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**THE SACRIFICIAL WIND**

*written by*

Lorna Shaughnessy

Directed by Max Hafler

FADE IN

OPENING CREDITS

1. EURIPIDES - I

A tired man in his 60's sits in a cold dark room, partly candlelight.

*Camera - MIDSOT, FRONT*

*Light - YELLOW/ORANGE, SIDE LIT*

*Soundscape - STORM / RAIN*

EURIPIDES

I tired of Greece, the never-ending wars, battles lost and battles won, in the end it all came down to the same thing: tit-for-tat, the blame game.

I tired of who I was: Euripides the playwright, always a thorn in someone's side, my own anger wore me out! So I came north, to this place, in search of peace.

You could say I exiled myself: tired of watching the strong men get stronger, of watching democracy flounder! I could see there was no space for an old poet.

Nothing happens in our own times that hasn't already been told in the old myths.

My mind keeps going back to Aulis, the raw beginnings of the Trojan Wars- that Homer didn't tell! When strongman Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter to Artemis in return for wind to fill the sails of his fleet.

I started working on a play but something odd has happened, I can't bear the thought of finishing it...

There is that other version, where the goddess defies the pact and saves Iphigenia from the knife.

(MORE)

## EURIPIDES (CONT'D)

Saves her for what though, for  
what kind of life?

Will Iphigenia die yet again at a  
stroke of my pen?!

Death doesn't look so heroic at  
my age, when it's breathing down  
your neck.

Is there a right ending for a  
story like this? Either way she's  
a slave to someone else's will, a  
young girl, barely visible in the  
bigger schemes dreamed up by gods  
or men.

## CROSSFADE

## 2. ORACLE

A dark space. Chorus mouths only; blindfolded. Faces of  
characters fading in/out.

Camera - CLOSE UP, FRONT

Light - WHITE/BLUE

Soundscape - SFX mirrors text, Aulos music.

## ORACLE

The vanity of a cuckolded husband  
demands the public stage of war.  
But without wind, the performance  
cannot begin.

Anchors will not be raised nor  
armies engage; instead men  
sharpen their weapons, scratch  
and stretch in boredom while they  
wait to sail.

The first victim of this war will  
die here, today. No soldier but  
an unarmed girl, Agamemnon's  
first-born.

Given in exchange for Artemis to  
blow into their sails and send  
them on their way; even for the  
gods a bizarre piece of trade.

Her blood on the altar will be  
the trickling stream that swells  
till her father's house and all  
in it are swept away.

(MORE)

## ORACLE (CONT'D)

The wind purchased by this death  
will be foul, foul like the tall  
pyre of corpses that will wait  
for the torch on the shores of  
Troy.

## CROSSFADE

## 3. IPHIGENIA - I

A small girl stands alone, spotlit.

Camera - MIDSOT, HIGH ANGLE, FRONT

Light - WHITE/BLUE

Soundscape - Birdsong and Zither motif

## IPHIGENIA

He wasn't going to tell me.  
It was my mother's servant came  
to us, the toothless old man I  
passed in the hall, I could  
barely make out what he was  
saying his accent was so thick  
but I heard two words;

*"Iphigenia, sacrifice..."*

Saw my mother's face flush for a  
moment then turn the colour of a  
seasick recruit. She listed as if  
a wave had struck, repeated the  
words and the sheer dread in her  
voice churned in my gut, spread  
up my spine and down my legs so I  
couldn't feel my hands or feet. I  
heard myself shriek *"He's  
lying!"*, but she didn't answer.

Then my father came, still no  
answer, he was looking at my  
mother, not at me and then I read  
it in his eyes- *"Die"*.

And for what? So Helen could be  
brought back? She doesn't even  
want to be here. On my knees,  
begging him to let me go on being  
what I've always been- his  
daughter!

Why does it have to be me?  
Why not Helen's daughter?  
Why not Hermione?

Not a word.  
(MORE)

## IPHIGENIA (CONT'D)

He was still looking at my mother, or at his feet. I looked at his sandals, they were clean, they were always clean...

I never knew real fear till then, the urge to flee. I said terrible things, begged him to hide me away in a goatherd's hut dress some slave girl in my clothes and send her to the altar in my place, confound the gods if that's what it would take.

Am I ashamed? No.  
Fear is stronger than shame.

Then he cried silently though his tears weren't for me. He showed me no pity but kept it to anoint himself, Agamemnon, my father;

My whole life- a lie.

Will you lie awake tonight, father? How will you remember me as you toss and turn?  
Fresh-skinned and smiling as I ran to hug you every morning?  
Proud as the daughter of a king should be, believing myself loved and cherished? A corpse stripped of parents, siblings, husband, children, sky, sun and sea all in the time it takes to draw a breath, one final breath.

Will you watch as the priest draws his blade across my throat?  
Will you hold me down yourself like a dumb animal, feel the rush of warm blood on your clean skin?

You might as well. Your hand is on every other part of this.

His guards will be back soon.  
My poor mother, her tears could drown us all. I have none left.  
Fear is stronger than grief.

I see her now like a broken mosaic

(MORE)

IPHIGENIA (CONT'D)  
 with lots of pieces missing,  
 something from a distant past and  
 I know the readied knife has  
 already severed me from  
 everything I loved.

CROSSFADE

4. CLYTEMNESTRA - I

A woman in her 40's stands back in shadow and slowly steps forward into the light.

*Camera - WIDE to CLOSE, FRONT*

*LIGHT - Balanced*

*Soundscape - 'Clytemnestra's Theme', voices whispering  
 "Fear is stronger than shame"*

CLYTEMNESTRA

What happened, Iphigenia? You came out fighting, instinct primed and at full throttle, threw yourself at your father's feet, arms around his legs and begged for recognition, for mercy, for your life.

What made you change course from the fight to survive to this listless resignation? Not the whims and whinging of Agamemnon's squaddies, steaming and mutinous in their tents, spoiling for a piece of action. Or was it Odysseus? That fraud! harping on and on about Greek glory as though your death served some great cause. The only cause he serves is his own ambition.

Or that pious old snake, Calchas the priest? He dropped the poison in your father's ear. How to appease the goddess and gain fair winds.

Kill two birds with one stone;  
 kill two birds and still your  
 fluttering heart.

Dry-eyed, you watch me weep?  
 (MORE)

## CLYTEMNESTRA (CONT'D)

We both know the gods have little interest in a mother's tears but that won't stop me plaguing them, beating at their doors with my prayers and offerings. I gave you a name that means strong-born, but what strength is there in this silence?

Hold tight onto life Iphigenia, don't make it easy for them! I'd rather see you kick and scratch at their eyes, swear and curse their houses with foul obscenities than surrender your last moments to this- mute, surrender...

Fight them, my child, don't let them dignify this slaughter with the pretence of your consent!

A dirty closed fist reaches forward and open to reveal a golden coin.

## CROSSFADE

## 7. FOOTSOLDIER

A thick accented man sits beside a campfire, illuminated.

*Camera - CLOSE UP, SIDE ANGLE*

*Light - YELLOW/ORANGE*

*Soundscape - Night, fire crackling.*

## FOOTSOLDIER

Blame is a coin passed down from hand to hand: it starts off hidden in the fists of powerful men but like most things they want to be rid of it finds its way down here to the likes of us.

I'll give you an example. Helen takes off with Paris good riddance I've heard some say-

But her husband, a powerful man, gathers the lords and all their ships, all prepared for war when out of nowhere an eerie stillness descends.

We wait. Temperatures rise. We wait some more.

(MORE)



## FOOTSOLDIER (CONT'D)

Supplies run down. The men waver  
and squabble. Nature won't  
comply.

So Agamemnon sends Calchas to go  
find out the gods' true  
intentions. The priest comes back  
with sly and sinister counsel-

*"Artemis bears a stubborn  
grudge", he says,  
"There'll be no wind till  
Agamemnon pays a price  
with his own kin."*

Next thing, we hear the officers  
mutterings-

*"Years of loyal service... no  
thanks... badmouthed on the eve of  
a campaign"...*

While Calchas drip-feeds  
hints in high places!

*"The men couldn't be trusted!  
The anger meant for Troy could  
climax too soon, all that  
frustration spurting out  
prematurely. Who knows?  
They could even harm their own  
people!"* As if we couldn't tell  
friend from foe!

In the end it wasn't us who  
harmed our own. Agamemnon had to  
pass on the blame, couldn't be  
seen to make a free choice,  
couldn't shoulder the guilt for  
his daughter's death.

So the coin passed down, hand to  
hand. It was tarnished by the  
time it came to us, the rank and  
file.

It always is. It turned our  
fingers black!

CROSSFADE

## 8. ACHILLES

A younger man sits forward in his chair, conflicted.

*Camera - MID SHOT, LOW ANGLE, FRONT*

*Light - Balanced*

*Soundscape - Trumpet blare, drumbeat. A ship sailing across the sea.*

ACHILLES

Shame.

That was the first time in my life I'd felt it. When her mother looked at my scabbard then looked me in the eye my cheeks flushed like a boy's.

I couldn't believe it when they told me I was a pawn in Agamemnon's plot. He promised me, Achilles, as bait to lure his daughter to Aulis and now she and her mother were on their way in a flurry of wedding plans and giddy girl-servants.

I was speechless. That was another first. It didn't even occur to him to ask, he dangled me there like some kind of trinket and expected me to play along like all his lackeys.

When her mother found out the truth, she brought the girl to me. She was so young, I couldn't take my eyes off her wrists, so bird-boned, a man could circle them both with one hand.

I gave my word I wouldn't let them go through with it! But the will of a god is the sharpest blade a leader wields- and he had it all figured out.

*"It wasn't my idea." he said,  
"It was what She demanded."*

Artemis would have Iphigenia in payment for a slight, and nothing, but nothing else would raise those anchors or steer those ships out of Aulis.

And you know how these things go; and so do the men. What did they care, after all, for a slip of a girl when all the riches of Troy were out there waiting for them. All they needed was a fair wind.

(MORE)

## ACHILLES (CONT'D)

In their minds' eye they already  
saw themselves returning, cloaked  
in victory spoils, rhymed into  
heroes for the people's ears,  
welcomed into warm beds.

*"What's wrong with you anyway?"  
they jeered, "Lost your appetite  
for a fight? \*Love-sick for  
Agamemnon's child?"*

They got a laugh out of that. So  
I gave up and my oath slid back  
into its scabbard, limp.

Her mother came again, still  
pleading. I told her straight: it  
was out my hands, there was no  
turning them.

That's when she looked at me like  
that- I half expected her to  
spit.

A candle is blown out.

CROSSFADE

## 9. CALCHAS - I

A priestly man looks down from his altar, his face half cast  
in shadow.

*Camera - MID / CLOSE UP, LOW ANGLE*

*Light - WHITE / SHADOWED*

*Soundscape - RELIGIOUS CHANTING, church INT.*

## CALCHAS

The Oracle said *"If..."*

No-one ever seems to remember  
that part. It was perfectly  
clear: *if* the Greek fleet wanted  
to sail to Troy in pursuit of  
Helen, Iphigenia was the price  
that had to be paid.

Artemis gave him a choice:  
sacrifice the girl and win fair  
winds for the campaign, or else  
raise anchors, forget about  
Helen, Paris and Troy, and go  
home. It was his decision!

Not that you'd think it listening  
to the troops.

(MORE)

CALCHAS (CONT'D)

You'd swear I wrote the oracle myself the way they go on. I'm only the delivery boy.

I suppose it's less complicated to hate a priest than your king and commander, definitely safer than hating the gods!

Soldiers are a superstitious bunch. Maybe it's because death is always in their sights, their own or someone else's. Better someone else's, let's face it.

It was Odysseus suggested consulting the oracle....

Funny how mud never sticks to Odysseus. What did they expect to come from all that unnatural heat and stillness- it was clear the gods had a hand in it!

And Agamemnon, knowing he had shown disrespect to a goddess, did he really think she would suddenly comply with his ambitions?!?

No. She went right to the crux of the matter and made him choose: fame or family?

The oracle made him show his true colours.

Of course, that's not how it looks to the men, Odysseus made sure of that, put a nice spin on it!

*"Poor Agamemnon, forced to sacrifice his lovely girl for the glory of Greece!"*  
Whatever that means...

Well, it's not a priest's job to be popular, is it? I have no illusions. The only reason the king keeps me close is his own fear of the gods. Fear is the right instinct when it comes to divine will, but this time he didn't fear enough.

(MORE)

CALCHAS (CONT'D)  
 He made his choice and sacrificed  
 the girl-

Drum beats rise-

CUT TO

10. IPHIGENIA - II

*Camera - CLOSE UP, SLIGHT HIGH ANGLE*

*Light - WHITE / SPOTLIT*

*Soundscape - SFX RISING WIND, FOOTSTEPS. Aulos music, crescendoing drum roll.*

IPHIGENIA  
 My nails cut into the palms of my  
 hands. Look ahead, look straight  
 ahead!

One foot, the other foot-

Is this what my father wants?  
 Is this what the goddess wants?  
 Is this what my people want?!?

My footsteps count down the final  
 moments between me and the altar,  
 too close. Fear dusks all  
 affections, memory twilights.

My pulse roars in my ears, the  
 sun blinds me, it glints on the  
 raised blade- they hold me fast!

Pulse in my ears and now a wind  
 howls, blows dust in my eyes-

Bright gale of *Her* presence  
 sweeps me up-

Stolen! I am stolen...

CUT TO

11. CALCHAS - II

Wind continues to blow-

*Camera - LOW ANGLE*

CALCHAS  
 But no-one bargained for what  
 happened next: the strangest  
 sacrifice I've ever seen!

(MORE)

CALCHAS (CONT'D)

The moment the knife was raised,  
a gale blew up, out of nowhere,  
blinding us all with dust.

When we could see again, the  
victim was gone, magicked away,  
replaced by a *deer*, its life  
bleeding away on the altar...

SFX wind rises-

CUT TO

12. EURIPIDES - II

He throws down his pen and leans back from his desk.

EURIPIDES

We all know the girl is  
blameless!

Whether she meets the knife  
in terror or patriotic fervour is  
hardly the point. She's the goat  
Agamemnon sacrifices to escape  
his own obscurity!

Of course he calls it "*sacred  
rite*", that's how the magic  
works: all that violence  
channelled into one staged act.

The men buy into it too. They  
know a soldier's fate is  
sacrifice and sooner or later  
they too will pay that price.

The public don't like too much  
meddling with their myths. You  
think I haven't tampered with the  
plot? Go back and watch again, I  
expect you'll find that no-one in  
this play believes a god demands  
the murder of a girl.

And yet a father, driven by  
ambition, blind, kills his own  
offspring! You think the girl  
looks powerless, resigned?

Well, who would choose such a way  
to die. So we sell it as her  
surrender to the greater good,  
but you call that denial?

(MORE)

## EURIPIDES (CONT'D)

Would you rather see her dragged  
by soldiers to the altar, hear  
her ear-splitting screams as she  
begs again for her father to  
spare her?

Maybe I've seen enough pointless  
killing in my time. The ending's  
not what I'd have wanted, I'll  
grant you that. Maybe I didn't  
take any risks- maybe I was just  
old and tired!

But divine intervention's a  
pretty safe card. The fact is,  
when a story leads to such a  
cruel cul de sac, sometimes magic  
is the only way out.

FADE

Horn blares, drum beat-

CUT TO

## 13. AGAMEMNON

A proud man stands tall, centre lit.

*Camera - MID / WIDE SHOT, FRONT*

*Light - YELLOW/ORANGE*

*Soundscape - Drum rolls and wind SFX into Aulos music.*

## AGAMEMNON

Magic or moral high ground?  
Time the playwright made up his  
mind.

He wants to keep his audience  
happy and still make them think  
for themselves, so he knocks them  
out with his gimmicky goddess and  
expects them to go home debating  
the deeper moral issues of the  
tale.

He paints me, Agamemnon, as the  
villain of the piece! Who slays  
his own child for blind  
ambition...

Not so blind. I've seen more  
blood than I'd like.

(MORE)

## AGAMEMNON (CONT'D)

But try as he might with his  
weasel words to make you hate me,  
you know what it is I have to do.  
You know what happens to a  
conquered people-

*I let my child die so you don't  
have to!*

Child-killer- You all know that,  
and still you play the game.

Wave me off to war from the  
harbour wall, me and every other  
soldier Greece can spew out.

Onto seas, onto plains and onto  
the pages of plays; anything to  
keep the barbarian at bay...

## CROSSFADE

## 14. CHORUS II

Two women, both in blindfolds, fading in and out.

*Camera - CLOSE UP, FRONT*

*Soundscape - Continued Aulos track, SFX mirrors text.*

## CHORUS 1 &amp; 2

And so it goes...

## CHORUS 1

The suffering of those who do not  
sail to war.

The ones who have no quarrel with  
their neighbours, who will not  
see one coin, one ear of corn  
from all the wealth and stores of  
glittering Troy.

## CHORUS 2

The women are another currency of  
war. Seized in the frustration of  
defeat or triumphant lust.

Passed between the calloused  
hands of soldiers who feel only  
the solid ache between their  
legs,

## CHORUS 1

For nothing will stand in the way  
of a soldier's claim to his  
spoils.

(MORE)



## CHORUS 1 (CONT'D)

He spoils, defiles, pollutes,  
 drags down the highest born and  
 the lowest; victims all.  
 All to be taken as slaves.

## CHORUS 2

Who would be a Trojan woman now.  
 As the Greeks advance with  
 stealth on compliant seas...

Women, sleeping in their beds,  
 unaware they will lose not just  
 their men but also their freedom.

## CHORUS 1

And dark shadows of doubt take  
 hold in the hearts of Greek wives  
 in the harbour as they watch  
 their men depart.

That creeping sense of being left  
 behind! Which of the men will be  
 taken by the tide, which by the  
 sword?

## CHORUS 2

The war is not here, not now-  
 But it stalks their lives.

Ever-present as the carrion crow-  
 The black feather that lands on  
 the doorstep at dawn-  
 A KRAAW overhead as they walk to  
 the market-

A rustling in the eaves while  
 their children sleep...

## CHORUS 1 &amp; 2

And so it goes, and so it goes..

CROSSFADE

## 15. CHRYSOTHEMIS

A well mannered woman sits, clutching a cup between her  
 hands.

*Camera - MID SHOT, FRONT*

## CHRYSOTHEMIS

Impossible to escape, the perfect  
 sister, dead or alive. She was  
 always the good child!

(MORE)

## CHRYSOthemis (CONT'D)

Agamemnon had three daughters,  
his blood flowed in all our  
veins, but Iphigenia was the only  
*real* princess: never a hair out  
of place, never a step out of  
line.

While Electra and I played  
'catch' with our little brother,  
she sat with our mother learning  
to weave. I don't know if we were  
all that raucous, or if we just  
seemed that way when we barged in  
on her solitude over and over  
again.

There were only four years  
between us, and yet I can't  
remember her any younger than  
ten...

It's as if she was never really a  
child; always nearly a woman.

Sometimes Electra and I giggled  
so much, we were banished from  
the table. Sometimes when our  
father dealt harshly with us her  
eyes would fill up and her cheeks  
burn. That used to make me really  
mad!

What was she getting so upset  
about? She wasn't the one going  
without dinner or sent to bed  
early. She was so bloody good  
it got on my nerves.

But not even Iphigenia could  
challenge Agamemnon:  
our King, Lord and father.

When he sent for her to go to  
Aulis to marry Achilles,  
it was like something from the  
old stories our nurse  
told us at bedtime.

*"Iphigenia was to marry",*  
and even though I had no interest  
in boys, something like envy  
stuck in my throat.

I wasn't invited. Neither was  
Electra. I was so cross,  
the minute they left I went to  
her room, tore down all her gowns  
and threw them on the floor!

## CHRYSOthemis (CONT'D)

What kind of sister would do such a thing? How could I know she would be taken from us- and not into marriage.

Later, the word came from Aulis. Then Mother came back- She hardly ate or spoke for weeks.

Father was gone too, of course. We'll never know what thoughts he took with him to Troy, or what was the last thing she said to him...

Or the look on her face as she walked to the altar...

What did he see there, was it accusation? I don't think she had it in her, she was so good.

Did that last look come back to him, far from home, when he paced the shores of Troy on the eve of battle and looked up at the night sky, at the same stars that lit up our nights in Mycenae?

I doubt he gave his other daughters a second thought.

## CROSSFADE

## 16. ELECTRA

A tough woman, cleaning as she speaks-

*Soundscape - Zither motif*

## ELECTRA

She shut us out you know- after Aulis. Or shut herself in.

Either way, our mother disappeared that day along with Iphigenia. She forgot she had three other children.

(MORE)

## ELECTRA (CONT'D)

I was still a child myself, but I practically reared Orestes while my younger sister mooned about the place, full of "what ifs", and "if onlys"- crying every time she went into Iphigenia's room.

In the end, I had to tell the servants to lock the door. Sometimes, at night, though, I still think I can hear the hinge squeak, as if someone were stealing out- or stealing in.

I suppose I learned to shut a lot of doors; in the end I forgot where I left some of the keys.

When he wrapped his arms around my neck, the heat of my little brother's body was the only human heat I knew for years.

If that wasn't bad enough, then *Aegisthus*, my father's cousin, came sniffing around.

We welcomed his company at first: a man around the house, a kinsman, "one of us", we thought. The others were too young to see what was happening, but I saw how the servants glanced at each other every time he came to the door.

I saw the way he drew her out, our mother. Working his way past the hard shell of her grief, like working a pin into a periwinkle till it catches hold of the coiled flesh and pulls it out!

And I saw the change in her.

It wasn't like she was swept away by passion; it was as if she had woken up from the past, the memory of Aulis, and decided to live again!

She never mentions Iphigenia- she never mentions our father- she never shows affection, not to *Aegisthus*, not to us, *her children!*

She has decided to live this way, with him at her side and we must share in the lie of this usurper, this cuckoo in our home!

## CROSSFADE

## 17. CLYTEMNESTRA - II

*Soundscape - 'Clytemnestra's theme'*

## CLYTEMNESTRA

There was something about the  
silence that fell after they led  
her away to the altar...

They kept me in the tent, but  
even before the messenger burst  
in to tell me, I knew it was  
something more frightening than  
death.

Artemis called in her debt- but  
not the way the Oracle said. This  
was a miracle that brought no  
joy.

Where are you, Iphigenia?  
Are you alive or dead?  
Can you hear me?

If I could speak to you again, I  
would tell you just one thing:  
that you are loved, and loved,  
and loved!

I can't bear to think of the last  
words I said to you-  
that I spoke of things as stupid  
as strength and dignity,  
when all I wanted to say was-

*Live, Iphigenia, live!*

Your lovely young body...  
Who will comb your hair?  
Where has she taken you?  
What language do they speak  
there?  
Do words mean anything anymore?

"Mother"- "Father"- "Greece"-  
*What is "Greece?!"*

The Greece we knew has sailed for  
Troy! It rocks on the tides,  
and we women wait, suspended  
between a past we know and a  
future we cannot predict.

Women, all in the same boat, not  
knowing who will come back to our  
harbours.

(MORE)

## CLYTEMNESTRA (CONT'D)

Grit has lodged somewhere between my soft woman's flesh, and the hard shell that protects it. The shell I grew when I married your father, Agamemnon. The grit chafes and rubs, steals the lustre from my heart.

But one day it will turn into a hard, shining pearl, the proof of my pain, to set in the handle of a dagger!

CROSSFADE

## 18. IPHIGENIA - III

*Soundscape - Foreign bird song, Zither motif.*

## IPHIGENIA

My second spawning was here, on these shores, in Tauris. The start of my new life, gifted by Artemis- though I didn't ask for it, any more than I asked for death in Aulis.

A newborn old enough to marry- but all that's gone now, gone with the old life.

I belong to *Her* now, chaste priestess...

I serve her with sacrificial rites I have little taste for. But where's the wonder in that?

I miss my home! Thoughts of it bring a pain that cuts deeper than the sacrificial blade. I swallow back the bile that rises when I think of Agamemnon, blink away scalding tears when I recall my mother's face.

In my mind's eye I try to see only my home: no family, no servants, no friends.

(MORE)

## IPHIGENIA (CONT'D)

I walk through the empty rooms  
and courtyards and touch each  
blessed object as I go: the  
squeaking hinge of my bedroom  
door, the little pewter cup cook  
used to give me in the kitchen  
when I slipped in there after  
quarrels with my sisters...

*I don't understand what the birds  
are singing in this place!*

I don't know what it is they are  
saying to me, and not one of them  
comes to my doorstep when I  
scatter crumbs. They will not  
share the *little* I have to offer.

The pictures of home in my mind  
will fade and I don't know if  
that is good or bad.

I don't know if I want to hold  
onto them, if they are the truth-  
or a lie!

Who will tell my version of  
Aulis?

Will the aloneness of my walk to  
the altar be erased in a flashy  
theatrical trick on the stage of  
war?!

My father's blood still courses  
in my veins, unbleeding pain  
worse than death.

I would welcome Aulis now-  
the kind uncoupling knife!

Iphigenia storms out of frame-

CROSSFADE

## 19. Euripides III

*Camera - CLOSE UP*

## EURIPIDES

Rain-sodden sparrows peck the  
last seeds from my doorstep. My  
bones ache from the damp.

I wish I could summon as much  
courage in my own heart as I  
penned in Iphigenia's mouth.

(MORE)

## EURIPIDES (CONT'D)

She knew- that no rite or miracle  
would change the course of  
sacrificial wind.

She knew- that men would set a  
thousand sails against their  
better senses, and still, she  
laid bare her neck to the knife  
and shamed the House of Atreus!

I want to believe that suffering  
can be contained by the will of  
the gods so it won't infect us  
all. I try to trust in what I do  
not know: the power of this tale  
to speak beyond my control, a  
different kind of magic that no-  
one can predict.

The one that happens in the minds  
of those who witness it.

War has lodged itself in my  
memory and my lungs and nothing I  
write seems to dock in the safe  
harbour of conclusion.

Take this sad tale where you  
will, raise its anchor from my  
heart, cast it adrift-

Clouds darken the horizon...

Thunder rolls in the sky above.

FADE OUT

CREDITS