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"The Watchman," Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 1-39 (Translation)

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THE WATCHMAN: Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 1–39

The Watchman: In truth, I pray the gods deliver me,
The watchman, guarding year to toilsome year
On rooftops, eyeing sons of Atreus,
Arms bent and doglike. Well I know the stars
In dread assembly—brilliant, noble lords
Who bring the warm and winter months to men
While heaven turns to make them rise and set.
And now I watch for signals from the torch,
That beam of fire bringing word from Troy,
Report of conquest: in this way, I serve
A woman's manly-minded, hoping heart.
And when in dreamless slumber, drenched in dew,
I grasp this bed in worn anxiety—
For panic looms above me, never rest,
Unsteady eyes averse to wanted sleep—
I sometimes cry in anguish for this house,
Now hapless, governed once in majesty.
Deliver me from labors into luck
By bringing news that dissipates this murk!
Oh welcome, shining beam that makes the night
To shine as day and brings decree of dance
To crowds in Argos, gathered by your charm!
Hail, hail!
I raise this call to Agamemnon's wife,
And to the households, kindling them from sleep,
To summon every voice, if Ilium
Has fallen, as the beacon plainly tells.
And I myself will dance a prelude now:
My master's dice, it seems, have fallen well—

Three sixes have been thrown me by this sign.
Now, may the ruler of this household come
Once more to clasp his well-loved hand in mine.
Of other deeds, I dare not tell. A cow
Has trod upon my tongue. The house itself
Would gossip, if it could. In faith, I speak
To those enlightened ones, and flee the fools.

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