

Translator: **Robert Fagles**

Ode 1

Numberless wonders
Terrible wonders walk the work the world but none the match for man— *Strophe 1*
That great wonder crossing the heaving gray sea,
 driven on by the blasts of winter
on through breakers crashing left and right,
 holds his steady course
and the oldest of the gods he wears away—
the Earth, the immortal, the inexhaustible—
as his plows go back and forth, year in, year out
 with the breed of stallions turning up the furrows.

And the blithe, lightheaded race of birds he snares, *Antistrophe 1*
the tribes of savage beasts, the life that swarms the depths—
 with one fling of his nets
woven and coiled tight, he takes them all,
 man the skilled, the brilliant!
He conquers all, taming with his techniques
the prey that roams the cliffs and wild lairs,
training the stallion, clamping the yoke across
 his shaggy neck, and the tireless mountain bull.

And speech and thought, quick as the wind *Strophe 2*
and the mood and mind for law that rules the city—
 all these he has taught himself
and shelter from the arrows of the frost
when there's rough lodging under the cold clear sky
and the shafts of lashing rain—
 ready, resourceful man!
 Never without resources
Never an impasse as he marches on the future—
only Death, from Death alone he will find no rescue
but from desperate plagues he has plotted his escapes.

Man the master, ingenious past all measure *Antistrophe 2*
Past all dreams, the skills within his grasp—
 He forges on, now to destruction
now again to greatness. When he weaves in
the laws of the land, and the justice of the gods
that binds his oaths together
 he and his city rise high –
 but the city casts out
that man who weds himself to inhumanity
thanks to reckless daring. Never share my hearth
never think my thoughts, whoever does such things.