

## from ANTIGONE by Sophocles

**Creon:** You, with your eyes fixed on the ground - speak up.  
Do you deny you did this, yes or no?

**Antigone:** I did it. I don't deny a thing.

**Creon:** You, tell me briefly, no long speeches -  
were you aware a decree had forbidden this?

**Antigone:** Well aware. How could I avoid it? It was public.

**Creon:** And still you had the gall to break this law?

**Antigone:** Of course I did. It wasn't Zeus, not in the least,  
who made this proclamation - not to me.  
Nor did that Justice, dwelling with the gods  
beneath the earth, ordain such laws for men.  
Nor did I think your edict had such force  
that you, a mere mortal, could override the gods,  
the great unwritten, unshakeable traditions.  
They are alive, not just for today or yesterday:  
they live forever, from the first of time,  
and no one knows when they first saw the light.  
These laws - I was not about to break them,  
not out of fear of some man's wounded pride,  
and face the retribution of the gods.  
Die I must, I've known it all my life -  
how could I keep from knowing? - even without  
your death-sentence ringing in my ears.  
And if I am to die before my time  
I consider that a gain. Who on earth,  
alive in the midst of so much grief as I,  
could fail to find his death a rich reward?  
So for me, at least, to meet this doom of yours  
is precious little pain. But if I had allowed  
my own mother's son to rot, an unburied corpse -  
that would have been an agony! This is nothing.  
And if my present actions strike you as foolish,  
let's just say that I've been accused of folly by a fool.