

Aeschylus, Prometheus Bound, 11-38, 91-125

Hephaistos Kratos and Via, you've done your part of Zeus' command. You need do nothing more. You may go now but I, I have not the strength of heart to tie a god - a relative of ours - upon this wild and icy rock. Still, I must do so. I must harden my resolve and obey because it is a heavy thing to disobey our father's word.

To Prometheus:

You, Prometheus! You, with your high morals! You, son of wise Themis! Whether you and I want to, I must nail you with these bronze chains upon this deserted peak where no mortal's voice nor mortal's vision will reach you. No one can loosen these chains.

Scorched by the sun's fire you'll lose the bloom of your health and you'll be impatient for Night in her bejewelled robe to come and cover that burning light. That is, until the sun will rise again and Dawn spreads her rays; and so, Prometheus, you'll always have to deal with one tyranny or other and there will be no one to ease your pain. These are the wages you've been paid for your sin of loving the mortals.

Because as a god, you didn't think of the rage of the other gods before unjustly offering gifts to mortals; and so, in payment of this you'll be a guard to this repugnant rock: sleepless, standing, unable to bend your knees and you'd be singing many songs of grief and mourning, all to no effect.

It's not easy, Prometheus, to turn Zeus' mind about. Every new ruler is harsh.

[...]

Prometheus Ah! Ah!

Oh, sacred Ether and you winds, masters of speed! You, waters of rivers and you, endless laughter of Ocean's waves! Oh, Mother Earth! And you, Sun, who sees all!

Look at me! Look at my suffering, I, a god who must suffer the punishment of gods!

Look at what outrageous torment I must endure for countless years! Look at these dire shackles this new ruler of the Gods has devised for me!

Ah! Ah! 100

I groan for my suffering now and for all the suffering to come. When will I see their end?

But what am I saying? I know the future and all that it will bring and I know all my suffering beforehand, so I must endure as best I can what Necessity has sent upon me because she cannot be resisted.

Yet, neither can I speak nor stay silent about this agony that I am forced to suffer.

I've hunted down and stolen, inside the hollow of a fennel's stalk, the seed of fire, a gift that has proven itself to be the teacher of every craft and the greatest resource for humans. 110

Such is the crime I have committed and this is the penalty I am to suffer: nailed and chained on this rock beneath the open sky.

Ah! Ah!

What sound is this? What invisible scent comes this way? Is it divine or human or both? Who has come to witness my suffering upon this rock at Earth's end and for what purpose?

To look at someone in misery? A god in chains? An enemy of Zeus and of all the other gods who frequent his court - and all because I love the mortals? 120

Ah! Ah!

The sound is getting closer! I hear the rustling of feathers whistling all around me. Whatever it is that is approaching me, frightens me!