, almost relieved, does not resist. Even more confident than before, he raises his voice.)

Here, where church bells ring to all ends
And silence, jealous of its false sanctity,
Recruits the dogs that bark and sing our worst fears
And there among faith and fear the chosen get lost along with their almighty
Stench of wine, cheap cologne, burnt-out candles
Buy them something to believe in and preach, and they are yours.
Here, where the rocks have so little soil to cover
They stand lonesome as islands in sea waters
They hide ruthless as obstacles against our next step
Here, where boats have ocean-born endurance of oarless wanderlust

Yet they sit ashore chasing flopping jewels of the reverent hyaline depths
Here, where courageous seamen and fishing nets and nautical ropes and
Tempest's fierce wars on harbors and anchors now grow
ecstatic solely in celluloid films.
Here where statues and sculptures of terra-cotta or bronze or ivory or marble totalities
Pose pensive and feisty as the most elegant symbols of ravished sell-outs
Naked and muscular and lovely and raped
Here where storms menace in olive oil drops and oregano aromatic snowflakes
And citrus fruits' juice sprinkles perfumed caustic acids
Inside the pores of every early spring evening vow.
Here where girls half-dressed in red complexions
Crave shade under the palm tree fronds of boyish eyelashes
Yet they all settle like weary old jesters under striped umbrellas
Here where the bicycles' flying speed near and outside graveyards
drums the self-consciousness
Out of the tombstones in new infantile inscriptions of hasty life and short holidays
Here where only flowery dooryards and abandoned streets
Revive in scents and quiescence pieces of classic clarity.
(Now Prometheus examines the clothes, smells them, feels the fabric and
hangs them on the tree branches. Oedipus naked and lonesome has lost any
sense of center. He now circles around himself.)

Here where agorae flourish
"Bring you barbarians the merchandise for the exchange!"
Both they and we came empty-handed
And so straight to our jobs!
The labor, the minor nuisances slithering through this gravel-layered lethargy
For a meal, for a way in bars, in society and behind its bars
With stomachs full and emptied brains out in the open, an offer to the historians
Here where the homeless and the poor
Fade away day and night through the fumes and smokes of rush hours
And their timeless spirits are elevated to a ghostly status
Here where concentration camps are celebrated
With the fixed neon lights of shopping malls
Turning on and turning off
Turning off and turning on
Here where poets wept in cosmic tildes and grandiose vocatives
While all humans moan for their dried-out ambitions.
How I envy their tears
How can someone not pity a man who cannot cry?
How can someone not fear him?
I do not need your pity. It brought me alive in this pit.
I do not need your fear. It left me lonesome there.
But if you ever finally find me, tell me I will not live forever.
For now I am with you here
Sharing our nowhere
Seeking an escape
As if the whole Earth could ever be enough.
As if—

PROMETHEUS

There is noth—

OEDIPUS

Let me complete my—I must renounce my own voice. Put a halt to it all.
I cannot—Let me speak. (silence)

ANTIGONE

(Prometheus picks up Oedipus in his arms, and his chains start slipping and leaking from his body with their icy metal saliva, and they fall and hit half-concrete and half-soil. He lays Oedipus up against the trunk of a tree, and the old man feels so familiar with the touch of the tree, for its harshness and wisdom reminds him of his fleshy luggage of experiences. Oedipus trembles in slight fear and calmly hums, and Prometheus wraps his fallen chains around the waists of the tree and the man, leaving arms and branches loose, and finally calmness comes, no shivering anymore, no distress, no panic. Prometheus puts Oedipus' shirt on and walks over to him and sits down under the green replica of a sky. Prometheus looks straight into darkness, straight into Antigone as if he had been looking at her from the moment she was born.)

People are not enough. Mankind wants more. Womankind wants more.
Less than I could ever want. All I've got:
Family relations. Family ties. Ties to the inside. Eyes turning inwards.
Outside the city is empty. My lungs are filled with it. My neck is heavy.
Staying to live. Living for leaving. I come forth coming back.
"Come back." I came back. Back to the ones that come next.
The ones coming alive before me. Next to me. The offspring. Sprang out. These roots.
Rootless. Childless. A woman with a man's womb.
My children are saved. These lucky ones. My children are safe. Safe next to me.
I invent the never again—
Where did I come from? Where do I go? (silence)
My sister, this unnoticed witness of a stranger infinity, deadened her killing;
always overprotective of herself, overprotective of death. (long pause)
Both my brothers are lost. Always brother against brother;
a fair trade in this ever-unfolding market of mortality;
a notorious trick in the farce of enmity.
No soil is enough to bury them all. All kinds of darkness have seduced them now.
All I've got, I never had;
I will never again be invented—

PROMETHEUS

There is nothing to look at. Nothing to admire. In this world it's staring.
No need to weep. No need to try. Don't scream. No one listens or hears
—No difference between the two in a battle of bitten silences—
No one sees. Calm down now. Make the blind proud
They trust hoarse voices and harsh hands.
Take my chains. Give me your clothes. Accept your skin. Save your body.
Your mind is lost. Your soul never found to be lost. Don't worry about it.
(Prometheus stands up and lies under the tree.)

Yet if only you could see them. If only you could live
Where have all the living gone? I am ashamed of breathing among them.
Among them, I try to look dead. Alone, I end up feeling myself, feeling immortal.
Maybe that is why I just cannot get enough of human animals:
To feed off their death. Just like all great benefactors of humanity.
And so I am here for them.

(Antigone with a noose around her neck, almost invisible, unnoticed by these
two comes forth. She places the noose around her father's neck and tightens it.
She takes the eyes from the ground, lingers awhile to admire the vulnerability
of her father, and leaves again.)

I am not Prometheus. I have no name. I am Unnamed.
You cannot call me. I go by nothing. Anonymous considered known.
No one can summon the no one. No one can find the no one.
Just like that, elsewhere hidden and unnamed.
No reality, no identity, no age, no face, no solace
I am out of terms, no terminals, no beginnings
Not even somewhere in the middle
Nothing to go against. The typical outmoded nothingness.
It's getting more popular than ever.
Nothing to be afraid of
The dusks and the twilights out of nylon, out of vinyl
Too cheap, too plastic, so used. Nothing like before;
(He stands.)

No rocks, no vultures,
no blind men, no mute women. A celebration of the senses that must be.
(He tries to pick up the rock, fails.)
Pure, crystal-clear denial.

Here's to the small people, these timeless beings
The nobodies with their blown chances
By now everyone is everyone, yet no one dares wear the dress of warm affinity,
this cloth that wraps us in unison.
Naked, unburied, untouched, we'll rot;
Prey for the eyes, for the onlookers
Day by day, night by night.
Theirs or yours, therefore, forever mine;
the death; this death that strikes me, sweeping me up,
Towards there; there wherein the last of the last ran untraced;
No way to mark their passing, no traces; that's their pace.
The road is laid there but all the seats are taken.
If nothing leads them there to you, they are sure to be found here with you;
Soon, to be bound; alone—yet again—with
—Look at the words taking their revenge
Look at me repeating myself, themselves, ourselves

(He tries again to pick up the rock, harder than before. He kicks and punches
it. He throws his body on it until he is wounded and bleeding. He is enraged,
but he backs off.)

Have I at last forgotten how to speak? Has repetition achieved its goal?
Is tedium the precious key to my freedom's prison?

Yet here's my problem:

I am not sure whether I want a way in or a way out.

Uncertainty. The holiest of human values

The only one that's always left

when we leave all the other ones at the exact moment of their arrival.

Enough speaking. You are right. Speaking will stop.

(He comes back and repeats the same action while speaking.)

When I am free, I will —

No. All my attempts in vain

They will understand. Understanding. Yet another humane lie.

Standing under water. Drowning under meanings. Floating over their surface.

How can anyone recover from it? How can anyone not search for truth?

(He is exhausted. His shirt and the rock are covered with his blood.)

In vain. No matter what I will still be interpreted

The guards of this world await me. To rape me

with their advanced sciences and lucid rationale

And I can't wait. They are my fellow inmates, after all.

I raised myself to care with all the violence this entails—

I've never met such passion in so many voids.

(He takes the shirt off, hangs it on the branch, takes the trousers, puts them on and lies down again.)

Trying to be. I am always trying to be.

How can one bear the guilt of being?

I've told the gods what they wanted to hear.

I've given you people what you needed. Enough living off me.

My dear disappointments, I do not need you. You failed me.

And all words failed to heal me. And I wounded the words.

And unforgiving as they are they left me once again.

I cannot heal myself with them. I cannot kill you with them.

I can only kill myself with their absence and heal you of my presence.

Inexistence is my only acquaintance, hoped to be my friend and loved one.

So, let it come. Will you let it? I am asking for your permission. Can I close my eyes? Can I be you for once, please? Leaf-like, life-like. Weightless and light.

Or like a weightless light. Constantly in another here.

I am sorry for the fire; I did not foresee that all that lights must burn.

I do not owe anything to anyone. I am obliged not to care and to be forgotten.

I seek the privileges of the dead

(He stands up again, takes the shirt from the branches, puts it on and lies down again.)

I said I see—

I am keeping up with the times. I am one of the many. I am the person of the century.

Of all centuries.

(The immortal has actually convinced himself that he has died. As for the other one, blind and bound, he reaches out with his arms protruding dangerously like skin-covered swords She comes forth again, steps over the immortal's outstretched legs, and stands in front of the blind man. Her breasts merely touch his fingertips, so close to him but out of his reach. And then she leaves the eyes on the rock and walks away.)

* * * *

When I reread Sophocles' Oedipus at Colonus and Aeschylus' Prometheus Bound, I found it interesting that Sophocles mentions that Prometheus is the protector of the sacred grove Hippeios Colonus, but Prometheus is not a character in the play. And so I wondered what would happen if these two intriguing figures, situated in a similar setting, actually got a chance to meet. I wrote a literary mutation, a hybrid of genres that started off as a short story and in the end included prose, poetic elements, and "stage directions" for no stage. I then revised the piece and turned it into what is considered to be a play. I gave Antigone the voice she didn't really have in the first version of the manuscript and tried to make Oedipus and Prometheus' monologues shorter and therefore less tiring. In this play, Oedipus takes responsibility for his actions (or at least he seems to do so), Antigone goes against family ideals, and Prometheus is hateful of humanity and of the notion of knowledge he is supposed to instill. In other words, they are the opposites of themselves, if their true selves are thought to be represented by the standard mythologies. Taking everything into account, there is also confusion about their identities, since towards the end, the whole piece seems like a dream or a hallucination that Oedipus might have had before, after, or as he dies. Subsequently, all the voices seem to run through his voice. A certain existential awkwardness results as the characters do not quite know what to do with themselves, where they are or where they are to go, and why they are what they are.