# Poetry Writing at the Mythological Crossroads

***Participant and author of the original workshop texts: Dr Zeliha Kuruducu***

Being Human Festival | 14 November 2026

## 1. Ode to a Place — Encountering the Self, Embracing the Other

Workshop task: Choose a place where past and present converge, and write an ode, letter, or dialogue attentive to its environment, sensory qualities, history, and personal significance. The prompt followed Oedipus's arrival at Colonus and his relationship with the grove of the Furies.

***Original response by Dr Zeliha Kuruducu***

Two distinct selves can preserve their uniqueness while experiencing a shared sense of "we."

The other is no longer merely a mirror of ourselves, but someone who witnesses our existence.

Perhaps this is one of the most beautiful expressions of human potential: to be oneself, to allow the other to be themselves, and to experience togetherness without losing individuality.

Some people carry stars in their eyes and sunlight on their faces. Perhaps they are those who, after a painful journey, have finally encountered themselves.

Context supplied by participant: "This is a brief English translation of a passage from my Turkish podcast, Kavramlarla İçsel Karşılaşma, published some time ago. It emerged from a period of self-reflection and coming to terms with myself and my past relationships."

# 2. Contemporary Chorus — A Digitally Alienated Colonus

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Workshop task: Reimagine the citizens/chorus of Colonus in a contemporary setting. Consider their collective identity, their response to Oedipus's arrival and request for refuge, and what they know, notice, or refuse to acknowledge.

***Original response by Dr Zeliha Kuruducu***

CHORUS

We saw him arrive.
Or did we really see him?

We did not even ask his name.
No wonder. No curiosity, either.
We did not worry about what he needed.

Each of us looked down
at a bright screen,
scrolling up and down.

We saw what was happening elsewhere,
but none of us knew the man before us.

Silence. Deep silence.
Comfort—or was it only ignorance?
Ignorance of the self and the other.

Each of us leaves ourselves alone.
Each of us leaves him alone.

He asks only for a place to die.
We scroll past.

# 3. Messenger Speech — Antigone, Burial, and Truth

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Workshop task: Write a messenger speech reporting a consequential event to the person who forbade or would be affected by it. One option was Antigone's burial of Polyneices, reported to Creon; the messenger's motives, risks, and relation to truth could shape the account.

***Original response by Dr Zeliha Kuruducu***

MESSENGER, to Creon

My lord, I was there. I saw Antigone beside her brother's body, and I saw her weep.
Yes, that is true!

(The Messenger turns towards the other two soldiers.)

But these men claim she buried him. What proof do they have, apart from their accusations against her?

How terrible it is to see how readily they lie when it serves their interests! Who can assure me they will not do the same to me tomorrow?

Shame!
Yes, that is true!

She stood beside Polyneices. She mourned him.
That is all!

The truth will reveal itself sooner or later, my lord.
At sunset or in the deepest dark—
it will always come to light.