

Oresteia Anne Carson

Features Oedipus Rex and Electra by Sophocles (translated by George Young), Medea and Bacchae by Euripides (translated by Henry Hart Milman), and Prometheus Bound by Aeschylus (translated by George Thomson).

While on an expedition with his uncle in the jungles of Borneo in 1920, fifteen-year-old Harry Windsor is captured by Bayang, a young Iban tribesman, who believes that Harry has some power to help him and an outcast Iban girl on their dream quest.

A masterful debut from a powerfully original poetic voice A poignant and terse vision of New York City unfolds in Rowan Ricardo Phillips's debut book of poetry. A work of rare beauty and lyric grace, *The Ground* is an entire world, drawn and revealed through contemplation of the post-9/11 landscape. With musicality and precision of thought, Phillips's poems limn the troubadour's journey in an increasingly surreal modern world ("I plugged my poem into a manhole cover/That flamed into the first guitar"). The origin of mankind, the origin of the self, the self's development in the sensuous world, and—in both a literal and figurative sense—the end of all things sing through Phillips's supple and idiosyncratic poems. The poet's subtle formal sophistication—somewhere between flair and restraint—and sense of lyric possibility bring together the hard glint of the contemporary world and the eroded permanence of the archaic one through remixes, underground sessions, Spenserian stanzas, myths and revamped translations. These

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are poems of fiery intelligence, inescapable music and metaphysical splendor that concern themselves with lived life and the life of the imagination—both equally vivid and true—as they lay the framework for Phillips's meditations on our connection to and estrangement from the natural world.

Presents a facsimile of a book the author created after the death of her brother, and includes poetry, family photographs, letters, and sketches that deal with coming to terms with the loss.

A fantastic comic-book collaboration between the artist Rosanna Bruno and the poet Anne Carson, based on Euripides's famous tragedy Here is a new comic-book version of Euripides's classic The Trojan Women, which follows the fates of Hekabe, Andromache, and Cassandra after Troy has been sacked and all its men killed. This collaboration between the visual artist Rosanna Bruno and the poet and classicist Anne Carson attempts to give a genuine representation of how human beings are affected by warfare. Therefore, all the characters take the form of animals (except Cassandra, whose mind is in another world).

First presented at the festival of the City Dionysia, in 458 BCE and won the first prize, the Oresteia is the only trilogy that has survived the rapacious ways of Time to come down to us almost intact. The myth that has inspired Aeschylus to write this trilogy is long and concerns the House of Atreus, a house which was almost obliterated by vengeance and revenge, in other words, by brutal murders. The last male of the house,

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Orestes survived, thanks to the new and exciting phenomenon that has emerged during Aeschylus' time, that of Democracy. The playwright shows us here this new phenomenon, in the form of a jury. The citizens of Athens, the demos, were asked by the goddess Athena to consider Orestes' guilt or innocence after he had murdered his mother, the Queen of Argos, Klytaemestra, and her lover, Aigisthus. With this trilogy, Aeschylus shows the Athenian citizens the ills of the old and bloody ways of pursuing justice and asked them to see the benefits of the new ways of seeking the engagement and approval of the whole of the Athenian Demos, of each other in other words, of their peers. Courts from that moment on will be run just like the Parliament, the first that was built by the people and for the people. The country and its Justice systems would now be ruled by every male citizen. Aristotle's view that all men are inherently politicians since they are members of a polis is, in this trilogy given a theatrical exhibition. Anne Carson's poetry - characterized by various reviewers as "short talks", "essays", or "verse narratives" - combines the confessional and the critical in a voice all her own. Known as a remarkable classicist, Anne Carson in *Glass, Irony and God* weaves contemporary and ancient poetic strands with stunning style. This collection includes: "The Glass Essay", a powerful poem about the end of a love affair, told in the context of Carson's reading of the Bronte sisters; "Book of Isaiah", a poem evoking the deeply primitive feel of ancient Judaism; and "The Fall of Rome", about her trip to "find" Rome and her struggle to overcome feelings of a terrible alienation there.

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Aeschylus was a Greek playwright considered to be the founder of the tragedy. Aeschylus along with Sophocles and Euripides are the three major Greek tragedians whose plays have survived. Before Aeschylus, characters in a play only interacted with the chorus. Aeschylus expanded the number of actors allowing for interaction among the characters. Seven of his 92 plays have survived. The Persian invasion of Greece, which took place during his lifetime, influenced many of his plays. The Oresteia is a trilogy of Greek tragedies written by Aeschylus, which concerns the end of the curse on the House of Atreus. The plays were "Agamemnon," "Choephorae" (The Libation-Bearers), and the "Eumenides" (Furies).

The first book of essays dedicated to the work of noted writer, Anne Carson. The award-winning poet reinvents a genre in a stunning work that is both a novel and a poem, both an unconventional re-creation of an ancient Greek myth and a wholly original coming-of-age story set in the present. Geryon, a young boy who is also a winged red monster, reveals the volcanic terrain of his fragile, tormented soul in an autobiography he begins at the age of five. As he grows older, Geryon escapes his abusive brother and affectionate but ineffectual mother, finding solace behind the lens of his camera and in the arms of a young man named Herakles, a cavalier drifter who leaves him at the peak of infatuation. When

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Herakles reappears years later, Geryon confronts again the pain of his desire and embarks on a journey that will unleash his creative imagination to its fullest extent. By turns whimsical and haunting, erudite and accessible, richly layered and deceptively simple, *Autobiography of Red* is a profoundly moving portrait of an artist coming to terms with the fantastic accident of who he is. A **NEW YORK TIMES NOTABLE BOOK OF THE YEAR** National Book Critics Circle Award Finalist "Anne Carson is, for me, the most exciting poet writing in English today." --Michael Ondaatje "This book is amazing--I haven't discovered any writing in years so marvelously disturbing." --Alice Munro "A profound love story . . . sensuous and funny, poignant, musical and tender." --The New York Times Book Review "A deeply odd and immensely engaging book. . . . [Carson] exposes with passionate force the mythic underlying the explosive everyday." --The Village Voice

In Mindy Nettifee's second book, *Rise of the Trust Fall*, her poems possess a magic that can only come from a seasoned writer willing to share more on the page than she's comfortable with. Whether exploring the strange alchemy of healing, the perils of self-actualization, or the contemporary experience of womanhood, the poems in this daring collection are gorgeous and vibrant, biting funny, and unflinchingly honest. *Rise of the Trust Fall* challenges more

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than our understanding of ourselves. It calls us to connect to our humanity, to celebrate its flaws, and then to demand more of it, in every well crafted line. Rise of the Trust Fall by Mindy Nettifee is the linguistic orgasm we've all been waiting for, no clit-stims necessary. -BUST Magazine Mindy Nettifee is destined to be the next Dorothy Parker. -Poetic Diversity When award-winning poet Mindy Nettifee speaks...you're powerless-you have no choice but to raise your wine glass high over your osmosis head and join her pledge of allegiance to graphic truth. Her poems have the grace of cursive letters and the guts of a truck driver. -District Weekly

An illustrated new translation of Sophokles' Antigone. Anne Carson has published translations of the ancient Greek poets Sappho, Simonides, Aiskhylos, Sophokles and Euripides. Antigonick is her seminal work. Sophokles' luminous and disturbing tragedy is here given an entirely fresh language and presentation. This paperback edition includes a new preface by the author, "Dear Antigone." When her dead brother is decreed a traitor, his body left unburied beyond the city walls, Antigone refuses to accept this most severe of punishments. Defying her uncle who governs, she dares to say 'No'. Forging ahead with a funeral alone, she places personal allegiance before politics, a tenacious act that will trigger a cycle of destruction. Renowned for the revelatory nature of his work, Ivo van

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Hove first enthralled London audiences with his ground-breaking Roman Tragedies seen at the Barbican in 2009. Drawing on his 'ability to break open texts calcified by tradition' (Guardian), the director now turns to a classic Greek masterpiece.

Presents a modern translation of the ancient Greek trilogy which traces the chain of murder and revenge within the royal family of Argos, commissioned by the Royal National Theatre for performance in the Fall of 1999.

The poetry and prose collected in Plainwater are a testament to the extraordinary imagination of Anne Carson, a writer described by Michael Ondaatje as "the most exciting poet writing in English today." Succinct and astonishingly beautiful, these pieces stretch the boundaries of language and literary form, while juxtaposing classical and modern traditions. Carson envisions a present-day interview with a seventh-century BC poet, and offers miniature lectures on topics as varied as orchids and Ovid. She imagines the muse of a fifteenth-century painter attending a phenomenology conference in Italy. She constructs verbal photographs of a series of mysterious towns, and takes us on a pilgrimage in pursuit of the elusive and intimate anthropology of water. Blending the rhythm and vivid metaphor of poetry with the discursive nature of the essay, the writings in Plainwater dazzle us with their invention and enlighten us with their erudition.

Classical Traditions in Modern Fantasy is the first collection of essays in English

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focusing on how fantasy draws deeply on ancient Greek and Roman mythology, philosophy, literature, history, art, and cult practice. Presenting fifteen all-new essays intended for both scholars and other readers of fantasy, this volume explores many of the most significant examples of the modern genre—including the works of H. P. Lovecraft, J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, C. S. Lewis's *Chronicles of Narnia*, J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series, George R. R. Martin's *Game of Thrones* series, and more—in relation to important ancient texts such as Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, Aristotle's *Poetics*, Virgil's *Aeneid*, and Apuleius' *The Golden Ass*. These varied studies raise fascinating questions about genre, literary and artistic histories, and the suspension of disbelief required not only of readers of fantasy but also of students of antiquity. Ranging from harpies to hobbits, from Cyclopes to Cthulhu, and all manner of monster and myth in-between, this comparative study of Classics and fantasy reveals deep similarities between ancient and modern ways of imagining the world. Although antiquity and the present day differ in many ways, at its base, ancient literature resonates deeply with modern fantasy's image of worlds in flux and bodies in motion.

A Bold, Iconoclastic New Look at One of the Great Works of Greek Tragedy In this innovative rendition of *The Oresteia*, the poet, translator, and essayist Anne Carson combines three different visions—Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, Sophocles' *Elektra*, and Euripides' *Orestes*—giving birth to a wholly new experience of the classic Greek triumvirate of vengeance. After the murder of her daughter Iphigenia by her husband

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Agamemnon, Klytimestra exacts a mother's revenge, murdering Agamemnon and his mistress, Cassandra. Displeased with Klytimestra's actions, Apollo calls on her son, Orestes, to avenge his father's death with the help of his sister Elektra. In the end, Orestes, driven mad by the Furies for his bloody betrayal of family, and Elektra are condemned to death by the people of Argos, and must justify their actions—signaling a call to change in society, a shift from the capricious governing of the gods to the rule of manmade law. Carson's accomplished rendering combines elements of contemporary vernacular with the traditional structures and rhetoric of Greek tragedy, opening up the plays to a modern audience. In addition to its accessibility, the wit and dazzling morbidity of her prose sheds new light on the saga for scholars. Anne Carson's *Oresteia* is a watershed translation, a death-dance of vengeance and passion not to be missed.

Based on the conviction that only translators who write poetry themselves can properly recreate the celebrated and timeless tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, the Greek Tragedy in New Translations series offers new translations that go beyond the literal meaning of the Greek in order to evoke the poetry of the originals. Under the general editorship of Peter Burian and Alan Shapiro, each volume includes a critical introduction, commentary on the text, full stage directions, and a glossary of the mythical and geographical references in the play. Although it has been at times overshadowed by his more famous *Oedipus Tyrannus* and *Antigone*, Sophocles'

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Electra is remarkable for its extreme emotions and taut drama. *Electra* recounts the murders of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus by Clytemnestra's son Orestes, to avenge their murder of his father Agamemnon, commander of the Greeks at Troy, upon his return home. Sophocles' version is presented from the viewpoint of *Electra*, Orestes' sister, who laments her father, bears witness to her mother's crime, and for years endures her mother's scorn. Despite her overwhelming passion for just revenge, *Electra* admits that her own actions are shameful. When Orestes arrives at last, her mood shifts from grief to joy, as Orestes carries out the bloody vengeance. Sophocles presents this story as a savage though necessary act of vengeance, vividly depicting *Electra*'s grief, anger, and exultation. This translation equals the original in ferocity of expression, and leaves intact the inarticulate cries of suffering and joy that fill the play.

The surviving works of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides have been familiar to readers and theatregoers for centuries; but these works are far outnumbered by their lost plays. Between them these authors wrote around two hundred tragedies, the fragmentary remains of which are utterly fascinating. In this, the second volume of a major new survey of the tragic genre, Matthew Wright offers an authoritative critical guide to the lost plays of the three best-known tragedians. (The other Greek tragedians and their work are discussed in Volume 1: *Neglected Authors*.) What can we learn about the lost plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides from fragments and other types of evidence? How can we develop strategies or methodologies for 'reading' lost

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plays? Why were certain plays preserved and transmitted while others disappeared from view? Would we have a different impression of the work of these classic authors – or of Greek tragedy as a whole – if a different selection of plays had survived? This book answers such questions through a detailed study of the fragments in their historical and literary context. Making use of recent scholarly developments and new editions of the fragments, *The Lost Plays of Greek Tragedy* makes these works fully accessible for the first time.

The ancient Greek lyric poet Simonides of Keos was the first poet in the Western tradition to take money for poetic composition. From this starting point, Anne Carson launches an exploration, poetic in its own right, of the idea of poetic economy. She offers a reading of certain of Simonides' texts and aligns these with writings of the modern Romanian poet Paul Celan, a Jew and survivor of the Holocaust, whose "economies" of language are notorious. Asking such questions as, What is lost when words are wasted? and Who profits when words are saved? Carson reveals the two poets' striking commonalities. In Carson's view Simonides and Celan share a similar mentality or disposition toward the world, language and the work of the poet. *Economy of the Unlost* begins by showing how each of the two poets stands in a state of alienation between two worlds. In Simonides' case, the gift economy of fifth-century b.c. Greece was giving way to one based on money and commodities, while Celan's life spanned pre- and post-Holocaust worlds, and he himself, writing in German, became

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estranged from his native language. Carson goes on to consider various aspects of the two poets' techniques for coming to grips with the invisible through the visible world. A focus on the genre of the epitaph grants insights into the kinds of exchange the poets envision between the living and the dead. Assessing the impact on Simonidean composition of the material fact of inscription on stone, Carson suggests that a need for brevity influenced the exactitude and clarity of Simonides' style, and proposes a comparison with Celan's interest in the "negative design" of printmaking: both poets, though in different ways, employ a kind of negative image making, cutting away all that is superfluous. This book's juxtaposition of the two poets illuminates their differences--Simonides' fundamental faith in the power of the word, Celan's ultimate despair--as well as their similarities; it provides fertile ground for the virtuosic interplay of Carson's scholarship and her poetic sensibility.

From the renowned classicist and MacArthur Prize winner: a brilliant new collection that explores myth and memory, beauty and loss, all the while playing with--and pushing--the limits of language and form. Anne Carson continuously dazzles us with her inventiveness and the way her work changes our perspectives. With *Float*, she surpasses her own bar. In individual chapbooks that can be read in any order, she conjures a mix of voices, time periods, and structures to explore what makes people, memories, and stories "maddeningly attractive" when observed in liminal space. One can begin with Carson puzzling through Proust on a frozen Icelandic plain; in the art-

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saturated enclaves of downtown New York City; atop Mount Olympus as Zeus ponders his afterlife. There is a three-woman chorus of Gertrude Steins embodying an essay about "falling." And an investigation of monogamy and marriage as Carson anticipates the perfect egg her husband is cooking for breakfast. Exquisite, heartbreaking, disarmingly funny, *Float* illuminates the uncanny magic that comes with letting go of boundaries. It is Carson's most intellectually electrifying and emotionally engaging book to date. From the Hardcover edition.

This cahier unites two texts by celebrated Canadian poet Anne Carson, encouraging readers to experience them alongside and illuminating each other. 'Variations on the Right to Remain Silent' is an essay on the stakes involved when translation happens, ranging from Homer through Joan of Arc to Paul Celan; it includes the author's seven translations of a poetic fragment from the Greek poet Ibykos. 'By Chance the Cycladic People' is a poem about Cycladic culture where the order of the lines has been determined by a random number generator. The cahier is illustrated by Lanfranco Quadrio.

A remarkable compilation of literary writings by the critically acclaimed author of *Autobiography of Red* features an array of original poetry, essays, a screenplay, and a libretto that explores the nature and mechanics of the human act of decreation as revealed in the lives of Sappho, Marguerite Porete, Simone Weil,

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Virginia Woolf, and her own relationship with her mother. Reprint.

The insights presented in the volume are many and wide-ranging, recognizably in tune with the subtlest modern discussions of desire (such as triangulation, or loving what others love), yet offering new solutions to old problems, like the proper interpretation of Plato's Phaedrus. On the frequently discussed effect of literacy on Greek civilization, the book offers a fresh view: it was no accident that the poets who invented Eros were also the first readers and writers of the Western literate tradition. Originally published in 1986. The Princeton Legacy Library uses the latest print-on-demand technology to again make available previously out-of-print books from the distinguished backlist of Princeton University Press. These editions preserve the original texts of these important books while presenting them in durable paperback and hardcover editions. The goal of the Princeton Legacy Library is to vastly increase access to the rich scholarly heritage found in the thousands of books published by Princeton University Press since its founding in 1905.

How Greek Tragedy Works is a journey through the hidden meanings and dual nature of Greek tragedy, drawing on its foremost dramatists to bring about a deeper understanding of how and why to engage with these enduring plays. Brian Kulick dispels the trepidation that many readers feel with regard to classical

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texts by equipping them with ways in which they can unpack the hidden meanings of these plays. He focuses on three of the key texts of Greek theatre: Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, Euripides' *The Bacchae*, and Sophocles' *Electra*, and uses them to tease out the core principles of the theatre-making and storytelling impulses. By encouraging us to read between the lines like this, he also enables us to read these and other Greek tragedies as artists' manifestos, equipping us not only to understand tragedy itself, but also to interpret what the great playwrights had to say about the nature of plays and drama. This is an indispensable guide for anyone who finds themselves confronted with tackling the Greek classics, whether as a reader, scholar, student, or director.

Following her widely acclaimed *Autobiography of Red* ("A spellbinding achievement" --Susan Sontag), a new collection of poetry and prose that displays Anne Carson's signature mixture of opposites--the classic and the modern, cinema and print, narrative and verse. In *Men in the Off Hours*, Carson reinvents figures as diverse as Oedipus, Emily Dickinson, and Audubon. She views the writings of Sappho, St. Augustine, and Catullus through a modern lens. She sets up startling juxtapositions (Lazarus among video paraphernalia; Virginia Woolf and Thucydides discussing war). And in a final prose poem, she meditates on the recent death of her mother. With its quiet, acute spirituality, its fearless wit and

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sensuality, and its joyful understanding that "the fact of the matter for humans is imperfection," *Men in the Off Hours* shows us "the most exciting poet writing in English today" (Michael Ondaatje) at her best.

In *Ladies' Greek*, Yopie Prins illuminates a culture of female classical literacy that emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century, during the formation of women's colleges on both sides of the Atlantic. Why did Victorian women of letters desire to learn ancient Greek, a "dead" language written in a strange alphabet and no longer spoken? In the words of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, they wrote "some Greek upon the margin—lady's Greek, without the accents." Yet in the margins of classical scholarship they discovered other ways of knowing, and not knowing, Greek. Mediating between professional philology and the popularization of classics, these passionate amateurs became an important medium for classical transmission. Combining archival research on the entry of women into Greek studies in Victorian England and America with a literary interest in their translations of Greek tragedy, Prins demonstrates how women turned to this genre to perform a passion for ancient Greek, full of eros and pathos. She focuses on five tragedies—*Agamemnon*, *Prometheus Bound*, *Electra*, *Hippolytus*, and *The Bacchae*—to analyze a wide range of translational practices by women and to explore the ongoing legacy of *Ladies' Greek*. Key figures in this

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story include Barrett Browning and Virginia Woolf, Janet Case and Jane Harrison, Edith Hamilton and Eva Palmer, and A. Mary F. Robinson and H.D. The book also features numerous illustrations, including photographs of early performances of Greek tragedy at women's colleges. The first comparative study of Anglo-American Hellenism, *Ladies' Greek* opens up new perspectives in transatlantic Victorian studies and the study of classical reception, translation, and gender.

Written during the long battles with Sparta that were to ultimately destroy ancient Athens, these six plays by Euripides brilliantly utilize traditional legends to illustrate the futility of war. *The Children of Heracles* holds a mirror up to contemporary Athens, while *Andromache* considers the position of women in Greek wartime society. In *The Suppliant Women*, the difference between just and unjust battle is explored, while *Phoenician Women* describes the brutal rivalry of the sons of King Oedipus, and the compelling *Orestes* depicts guilt caused by vengeful murder. Finally, *Iphigenia in Aulis*, Euripides' last play, contemplates religious sacrifice and the insanity of war. Together, the plays offer a moral and political statement that is at once unique to the ancient world, and prophetically relevant to our own.

A literary event: a follow-up to the internationally acclaimed poetry bestseller

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Autobiography of Red ("Amazing" -- Alice Munro) that takes its mythic boy-hero into the twenty-first century to tell a story all its own of love, loss, and the power of memory. In a stunningly original mix of poetry, drama, and narrative, Anne Carson brings the red-winged Geryon from *Autobiography of Red*, now called "G," into manhood, and through the complex labyrinths of the modern age. We join him as he travels with his friend and lover "Sad" (short for Sad But Great), a haunted war veteran; and with Ida, an artist, across a geography that ranges from plains of glacial ice to idyllic green pastures; from a psychiatric clinic to the somber house where G's mother must face her death. Haunted by Proust, juxtaposing the hunger for flight with the longing for family and home, this deeply powerful verse picaresque invites readers on an extraordinary journey of intellect, imagination, and soul.

Anne Carson's new work that reconsiders the stories of two iconic women—Marilyn Monroe and Helen of Troy—from their point of view. *Norma Jeane Baker of Troy* is a meditation on the destabilizing and destructive power of beauty, drawing together Helen of Troy and Marilyn Monroe, twin avatars of female fascination separated by millennia but united in mythopoeic force. *Norma Jeane Baker* was staged in the spring of 2019 at The Shed's Griffin Theater in New York, starring actor Ben Wishaw and soprano Renée Fleming and directed by Katie Mitchell.

Based on the conviction that only translators who write poetry themselves can properly re-create the celebrated and timeless tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and

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Euripides, the Greek Tragedy in New Translations series offers new translations that go beyond the literal meaning of the Greek in order to evoke the poetry of the originals. Aeschylus' Oresteia, the only ancient tragic trilogy to survive, is one of the great foundational texts of Western culture. It begins with Agamemnon, which describes Agamemnon's return from the Trojan War and his murder at the hands of his wife Clytemnestra, continues with her murder by their son Orestes in Libation Bearers, and concludes with Orestes' acquittal at a court founded by Athena in Eumenides. The trilogy thus traces the evolution of justice in human society from blood vengeance to the rule of law, Aeschylus' contribution to a Greek legend steeped in murder, adultery, human sacrifice, cannibalism, and endless intrigue. This new translation is faithful to the strangeness of the original Greek and to its enduring human truth, expressed in language remarkable for poetic intensity, rich metaphorical texture, and a verbal density that modulates at times into powerful simplicity. The translation's precise but complicated rhythms honor the music of the Greek, bringing into unforgettable English the Aeschylean vision of a world fraught with spiritual and political tensions. By combining the ancient mysteries of Sappho with the contemporary wizardry of one of our most fearless and original poets, If Not, Winter provides a tantalizing window onto the genius of a woman whose lyric power spans millennia. Of the nine books of lyrics the ancient Greek poet Sappho is said to have composed, only one poem has survived complete. The rest are fragments. In this miraculous new translation,

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acclaimed poet and classicist Anne Carson presents all of Sappho's fragments, in Greek and in English, as if on the ragged scraps of papyrus that preserve them, inviting a thrill of discovery and conjecture that can be described only as electric—or, to use Sappho's words, as "thin fire . . . racing under skin." "Sappho's verse has been elevated to new heights in [this] gorgeous translation." --The New York Times "Carson is in many ways [Sappho's] ideal translator....Her command of language is honed to a perfect edge and her approach to the text, respectful yet imaginative, results in verse that lets Sappho shine forth." --Los Angeles Times

Now in paperback. Euripides, the last of the three great tragedians of ancient Athens, reached the height of his renown during the disastrous Peloponnesian War, when democratic Athens was brought down by its own outsized ambitions. "Euripides," the classicist Bernard Knox has written, "was born never to live in peace with himself and to prevent the rest of mankind from doing so." His plays were shockers: he unmasked heroes, revealing them as foolish and savage, and he wrote about the powerless—women and children, slaves and barbarians—for whom tragedy was not so much exceptional as unending. Euripides' plays rarely won first prize in the great democratic competitions of ancient Athens, but their combustible mixture of realism and extremism fascinated audiences throughout the Greek world. In the last days of the Peloponnesian War, Athenian prisoners held captive in far-off Sicily were said to have won their freedom by reciting snatches of Euripides' latest tragedies. Four of those

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tragedies are presented here in new translations by the contemporary poet and classicist Anne Carson. They are Herakles, in which the hero swaggers home to destroy his own family; Hekabe, set after the Trojan War, in which Hektor's widow takes vengeance on her Greek captors; Hippolytos, about love and the horror of love; and the strange tragic-comedy fable Alkestis, which tells of a husband who arranges for his wife to die in his place. The volume also contains brief introductions by Carson to each of the plays along with two remarkable framing essays: "Tragedy: A Curious Art Form" and "Why I Wrote Two Plays About Phaidra."

In this innovative rendition of The Oresteia, the poet, translator, and essayist Anne Carson combines three different visions -- Aischylos' Agamemnon, Sophokles' Elektra, and Euripides' Orestes, giving birth to a wholly new experience of the classic Greek triumvirate of vengeance. Carson's accomplished rendering combines elements of contemporary vernacular with the traditional structures and rhetoric of Greek tragedy, opening up the plays to a modern audience. --from publisher description.

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