

PENTHEUS SIDE – 2 Men

PENTHEUS

So! You cut a handsome figure, I'll give you that!

Quite tempting –

I mean to women – the object, I don't doubt,

Of your presence here in Thebes.

Your curls are soft!

A bit too long for wrestling, but very pretty

The way they hug your cheeks, so lovingly.

And what fair skin you have, so well looked-after!

But then, you don't expose it to the sun, do you?

You like the darker places,

Where you can hunt desire with your beauty.

Now then! To start with, where are you from?

DIONYSUS

That's easy to answer, though nothing to boast of.

You must have heard of Mount Tmolus,

Famous for its flowers.

PENTHEUS

So I have. It rings the city of Sardis.

DIONYSUS

I come from there. Lydia is my country.

PENTHEUS

Where did you learn these orgiastic rituals

That you bring to Greece?

DIONYSUS

Dionysus initiated me.

He is the son of Zeus.

PENTHEUS

Which Zeus? A native of those parts,
Who coins new Gods?

DIONYSUS

No. The same Zeus who married Semele
In these parts of yours.

PENTHEUS

Did he possess you in your sleep
Or by appearing to your eyes?

DIONYSUS

Face to face. He share his mysteries with me.

PENTHEUS

What lies behind these mysteries, according to you?

DIONYSUS

That only the initiated may know.

PENTHEUS

And those who *are* initiated,
What are the benefits they gain?

DIONYSUS

You may not hear. Though you would gain by knowing.

PENTHEUS

A crafty answer, baited to sting my curiosity.

DIONYSUS

Wrong. Our mysteries abhor the probing ears of
Impious men.

PENTHEUS

This God you saw, or that you say you saw, what is he like?

DIONYSUS

Like the likeness of his choice. Not mine.

PENTHEUS

Another devious answer and devoid of sense.

DIONYSUS

What makes no sense is talking sense to a fool.

PENTHEUS

Is this the first place to which you've brought your God?

DIONYSUS

Throughout the Orient, people celebrate his dance.

PENTHEUS

I believe it. Next to the Greeks,

They're all barbarians.