

Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*

CHORUS

Anyone who wants more of everything,
Not content to live with his fair share,
That man is a fool.
Many days bring much sorrow,
And the passing years
Add up to pain.
If you outlive your allotted years, 1220
No pleasure
Will be found anywhere.
There's a savior for us all:
Finally Hades appears, unannounced —
No hymn, no lyre, no dance —
Death, at last.

Never to have been born is best,
But once you've entered this world,
Return as quickly as possible to the place you came from.
That's greatly to be desired.
Youth is a frivolous time 1230
And an empty head leads to much pain and strife.
Sorrow is never far away:
The result of murders, quarrels,
Rivalry, struggles, and envy.
Worse lies in wait, lurking at the end of life:
Despised old age, with its weakness, sickness,
A nature that isolates itself, and no friends.
They are replaced by suffering heaped on suffering.

It's not me alone—but this poor man.
He's like a jutting cliff that faces north
Battered on all sides by waves and winter tempests.
Likewise the fierce waves of disaster
Break over his head, and storms never let up.
Some come from the west, where the sun sets;
Some from the east, where it rises;
Some from the south, with its noontime blaze;
Others from the north, and its icy mountains,
Darkling with night.