HECUBA: Should I call upon the gods,
The gods who dwell in circles of darkness,
Who make mighty rules
and follow none,
the golden lords who live
above the law . . . ?

Should I lean on the gods as I lean on
this cane
Because something in me still cries out?- The terrified child who lives in the mind,
The original, phantom self which drowns
in the lungs-
Cries out: God, God, God!
Cries out like a drowning man in a sea
with no bottom,
Cries out like the soul on the beaches
of nowhere!
... or like a great city
that falls as a shadow
on the threshold of nowhere . . .

I want to call upon the gods . . .
I still believe . . .

But I saw my man, my king, my Lord,
my master
Fall like a broken animal upon the holy altar,
and I have met with men who saw my sons,
those glorious princes, those birds
of Troy
Quiver and shriek and vomit and die . . .
How can I call upon the gods these days,
How can I pray?

Everything falls apart
In the hour before the dawn.
Trees scatter meaningless leaves to
the wind,
Dreams scatter hopes, or lies.
Truth is as short-lived as the sunrise . . .

Everything's coming to a close
Before it's even begun.
I am coming to a close,
I see my end . . .
I'm an ugly old slave
Shuffling back and forth
Between here and nowhere,
shuffling back and forth
among my enemies.
I open and close my enemies' doors,
I greet their guests.
(I, who bore Hector!)

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HECUBA: (SLOWLY RISING, HER VOICE SOFTENING)
If Troy is meaningless, then everything is
meaningless,
and that can't be.
I demand meaning. I demand it . . .

(PAUSING)
Smoke rises like dust and spreads its filthy wings.
I become a shadow, and the city disappears.
It falls on the threshold of nowhere. It
is a dream, an aftermath of flame.
Trees scatter black meaningless leaves
to the wind,
Dreams scatter hopes, or lies.
Truth is as short-lived
As the sunrise . . .

(THE STAGE DARKENS UNTIL THERE IS
ONLY THE DYING FIRE AND THE HISSING
OF THE FINAL FLAMES)

**Excerpted from: The Trojan Women, a new version by Gwendolyn MacEwan. Soon to be published. Printed here by kind permission of the author.**