

ANTIGONE NICK

(SOPHOKLES)

TRANSLATED BY
ANNE CARSON



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ALSO BY ANNE CARSON
AVAILABLE FROM NEW DIRECTIONS

the albertine workout

glass, irony & god

nox

antigonick
(sophokles)

translated by
anne carson



a new directions ebook

the task of the translator of antigone

dear Antigone:

your name in Greek means something like “against birth” or “instead of being born”

what is there instead of being born?

it’s not that we want to understand everything

or even to understand anything

we want to understand *something else*

I keep returning to Brecht

who made you do the whole play with a door strapped to your back
a door can have diverse meanings

I stand outside your door

the odd thing is, you stand outside your door too

that door has no inside

or if it has an inside, you are the one person who cannot enter it
for the family who lives there, things have gone irretrievably wrong
to have a father who is also your brother
means having a mother who is your grandmother

a sister who is both your niece and your aunt

and another brother you love so much you want to lie down with him
“thigh to thigh in the grave”

or so you say glancingly early in the play

but no one mentions it again afterwards

oh you always exaggerate! my father used to tell me

and let’s footnote here Hegel calling Woman “the eternal irony of the
community”

how seriously can we take you?

are you “Antigone between two deaths” as Lacan puts it
or a parody of Kreon’s law and Kreon’s language — so Judith Butler

who also finds in you “the occasion for a new field of the human”?
then again, “an exemplar of masculine intellect and moral sense”
is George Eliot’s judgment, while to several modern scholars you
(perhaps predictably)
sound like a terrorist

and Žižek compares you triumphantly with Tito
the leader of Yugoslavia saying NO! to Stalin in 1942
speaking of the ’40s, you made a good impression on the Nazi high command
and simultaneously on the leaders of the French Resistance
when they all sat in the audience
of Jean Anouilh’s *Antigone*

opening night Paris 1944: I don’t know what color your eyes were
but I can imagine you rolling them now
let’s return to Brecht, maybe he got you best
to carry one’s own door will make a person
clumsy, tired and strange

on the other hand, it may come in useful
if you go places that don’t have an obvious way in, like normality
or an obvious way out, like the classic double bind
well that’s *your* problem
my problem is to get you and your problem
across into English from ancient Greek
all that lies hidden in these people, your people
crimes and horror and years together, a family, what we call a family
“one of my earliest memories,” wrote John Ashbery in *New York* magazine
1980,
“is of trying to peel off the wallpaper in my room,
not out of animosity
but because it seemed there must be something fascinating

behind its galleons and globes and telescopes”
this reminds me of Samuel Beckett who described in a letter
his own aspirations toward language
“to bore hole after hole in it until what cowers behind it seeps through”
dear Antigone: you also are someone keeping faith

with a deeply *other* organization that lies just beneath what we see or what
we say
to quote Kreon you are *autonomos*
a word made up of *autos* “self” and *nomos* “law”
autonomy sounds like a kind of freedom
but you aren’t interested in freedom
your plan

is to sew yourself into your own shroud using the tiniest of stitches
how to translate this?
I take inspiration from John Cage who, when asked
how he composed 4'33", answered
“I built it up gradually out of many small pieces of silence”
Antigone, you do not,

any more than John Cage, aspire to a condition of silence
you want us to listen to the sound of what happens
when everything normal/musical/careful/conventional or pious is taken away
oh sister and daughter of Oidipous,
who can be innocent in dealing with you
there was never a blank slate

we were always already anxious about you
perhaps you know that Ingeborg Bachmann poem
from the last years of her life that begins
“I lose my screams”
dear Antigone,
I take it as the task of the translator
to forbid that you should ever lose your screams

cast

Antigone

Ismene *sister of Antigone*

Kreon *king of Thebes*

Haimon *son of Kreon and Eurydike*

Eurydike *wife of Kreon, mother of Haimon*

Teiresias *blind prophet of Thebes [led by a boy]*

Boy

Guard

Messenger

Chorus of old Theban men

Nick *a mute part [always onstage, he measures things]*

set

Palace of Kreon at Thebes

[enter Antigone and Ismene]

Antigone: we begin in the dark
and birth is the death of us

Ismene: who said that

Antigone: Hegel

Ismene: sounds more like Beckett

Antigone: he was paraphrasing Hegel

Ismene: I don't think so

Antigone: whoever it was whoever we are, dear sister
ever since we were born from the evils of Oidipous
what bitterness pain disgust disgrace or moral shock
have we been spared
and now this edict
you've heard the edict

Ismene: I've heard no edict
that our two brothers are dead by one another's hands
and the Argive army gone from this city
is all I know

Antigone: that's what I thought
that's why I called you out here

Ismene: what's the matter
you have your thunder look

Antigone: Kreon is resolved
to honour one of our brothers with burial
the other not
Eteokles he has laid in the ground in accordance with justice
and law
Polyneikes is to lie unwept and unburied

sweet sorrymeat for the little lusts of the birds
noble Kreon draws our attention to this edict
yours and my attention
whoever transgresses it gets death
so what do you say

Ismene: what could I say
what could I do

Antigone: if you join me
if you join my action

Ismene: at what risk
where is your mind

Antigone: if you help me
help me lift the corpse

Ismene: Kreon says unlawful to do so

Antigone: Antigone says unholy not to

Ismene: O sister, don't cross this line

Antigone: dear sister, my dead are mine
and yours as well as mine

Ismene: *whoever we are*
think, sister —
father's daughter
daughter's brother
sister's mother
mother's son
his mother and his wife were one!
our family is doubled tripled degraded and dirty in every
direction

moreover
we two are alone
and we are girls
girls cannot force their way against men

Antigone: yet I will

Ismene: sweet sister, you aim too high

Antigone: true sister, yet how sweet to lie upon my brother's body thigh
to thigh

Ismene: your heart so hot, thou sister

Antigone: O one and only head of my sister whose blood intersects with
my own in too many ways
the dead are cold
they'll welcome me

Ismene: you are a person in love with the impossible

Antigone: and when my strength is gone I'll stop

Ismene: it's wrong

Antigone: don't say that or I'll have to hate you

he will hate you too

just let me go

for I'll not endure anything so grievous as what robs me of a
noble death

Ismene: go then but know

you go as one beloved although

you go without your mind

[exit Antigone and Ismene]

[enter Chorus]

Chorus:

the glories of the world come sharking in all red and gold
we won the war
salvation struts
the streets of sevens-gated Thebes
the man from Argos fled
the one who
swung above our land on snow-white screams
the one who

overweened our walls
seven spears in his mouth instead of teeth
that one fled
before filling his cheeks with blood
before any fire
the noise of war was stretched along his back
the boaster
fled

Zeus hates a boaster
saw an ocean of them coming at us
raised his hand
they hit the ground
they were
the man from Argos
war
made them all insane

seven gates
and in each gate a man
and in each man a death
at the seventh gate
two brothers grew into each other's hearts as pain

now victory is ours
let
there be forgetting

let
Thebes shake with joy
here comes Kreon
rowing his new powerboat

[enter Kreon]

Kreon: here are Kreon's verbs for today

Adjudicate

Legislate

Scandalize

Capitalize

here are Kreon's nouns

Men

Reason

Treason

Death

Ship of State

Mine

Chorus: "mine" isn't a noun

Kreon: it is if you capitalize it

[enter Guard]

Guard: well

Kreon: well what

Guard: well we

Kreon: well we what

Guard: well we saw someone

Kreon: saw someone what

Guard: or actually no one

Kreon: was it someone or no one

Guard: well hypothetically

Kreon: *you goat's anus*, tell me who buried that body I said was
unlawful to touch

Guard: don't know

Kreon: so find out

[exit Kreon and Guard]

Chorus:

many terribly quiet customers exist but none more
terribly quiet than Man
his footsteps pass so perilously soft across the sea
in marble winter
up the stiff blue waves and every Tuesday
down he grinds the unastonishable earth
with horse and shatter

shatters too the cheeks of birds and traps them in his forest headlights
salty silvers roll into his net, he weaves it just for that,
this terribly quiet customer
he dooms
animals and mountains technically
by yoke he makes the bull bend, the horse to its knees

and utterance and thought as clear as complicated air and
moods that make a city moral, these he taught himself
the snowy cold he knows to flee
and every human exigency crackles as he plugs it in
every outlet works but
one
Death stays dark

Death he cannot doom
fabrications notwithstanding
evil
good
laws
gods
honest oathtaking notwithstanding

hilarious in his high city
you see him cantering just as he please
the lava up to *here*

[enter Guard with Antigone]

Chorus: this, this
 oh I don't know
 let's not mention gods
 let's not mention Oidipous
 here's Antigone
 please don't say she's the one
Guard: she's the one she did it she did I got her
Chorus: oh perfect
 here's Kreon

[enter Kreon]

Kreon: here's Kreon
 nick of time
Guard: well miracles do happen
 I swore I wouldn't come back but I did
 because I got her she's the one she did it and I got her
 she was fiddling with the grave
 I'm off the hook
Kreon: fiddling what do you mean fiddling
Guard: I'm a free man I'm free I'm off the hook
Kreon: explain how you caught her
Guard: she was burying him
Kreon: how where when are you sure tell me more
Guard: the corpse
 the illegal
 she was burying him
 what more do you want
Kreon: burying him how and where did you see her and how did you
 catch her I want details
Guard: details okay
 you threatened me I went back wiped off all the dust left that
 body bare

sat up on the hill was it hot yes
was there putrefaction and vermiculation yes
was there noonsunstink yes
did I doze off no I did not I kept me awake then
all of a sudden
a storm came up
a wind tore the hair off the trees lofted the dust with fear I
shut my eyes and
when I sneaked a look there she was
the child
in her birdgrief the bird in her childreftgravecry howling
and cursing she poured dust onto the body with both hands
she poured water onto the body with both hands
I seized her I charged her it made me sad
but still that's less than my own safety
you like nouns here's some
Dustlibation
Donedeal
Deadreckoning

Kreon: actually I prefer verbs

Guard: *got* her

Kreon [to Antigone]: and you with your head down you're the one

Antigone: bingo

Kreon [to Guard]: go

[exit Guard]

Kreon [to Antigone]: you knew it was against the law

Antigone: well if you call that *law*

Kreon: I do

Antigone: Zeus does not

Justice does not

the dead do not

what they call *law* did not begin today or yesterday

when they say *law* they do not mean a statute of today or
yesterday

they mean the unwritten unfailing eternal ordinances of the
 gods
that no human being can ever outrun
of course I will die
Kreon or no Kreon
and death is *fine*
this has no pain
to leave my mother's son lying out there unburied that would
 be pain

Chorus: raw as her father isn't she

Kreon: you think you are iron but I can bend you
 I'm the man here

Antigone: yes you are

Kreon: I'll bend your sister too

Antigone: can we just get this over with

Kreon: no let's split hairs a while longer

 I'd say

 you're the only one in Thebes who sees things this way

 wouldn't you

 you're autonomous

 autarchic

 autodidactic

 autodomestic

 autoempathic

 autotherapeutic

 autohistorical

 autometaphorical

 autoerotic

 and

 autobeguiled

Antigone: actually no they all think like me

 but you've nailed their tongues to the floor

Kreon: you're not ashamed

Antigone: no shame in honouring one's kin

Kreon: wasn't the other brother your kin too
Antigone: same mother same father
Kreon: yet you honour the one disgrace the other
Antigone: my dead do not say so
Kreon: the one a criminal the other a defender of our land
Antigone: Death needs to have Death's laws obeyed
Kreon: same law for good and evil patriot and traitor
Antigone: oh who knows how these definitions work down there
Kreon: enemy is always enemy alive or dead
Antigone: I am born for love not hatred
Kreon: I will not be worsted by a woman

[enter Ismene]

Chorus: here's Ismene
why is she blushing

Kreon: here's Ismene
why is she snaking in here

Ismene: I did the deed I share the blame

Antigone: you did nothing you shared nothing leave my death alone

Ismene: I want to row the boat with you

Antigone: save yourself

Ismene: I'll be so lonely

Antigone: some think the world is made of bodies some think forces
I think a man knows nothing but his foot when he burns it in
the hot fire

Ismene: quoting Hegel again

Antigone: Hegel says I am wrong

Ismene: but right to be wrong

Antigone: *no ethical consciousness*

Ismene: is that how he puts it

Antigone: so I wonder
let's say my unconscious
while remaining unconscious
could also know the laws of consciousness by which I am
condemned for disobeying them, I mean
can a person be so completely conscious
of being unconscious
that she is guilty of her own repression
is that what I'm guilty of

Ismene: well we all think you're a grand girl

Antigone: is this an argument

Ismene: I can help you suffer

Antigone: no

Ismene: I can give you reasons not to die

Antigone: no

Ismene [to Kreon]: I can give you reasons not to kill her
your own son for one

Kreon: oh he'll find other ruts to plough
you women and your beds make me sick

[calling] GUARDS, TAKE THEM AWAY

[exit Antigone, Ismene, Kreon]

Chorus:

blessed be they whose lives do not taste of evil
but if some god shakes your house
ruin arrives
ruin does not leave
it comes tolling over the generations
it comes rolling the black night salt up from the ocean floor
and all your thrashed coasts groan

archives of grief I see falling upon this house
death on birth birth on death there is no end to it
some god is piling them on
one last root was reaching up for light in the house of Oidipous
but the bloody dust of death
hacks her down mows her down
all the tall mad mountains of her mind

Zeus you win you always win
the whole oxygen of power
belongs to you
sleep cannot seize it
time does not tire it
your Mt Olympos glows like one white stone around this law
nothing vast enters the lives of mortals without ruin

but of course there is hope look here comes hope
wandering in
to tickle your feet
then you notice the soles are on fire
a wise word
if evil looks good to you
some god is heading you on the high road to ruin

oh here's Haimon
here's Haimon in pain and rage
cheated of his future bride

[enter Haimon]

Kreon: in a rage about your future bride
or are we still friends

Haimon: father, I'm yours

Kreon: good attitude, son
good heart in your chest
I need you like that
we hold the same friends damage the same enemies
some children are useless
some are just trouble
and who would disagree
this makes people *laugh at the father*
a fact of life I'll say to you now I'll say it one time
when you lay yourself under a pleasure female
you take an open wound into your house and your life
spit her out
let her snake her way down and seduce some boy in hell
you know she disobeyed me
alone out of all the city
I will not be made a liar
I'll kill her
let her call on Zeus and blood and kinship who cares
should I nourish disorder within my own family no I should
not
my public is watching

Haimon: father, the gods grow minds in men
as the most precious equipment they have
yet I could not would not do not know how to
say you are wrong
it may be
some other way
I don't know
might turn out
I delete this line
I am your defender

I'm yours
I keep watch
no one says or does or disparages any of, why your dread eye
 your displeasure no one
yet I hear
there is talk
there are shadows
this girl
here I posit a lacuna
this girl does not deserve to die the town is sad most glorious
 of deeds most
terrible of deaths (they say) she only chose
to keep her brother's body from raw dogs
and eating birds this sort of talk
I don't know
 night's coming
 oh father
 when you ride uphill
 got to shift your weight
 pedal to pedal
 side to side
 ride the rhythm
 don't hoard your own custom don't haul old anger up
over your tongue and your mind
 they go blind
 trees bend
 ships loosen the rigging
 no single human being has perfect knowledge

Chorus: I like a good argument
marrow versus marrow
you two could learn from each other

Kreon: me at my age go to school and get wisdom from this stripling

Haimon: you would learn nothing unjust

Kreon: nothing unjust to honour anarchy

Haimon: I do not honour anarchy
Kreon: is the girl not tainted with that malady
Haimon: Thebes says otherwise
Kreon: shall Thebes prescribe to me how I should rule
Haimon: listen to yourself you sound like a boy dictator
Kreon: whom else should the government depend on
Haimon: no city belongs to a single man
Kreon: surely a city belongs to its ruler
Haimon: why not find a desert and rule all alone
Kreon [to the Chorus]: this fellow it seems is the woman's toy
Haimon: if *you* are the woman
it's you I care for
Kreon: O shameless thou utter miscreant
to prosecute thine own father
Haimon: yes for I see you doing wrong
Kreon: wrong to respect mine own prerogatives
Haimon: you don't respect you trample on the prerogatives of the gods
Kreon: O polluted O dastard nature O subject to a woman
Haimon: but not subject to injustice
Kreon: all thy words plead for her
Haimon: and for you and me and the gods below
Kreon: thou canst never marry her this side the grave
Haimon: then she'll die and take another with her
Kreon: doth thy boldness push thee even to threats
Haimon: threats what threats
Kreon: thou shalt rue the day of thy witless teaching
Haimon: if you weren't my father I'd say you were mad
Kreon: thou woman's chattel seek not to tickle me
Haimon: you talk and talk and never listen
Kreon: sayest thou so, well now well now I say
thou shalt revile me to thy cost
fetch out the loathéd creature
let her die hard against her bridegroom now this very instant
before his eyes
Haimon: never

[exit Haimon]

Chorus: well he's gone
in anger and pain

Kreon: let him go
Big Man
I have deaths to do

Chorus: both girls

Kreon: no just the loud one

Chorus: how

Kreon: I'll find her a desert
in the neighbourhood
I'll bury her alive
with a bit of food
sacred closet, terrible leisure
no doubt the god of death will save her life

[exit Kreon]

Chorus:

Eros, no one can fight you
Eros, you clamp down on every living thing
on girls' cheeks on oceans on wild fields
not even an immortal can evade you
certainly not a creature of the day

why
they go mad

you change the levels of a person's mind
this Haimon crisis is all your doing
you shook his blood
you glow on girls' eyelids
who cares about the laws of the land
Aphrodite, you play with us you
play

deeply

[enter Antigone]

Chorus: I can no longer restrain the stream of tears
when I see Antigone here passing
to the room where we all
go in the end

Antigone: Hegel says people want to see their lives on stage
look at me
people
I go my last road
I see my last light
look
Death who gathers all of us into his old bent arms in the end
is gathering me
but I am still alive
no wedding
no wedding song
no wedding chamber
yet I shall lie in the bed of the river of Death
while I am still alive

Chorus: yes but won't you win glory
won't you be praised
it's not as if you're dying of disease or war
you chose to live autonomous
and so you die
the only one of mortals to go down to Death alive

Antigone: are you mockers of me
you grabbing old men
are you laughers at me
though I'm not yet gone
O springs of the rivers of Thebes
O reaches of the plains of Thebes
bear me witness

no one shed a tear for me
as I went to my strange new grave
for I'm a strange new kind of inbetween thing aren't I
not at home with the dead nor with the living

Chorus: you're clumsy it's true
clumsy as your father
remember how Brecht had you do the whole play with a door
strapped to your back

Antigone: oh I don't want to talk about him
or him
or *him*
all that plowing in the dark
I go to them now
one final intersection
O my brother you have despoiled me

Chorus: you despoiled yourself
piety is nice but authority is authority
why must you always make your own laws

Antigone: unwept
unwed
unloved
I go

[enter Kreon]

Kreon: take her
we are clean of this girl

Antigone: O tomb
O bridal chamber
O house in the ground forever
I was an organized person and this is my reward
I organized your deaths, my dear ones

all of you father mother brother when you died
you ask would I have done it for a husband or a child
my answer is no I would not
a husband or a child can be replaced
but who can grow me a new brother
is this a weird argument
Kreon thought so
but I don't know the words go wrong they call my piety
impiety
I'm alone on my insides
I died long ago
who suffers more
I wonder who suffers more

Chorus: your soul is blowing apart

Kreon: get a move on

Antigone: next word
is death

Kreon: DEATH

Antigone: O Thebes
O gods
O look
I go
I'm the last one left in a line of kings
I was caught
in an act of perfect piety

[exit Antigone]

Chorus:

how is a Greek chorus like a lawyer
they're both in the business of searching for a precedent
finding an analogy
locating a prior example
so as to be able to say
this terrible thing we're witnessing now is
not unique you know it happened before
or something much like it
we're not at a loss how to think about this
we're not without guidance
there is a pattern
we can find an historically parallel case
and file it away under
ANTIGONE BURIED ALIVE FRIDAY AFTERNOON
COMPARE CASE HISTORIES 7, 17 AND 49

now I could dig up those case histories
tell you about Danaos and Lykourgos and the sons of Phineus
people locked up in a room or a cave or their own dark mind
it wouldn't help you
it doesn't help me
it's Friday afternoon
there goes Antigone to be buried alive
is there
any way
we can say
this is normal
rational
forgivable
or even in the widest definition *just*
no not really
here comes Teiresias
EPISODE FIVE

[enter Teiresias led by a boy]

Teiresias [to the Chorus]: hail, you kings of Thebes
I begin by addressing the wrong person
because I'm blind
is that what you think
because I'm blind

Kreon: what's up, Teiresias

Teiresias [to Kreon]: you're standing on a razor
I hear the birds they're *bebarbarizmenized* they're
making monster sounds
the fires won't light
the rites go wrong
you know my technologies you know
the failing of the sign is in itself a sign
from you a *sickness*
from you a *suppuration*
from you a *surfeit*
comes out upon the city
this pile of rot that was the son of Oidipous
the boy is dead stop killing him

Kreon: you fake

Teiresias:

Kreon: you profiteer

Teiresias:

Kreon: you entrepreneur

Teiresias:

Kreon: you're too quiet

Teiresias: watch out Kreon
watch out I see the future plunging toward you
and it contains the corpse of your own son
you've made a structural mistake with life and death my dear
you've put the living underground
and kept the dead up here
that is so wrong

that is so wrong

[exit Teiresias with boy]

Chorus: I hate to mention it but
historically
his prophecies are never false

Kreon: I know
I'm shaking

Chorus: take advice

Kreon: tell me

Chorus: set the girl free

Kreon: you mean

Chorus: quick quick quick

Kreon: it hurts

Chorus: quick quick quick

Kreon: I go

[exit Kreon]

Chorus:

another
an hour
an hour and a half
a year
a split second
a decade
this instant
a second
a split second
a now
a nick
a neck
Kreon rushes out

all the guards rush out

hang by the neck until:

here we are

in a song about joy

here we are in a day about dust

the dust it takes to house enemies

the house it takes to dust justice

the justice it takes to dodge a bullet

the bullet it takes to justify lovers

the love in which to delete your own darling

the darling you dust
the dust you disperse
the you who does not
does not what
does not
nick

here we are we're all fine
we're standing in
the nick of time

[enter Messenger]

Messenger: O people
there is no stanza of human life that
I would praise or blame
luck sends your powerboat up or
down the waves at any given moment
no seer can see what's next
Kreon (I thought) was an enviable man
for he saved this land of Kadmos
he got his hands on monarchy
he sailed it straight and furrows of children flourished around
him
now all that's gone
when joy betrays you
I do not count your life alive
a corpse is more alive
be as rich as you like be absolute
if your joy goes
I wouldn't buy you for a shadow of smoke

Chorus: you're the Messenger
what's your message

Messenger: they're dead

Chorus: who's dead

Messenger: Haimon's dead

Chorus: by whose hand

Messenger: a hand very like his own

Chorus: okay Teiresias, point match game

Messenger: game's not over

Chorus: you're right

here's Eurydike wife of Kreon

what's she up to

[enter Eurydike]

Eurydike: this is Eurydike's monologue
it's her only speech in the play
you may not know who she is
that's okay
like poor Mrs. Ramsay
who died in a bracket
of *To the Lighthouse*
she's the wife of the man
whose moods tensify
the world of this story
the world sundered by *her*
I say sundered by *her*
that girl with the undead
strapped to her back

a state of exception
marks the limit of the law
this violent thing
this fragile thing
try to unclench
we said to her
she never did
we got her the bike
we got a therapist
that poor sad man
with his odd ideas
some days he made us
sit on the staircase
all on different steps

or videotaped us
but when we watched it
was nothing but shadows
finally we expelled her we had to
using the logic of friend and foe
that she denies

but how can she deny
the rule to which she is an exception
is she autoimmune
no she is not

have you heard this expression
the nick of time
what is a nick
I asked my son
what is a nick
I asked my son

when the Messenger comes
I set him straight
I tell him nobody's missing
we're all here
we're all fine
why do you Messengers always
exaggerate
exit Eurydike bleeding from all orifices

[Eurydike does not exit]

Messenger: O beloved queen
I wish I could say I did not see
what was left of Polyneikes
the dogtorn parts
the parts lying
the parts gathered
the parts burned on a sacred pile I wish
I could say
I did not see
the stones shrieking
the girl hanging
the boy a bloody lung
the father on his knees

the bolt leaving the wall
the sword sinking up to its own mouth
O my queen
I did not see
Death marry them at last
oh so shyly

but I did
I did see it
exit Eurydike

Chorus: exit Eurydike

Eurydike: exit Eurydike

[exit Eurydike]

Messenger: too big a silence

[exit Messenger]

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Chorus: here comes Kreon
 dragging his
 dragging his
 dragging his what

[enter Kreon with body of Haimon]

Kreon: here is my crime it was
 my hard killing mind it was
 my deadly goings wrong O
 my child
 too soon dead O
 this sacrilege that I called public policy it was
 my child
 assassinated
 by my folly

Chorus: you're late
 to learn
 what's what
 aren't you

Kreon: late to learn O yes I am
 late too late O then O then
 some god slammed down on me
 a heavy weight
 some god shook me out on those raw roads
 alas for the joy of my life that I've trampled underfoot
 alas for us all going dark

[enter Messenger]

Messenger: okay Kreon
widen your eyes

Kreon: what now
what worse

Messenger: Eurydike is dead
Eurydike is dead

Kreon: O filth of Death
who can clean you out
O laugh of Death
you crack me
you crack me open
you crack me open again

here comes Kill
Kreon's verb for today
now he is perfectly blended with pain

Messenger: Eurydike cursed you
your wife cursed you
assassin of your own child she said
and she undid her eyes to the dark

Kreon: yes yes of course
of course she did

Messenger: she blamed you

Kreon: and then

Messenger: stabbed herself in the liver

Kreon: yes yes she did
of course in the liver
yes I am to blame
take Kreon away

he no more exists than someone who does not exist

Chorus: briefest is best
when evil is all around

Kreon: I want Kreon's death

Chorus: that's the future this is the present
you deal with the present

Kreon: to die is my only prayer

Chorus: then don't pray at all
you don't get to run this

Kreon: take Kreon away please take Kreon away
where can I look
where can I turn
everything I touch goes wrong
an unbearable fate has loaded itself onto my head

Chorus: last word
wisdom: better get some
even too late

[exeunt omnes except Nick who continues measuring]

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