Listen to me, my comrades, brothers in hardship.
All ways of dying are hateful to us poor mortals,
True, but to die of hunger, starve to death-
That’s the worst of all. So up with you now,
Let’s drive off the pick of Helios’ sleek herds,
Slaughter them to the gods who rule the skies up there.
If we ever make it home to Ithaca, native ground,
Erect at once a glorious temple to the Sungod,
Line the walls with hoards of dazzling gifts!
But if the Sun, inflamed for his longhorn cattle,
Means wreck our ship and the other gods pitch in-
I’d rather die at sea, with one deep gulp of death,
Than die by inches on this desolate island here!
See how close at hand they graze to our blue-proved ship.
Once we burn the bones and taste the organs-
Let us hack the rest into pieces, piercing them on spits
Let us feast, my comrades, for days on the cattle of the Sun.
Dramatic Interpretation

Source: Adapted from Bacchae by Euripides translated by Robin Robertson
Speaker: Agave
Audience: Agave’s father Cadmus
Scene: Agave, in a Dionysic transe, has just killed her son, Pentheus. She presents the kill to her father and slowly gains realization of just what she has done and who she has killed. Agave is holding the severed head of Pentheus while speaking.

Look at this, men of Thebes,
Citizens of this towered city,
Look at this prize!
The beasts brought down by the daughters of Cadmus-
Not with nets or spears
But the pale delicate hands of women.
You armed hunters should look,
Think hard, and then stay silent,
Because we caught our prey and tore it to pieces
With nothing but these hands, these fleshy blades.

I… I feel...I feel something slowing down.
This head I hold? A lion’s… The huntresses…They said…
I turn it. Yes, I see-
O god! It is the head- O god!
His head, it’s drenched in blood!
Who murdered him? Why am I holding this-
My son’s-? My son’s-?
Answer me! My heart beats with terror.

I! I and my sisters killed my son!
Pentheus! Misery!
Betrayer Dionysus murdered him!
I see it. Now I see it.
With his mother’s arm!