

*The goddess Athena convinces the Furies to accept the acquittal of Orestes.*

Yield to me. No more heavy spirits. You were not defeated — the vote was tied, a verdict fairly reached, with no disgrace to you. No, Zeus brought luminous proof before us. He who spoke the god's oracle bore witness that Orestes did the work but should not suffer harm.

And now you'd vent your anger, hurt the land? Consider a moment. Calm yourself. Never render us barren, raining your potent showers down like spears, consuming every seed. By all my rights, I promise you your seat in the depths of the earth, yours by all rights— stationed at hearths equipped with glistening thrones, covered with praise! My people will revere you.

You have your power, you are goddesses — but not to turn on the world of mortals and ravage it past cure. I put my trust in Zeus, and — must I add this? — I am the only god who knows the keys to the armory where his lightning-bolt is sealed. No need of that — not here.

Let me persuade you. The lethal spell of your voice, never cast it down on the land and blight its harvest home. Lull asleep that salt-black wave of anger — awesome, proud with reverence, live with me. The land is rich, and more, when its first fruits, offered for heirs and the marriage rites, are yours to hold forever, you will praise my words.

Come! — and, sped beneath the earth by our awesome sacrifices, keep destruction from the borders. Bring prosperity home to Athens, triumph sailing in its wake!

**adapted from Robert Fagles' translation of Aeschylus' *Eumenides* (pp 267-68 and 275)**

*Facing death, the wicked king Mezentius laments his son and his own cruel acts.*

Was life so sweet to me, my son, that I let you face the enemy in my place — you, whom I begot? Am I, your father, saved by your wounds, alive through your death?

Ah, now at last the bitterness of exile comes home to me; the wound is driven deep. I have stained your good name, my son, with my guilt — I, driven by resentment from the throne and scepter of my fathers. The penalty I owe my native land and bitter countrymen is long overdue. I should have given up my guilty life through any kind of death! Now I still live and have not yet left the light of day. But leave I will.

And you, my steed — we have lived long, if anything lasts long for mortals. Today either you'll bear off Aeneas' head and bloody spoils, and avenge with me the suffering of Lausus, or — if we can't find our way through force — you'll die with me. For I do not think, my brave one, that you would endure a stranger's orders or a Trojan lord.

Aeneas, you murderer! My son's gone, and you try to frighten me? This was the only way you could destroy me. I don't fear death, nor do I hold back for the gods. Break it off. I come to die.

Why do you taunt me and threaten me with death? Killing me is no sin. I did not come into battle for a truce. My Lausus did not seal such a pact between me and you. I ask only one thing, if the vanquished have any claim to clemency: let my body be covered by earth. I know my people's hatred surrounds me. Guard me from their rage; let me join my son in the tomb.

**adapted from Stanley Lombardo's translation of *Aeneid* Book X (pp 273-76)**