

Extract from: Aeschylus, *The Eumenides*, [*The Oresteia*], translated by Robert Fagles.

Apollo withdraws to his inner sanctuary; Orestes leaves with Hermes in the lead. The ghost of Clytaemnestra appears at the Navelstone, hovering over the Furies as they sleep.

GHOST OF CLYTAEMNESTRA

So, you can sleep ...

Awake, awake—what use are sleepers now?

I go shorn of honor, thanks to you,
alone among the dead. And for those I killed 100
the charges of the dead will never cease, never-
I wander in disgrace, I feel the guilt, I tell you,
enormous guilt from all the outraged dead!

But I suffered too, terribly, from dear ones,
and none of my spirits rages to avenge me. I 105
was slaughtered by his matricidal hand. See
these gashes—

Seizing one of the Furies weak with sleep.

Carve them in your senses.

The sleeping brain has eyes that give us light;
we can never see our destiny by day.

And after all my libations ... how you lapped 110
the honey, the sober offerings poured to soothe you,
;soraē midnight feasts I burned at the hearthfire,
your dread hour never shared with gods.
All those rites, I see them trampled down.
And he springs free like a fawn, one light leap 115
at that—he's through the thick of your nets,
he breaks away!
Mocking laughter twists across his face.

Aeschylus, *The Oresteia*, translated by Robert Fagles (1975) New York: Viking Press.

Hear me, I am pleading for my life.
Awake, my Furies, goddesses of the Earth!
A dream is calling—Clytaemnestra calls you now.

The Furies mutter in their sleep

Mutter on. Your man is gone, fled far away.
My kin has friends to defend him, not like mine.

They mutter again.

You sleep too much, no pity for my ordeal.
Orestes murdered his mother—he is gone.

125

They begin to moan.

Moaning, sleeping—onto your feet, quickly.
What is your work? What but causing pain?
Sleep and toil, the two strong conspirators,
they sap the mother dragon's deadly fury—

*The Furies utter a sharp moan and
moan again, but they are still
asleep.*

FURIES

Get him, get him, get him, get him—
there he goes.

130

THE GHOST OF CLYTAEMNESTRA

You hunt your prey in a dream, like
hounds mad for the sport you bay him on, you never
leave the kill

But what are you *doing*?

Up! don't yield to the labor, limp with sleep. Never
forget my anguish. Let my charges hurt you, they are
just; deep in the righteous heart they prod like spurs.

You, blast him on with your gory breath,
the fire of your vitals—wither him, after him,
one last foray—waste him, burn him out!