The Wrath of Apollo

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Abstract: This project is a loose translation of lines 1-18 of Euripides’ Alcestis, exploring Apollo’s motives for sparing Admetus. The speech is reinterpreted and illustrated as a super villain-reminiscent monologue as he describes his scheme; the aim of this project is to suggest that, as Apollo is the god of prophesy, he foresaw the consequences of sparing Admetus, and thus acted out of anger rather than gratitude. The text used for translation was edited by C. A. E. Luschnig and H. M. Roisman, and the artwork was influenced by graphic novelist Jeff Smith.

Text used for translation:

ὦ δῶματ᾽ Αδμήτει’, ἐν οἷς ἐτλην ἐγὼ
θῆσαν τράπεζαν αἰνέσαι θεώς περ ὡν.
Ζεὺς γὰρ κατακτάς παῖδα τὸν ἐμὸν αἰτίος
Ἀσκληπιόν, στέρνοισιν ἐμβαλὼν φλόγα:
5
οὐ δὴ χωλοθεῖς τέκτονας Δίου πυρὸς
κτείνῳ Κύκλωσας: καὶ με θητεύειν πατήρ
θνητῷ παρ’ ἄνδρῳ τῶν ἄποιν’ ἤνάγκασεν.
ἐλθὼν δὲ γαῖαν τήν ἐβουφόρβουν ἐξέναρ
καὶ τὸν ἐςωξον ὡκον ἐς τόδ’ ἡμέρας.
10
ὀσίον γὰρ ἄνθρος Ὀσίος ὡν ἐτύγχανον
παιδὸς Φέρητος, ὃν θανεῖν ἔρωσόμην,
Μοῖρας δολῶσας: ήνεσαν δὲ μοι θεαὶ
Ἀδμήτον ἄθην τὸν παραυτίκ’ ἐκρυγεῖν,
ἀλλον διαλλάξαντα τοῖς κάτω νεκρόν.
15
πάντας δ’ ἔλεγξας καὶ διεξελθὼν φίλους,
πατέρα γεραιάν θ’ ἕ σφ’ ἐτυκτε μητέρα,
οὐχ ἡπέρ πλὴν γυναικὸς ὅστις ἦθελε
θανὼν πρὸ κεῖνου μηκέτ’ εἰσορᾶν φαόσ:
ALCESTIS: LINES 1-18

Translation by Emily Shanahan, in the style of Tim Shepp

ZEUS IS RESPONSIBLE.
HE KILLED MY SON, ASCLEPIUS,
WITH A LIGHTNING BOLT TO HIS CREST.

ZAP

I WAS ANGRY,
SO I KILLED THE CYCLOPS
AND MADE ZEUS LIGHTNING.

AND MY FATHER PUNISHED ME,
FORCING ME TO ACT
AS A SERVANT.

PROMETHEUS' HOME,
WHERE I DESIRED TO SERVE,
THOUGH I AM A GOD.

BECAUSE I FOUND THE SON OF
PEIREIS PLEADS,
I SAID HIM FROM DYING
BY TRICKING THE FAIRIES.

BUT COMING TO THIS
PLACE,
I WORKED AS A
HEROIC MAN
AND SAVED THE
HOUSE UNTIL
THIS DAY.

AND THEY AGREED TO SPEAK
ASCLEPIUS
FOR NOW, IF HE PROVIDED
ANOTHER CORPSE.

HE BODED EVERYONE,
HIS OWN MOTHER AND FATHER.

ONLY AS WE AGREED
TO NEVER AGAIN
SEE THE LIGHT OF DAY.