



Extract from *The Burial at Thebes* by Seamus Heaney

Ismene is brought in.

Chorus

Ismene, look, in tears!
For her sister. For herself.

Creon

You bloodsucker. You two-faced parasite.
The pair of you at me like a pair of leeches!
Two vipers spitting venom at the throne.
Speak, you, now. You helped her, didn't you?
Or are you going to claim you're innocent?

Ismene

I helped her, yes, if I'm allowed to say so
And now I stand with her to take what comes.

Antigone

I don't allow this. Justice won't allow it.
You wouldn't help.

We cut all ties.

It's over.

Ismene

But now I'm with you. I want to throw myself
Like a lifeline to you in your sea of troubles.

Antigone

Too late, my sister. You choose a safe line first.
The dead and Hades know who did this deed.

Ismene

Antigone, don't rob me of all honour.
Let me die with you and act right by the dead.

Antigone

You can't just pluck your honour off a bush
You didn't plant. You forfeited your right.

Ismene

If Antigone dies, how will I keep on living?

Antigone

Ask Creon, since you seem so fond of him.

Ismene

What good does it do you, twisting the knife like this?

Antigone

I can't help it, dear heart. It hurts me too.

Ismene

But even at this stage, can I not do something?

Antigone

You can save yourself. That is my honest wish.