

## ELECTRA

### Sophocles

ELECTRA: If it appears to you that I am constantly mourning and lamenting, then I am ashamed. I ask that you forgive me. Does not my background and being my father's daughter urge me to bear witness to all that has happened in this house? From day to day, from morn to night, this endless increase of wrongs is one ceaseless sorrow. The first cause is my mother. My mother hates me. Here in this house I must live with my father's murderers. I am subject to their rule, beholden to them for each and every thing I do. Can you imagine passing the days watching Aegisthus sitting on my father's throne, seeing him in my father's robes, witnessing him pour libations on the very spot where he killed my father. Espying the worst outrage of all, this murderer of my father, in my father's bed with her, with my mother. As his mistress, brazenly she lives with this foul and contaminated criminal, fearing no fury. Far from it, she laughs in the face of what she has done. She marks that day, the day of my father's treacherous murder, celebrating it with song and sacrifice. Every month, on that day, she gives thanks to the gods who saved her. I must confront the profane ceremony, that commemorates his name, suppressing; my grief and lamentation, holding them tight inside my body. My heart cries for tears, but I will not let them show. And this woman, this empress of deceit, taunts me: 'What a wretched girl you are, you damnable creature, Do you think you're the first ever to have lost a father? Does no one else ever mourn? I curse you. May you never find escape from your sorrows, not even in the underworld!' And on and on she taunts me, unless she hears a rumour that Orestes is coming. Then she goes mad and shrieks in my face. 'This is your fault,' she says. 'I have you to thank for this,

# | a n | t h o | l o | g y |

you stole him from my embrace and forced him to go away.  
Mark my words, you will pay for this.'  
By now she is screaming, and at her side  
her noble lord backs her up, like the coward he is,  
that type of man who picks a woman as his foe.  
I must wait and wait, doing nothing.