

Sophocles' *Antigone*, Nick Hern Books

Chorus from Sophocles' *Antigone*

There are many wonders in the world,
But nothing more amazing than man!
He crosses the white-capped sea in winter's storms,
Cuts through the surge as it booms about him;
He harasses the almighty immortal unwearying Earth,
Turning his plow back and forth year after year,
Turning up the soil with the help of mules.

Skillful man of clever thought
Traps in the woven coils of his nets
The birds, with thoughts as light as wings,
And tribes of wild animals,
And sea creatures of the deep.
With his devices he overpowers
[350] The wild beast that roams the mountain;
He tames the rough-maned horse
And the untiring mountain bull,
Hurling a yoke over their necks.

He has mastered speech
And thought as swift as the wind,
And the ways of government.
All-resourceful man
Knows how to flee the
Airborne arrows of ice and rain.
He is ready for all that comes,
As he goes out to meet the future;
He can cure terrible diseases;
Only death he cannot escape.

His contrivance is skillful beyond hope;
He moves sometimes towards good,
Sometimes towards evil.
When he follows the laws of the land
And swears to keep the justice of the gods,
He is lofty in the city; but exiled, and homeless
Is the man who consorts with evil
For the sake of greed and ambition.
He has my curse upon him;
He'll never be welcome in my house,
Nor a companion for my thoughts.