

AESCHYLUS ... Agamemnon

Zeus, who guided men to think,
 who has laid it down that wisdom
 comes alone through suffering.
 Still there drips in sleep against the heart
 grief of memory; against
 our pleasure we are temperate.
 From the gods who sit in grandeur
 grace comes somehow violent.

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The sickening in men's minds, tough,
 reckless in fresh cruelty brings daring.

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Justice so moves that those only learn
 who suffer; and the future
 you shall know when it has come; before then, forget it

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Let me attain no envied wealth,
 Let me not plunder cities,
 neither be taken in turn, and face
 life in the power of another.

AESCHYLUS ... Agamemnon

I am a mortal, a man; I cannot trample upon
 these tinted splendors without fear thrown in my path.
 I tell you, as a man, not god, to reverence me.
 Discordant is the murmur at such treading down
 of lovely things; while God's most lordly gift to man
 is decency of mind. Call that man only blest
 who has in sweet tranquillity brought his life to close.
 If I could only act as such, my hope is good.

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I am not proud in skill to guess at prophecies,
 yet even I can see the evil in this thing.
 From divination what good ever has come to men?
 Art, and multiplication of words
 drifting through tangled evil bring
 terror to them that hear.

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I can not tell which counsel of yours to call my own.
 It is the man of action who can plan as well.

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No, we can never endure that; better to be killed.
 Death is a softer thing by far than tyranny.

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Exiles feed on empty dreams of hope. I know it. I was one.