

Crito

Plato

Rendered in blank verse by Rob Bocchino

In ancient Athens, Socrates has been tried, convicted, and sentenced to die for crimes against the city. He is in prison awaiting his execution, which will occur after a ship returns from a religious voyage to Delos. His friend Crito, who has visited him several times in prison, visits him now.

Socrates. You've come here early, Crito. Why is that?
 Or is it not still early?

Crito. Yes, it is.

Socrates. How early?

Crito. Early dawn.

Socrates. I am surprised
 The warden has agreed to let you in.

Crito. By now I'm friendly with him, Socrates.
 Each time I've come here I have brought a gift.¹

Socrates. When did you come here? Have you just arrived?
 Or have you been with me some time?

Crito. Some time.

Socrates. Then why did you not wake me straight away?
 Why sit with me in silence?

Crito. Socrates,
 By Zeus, I'd hardly want that for myself:
 To cast off sleep, awaking to distress.
 I noted with surprise how peacefully
 You slept; therefore I let the sleep continue,
 So that the time might pass agreeably.
 Indeed, throughout my life I have observed
 The way you live, and found that it is happy.
 Especially that's true now that you are
 About to die: you bear the weight of this
 So easily and lightly.

Socrates. At my age
 It hardly would be fitting to resent
 The fact that I face death.

Crito. Yet other men
 Are caught in situations just like yours;
 And they do not, because they're elderly,
 Resent them less.

Socrates. That's so. Why have you come
 So early?

Crito. I bring bad news, Socrates.
 It's not so bad for you, apparently.

¹ Here Crito implies that he has been plying the guard with petty bribes. Compare the discussion of bribery that occurs later in the dialogue.

- But I and all your friends find that it's hard
To bear: indeed, I'd rank it with the hardest.
- Socrates.* What is the news? Has it arrived, the ship
From Delos, whose arrival means my death?
- Crito.* It hasn't yet arrived but will, I think,
Arrive today, according to the men
From Sunium, where they have left the ship.
They've brought this message here. Because the ship
Will come today, your life will end tomorrow.
- Socrates.* I hope it's for the best. If in this way
The gods are pleased, then let it be. And yet
I think it won't arrive today.
- Crito.* Why's that?
- Socrates.* I'll tell you. When the ship arrives, I must
Be executed one day after that.
- Crito.* That's what I've heard from the authorities.
- Socrates.* Therefore I do not think it will arrive
This coming day, but rather on the next.
The reason that I think this is a dream
I had while sleeping here not long ago.
It seems you were correct to let me sleep.
- Crito.* What was the dream?
- Socrates.* A woman, beautiful
And dressed in white, approached me, calling out
And saying, "Socrates, may you arrive
At fertile Phthia's shores on the third day."²
- Crito.* That is a strange dream, Socrates.
- Socrates.* To me,
Dear Crito, it seems clear enough.
- Crito.* Too clear,
I think, dear Socrates. But listen now
And hear me, and perhaps you can be saved.
Your death, if it occurs, will cause me more
Than one misfortune. I will lose a friend,
The like of whom I'll never know again.
Not only this, but there are many who
Don't know you very well, and don't know me;
And they will think that if I had just spent
Some money,³ I'd have saved you; and they'll think
I didn't want to do it. Surely there
Can be no reputation worse than this:
"He values wealth more highly than his friends."
It seems unlikely that most will believe
That you yourself refused this kind of aid
And told me, "No, I'd rather wait to die."

² This passage refers to the *Iliad*. Phthia is the home of Achilles. When Achilles threatens to abandon the Greek army and return home, he says that with good weather, he will arrive there on the third day. In Socrates's case, if we count today as the first day, then the third day is the day after tomorrow.

³ I.e., by paying bribes to secure Socrates's release.

- Socrates.* Good Crito, what's the reason we should put
Such stock in the opinion of most men?
We should instead pay more attention to
The ones who are most reasonable. They
Will see the truth of what you've done for me.
- Crito.* But Socrates, we cannot just ignore
The tendencies of the majority.
Your present situation shows if they
Believe the lies directed at a man,
The evil that they cause him is not least,
But greatest.
- Socrates.* If they could inflict that harm,
Then they could also do the greatest good.
That would be fine. However, they cannot
Do either. The majority cannot
Give wisdom to a man, nor can they make
Him foolish; rather what they do to him
Is all haphazard.
- Crito.* Yes, that may be so.
But tell me, Socrates: Do you believe
That I and all your friends would face informers
If you escaped from here, that they'd report
The bribes that we had paid, that we would lose
Our property, or we'd pay heavy fines,
Or we would suffer other punishment?
If that is what you're thinking, please forget it.
To save you, we all think it's justified
To run this risk, and worse ones, if we must.
Please follow my advice. Don't be inclined
To take a different course.
- Socrates.* It's true I have
These things in mind, and many others, Crito.
- Crito.* Let go of fears like this. What must be paid
To get you out of here is minuscule.
Moreover, we can buy off the informers;
The cost of doing this is also small.
The money I have with me is enough.
If you, because you're fond of me, cannot
Agree to spend my money, there are strangers
Available to help you. One of them
Is Simmias the Theban. He has brought
Enough to pay the necessary cost.
So too has Cebes and have several others.
Therefore don't let these fears make you reluctant
To save yourself. Nor should you be concerned
With what you said in court, "How could I live
On leaving Athens?" Many places would
Receive you gladly, if you'd go to them.
Perhaps you'd like to go to Thessaly?
The friends I have there would appreciate
Your company, and they would keep you safe:
In Thessaly you'd never come to harm.

Besides this, Socrates, I think what you
 Are doing here is wrong, to yield your life
 Instead of saving it, to hasten death
 The way your enemies would hasten it,
 Indeed have hastened it, because they wish
 To see that you're destroyed. I also think
 That yielding means abandoning your sons.
 Instead why not remain and bring them up
 And educate them? You seem unconcerned
 About their fate. It's probable they will
 Endure the fate that other orphans do.
 If one has children, one should work to teach them
 And bring them up until the very end.
 It seems to me you're following the path
 That's easy for you; whereas one should choose
 The path a virtuous, courageous man
 Would choose, more so when one has claimed throughout
 His life that virtue is his chief concern.

On your behalf and on behalf of us,
 Your friends, I feel ashamed. I am concerned
 That everything you have endured may seem
 To be a product of our cowardice:
 The fact your case was tried in court at all;
 The way that it was handled; and now this,
 The way it ends absurdly, seemingly
 Beyond our capability to help,
 Through cowardice or through unmanliness,
 Because we did not save you or you failed
 To save yourself, when it was possible
 To rescue you, if only we had done
 The smallest part of what we had to do.
 Consider, Socrates: Is this not evil?
 Is it not shameful for both you and us?
 I'd ask you to take counsel with yourself,
 Except the time for doing this is gone,
 As is the time for making a decision.
 There is no further opportunity
 For counsel or decision. No, tonight
 This business must be ended, all of it.
 If we delay, the time to act will pass,
 And then escape will be impossible.
 Therefore let me persuade you, Socrates.
 Do not respond that you'll act otherwise.

Socrates.

Dear Crito, I commend your eagerness
 If it's directed towards a rightful aim.
 But if it isn't, then it just creates
 More difficulty when it's more intense.
 Therefore we must determine whether we
 Should do the things you say, or we should not.
 For always, not just now, I am a man
 Who acts according to the argument
 That, on reflection, seems to be the best.
 I can't, because I'm waiting here to die,
 Abandon all the arguments I've made;

They seem to me the same now as they were.
 The principles I value and respect
 Are those I did before; and if we have
 No better arguments before us now,
 Be sure that I shall not agree with you,
 Were the majority to threaten us
 With monsters in the dark as we were children:
 With time in prison, sentences of death,
 And confiscation of our property.
 How then should we examine what to do?
 What is most reasonable? Should we take
 Up first your argument about opinions,⁴
 That some opinions are the ones to heed,
 While others are not worthy of our thought?
 Or was the merit of that argument
 Extinguished when I was condemned to die,
 So it's clear now that it was said in vain,
 For sake of argument, but it in truth
 Was merely play and nonsense? Let us, Crito,
 Determine if this argument will seem
 In any way, because of where I am,
 At variance with how it seemed before,
 Or whether it indeed remains the same.
 Should we continue to believe the claim,
 Or should we give it up? Several have said,
 Who thought their speech was sensible, as I
 Have said just now, that some opinions have
 High value, whereas other ones do not.
 Do you agree the statement is persuasive?
 As far as anyone can know, you don't
 Confront a likely death tomorrow; so
 The difficulty that I face is not
 A likely cause of leading you astray.
 Consider, then: Do you believe it's sound
 To say one must not value all opinions
 Of men, but rather some and not the others,
 And likewise must not value the opinions
 Of all men, but of some and not the others?
 What is your answer? Is the statement true?

Crito. It is.

Socrates. The good opinions are the ones
 To value, not the bad ones?

Crito. Yes.

Socrates. The good
 Opinions are the ones that wise men have;
 The bad ones are the ones of foolish men?

Crito. Of course.

Socrates. Consider, then, the following.
 Suppose a man professionally trains
 His body for performance. Should he be
 Attentive to the praise, blame, and opinion

⁴ This refers to an argument that Crito and others have made before Socrates was tried and convicted.

Of any man, or of a single man,
The one who is his doctor or his trainer?

Crito. To those of that one man.

Socrates. Therefore he should
Fear blame and welcome praise when either comes
From that one man, and not when from the many?

Crito. That's obvious.

Socrates. Then he must exercise,
Behave and eat and drink in just the way
The one, the trainer who is guiding him,
Thinks right, and not according to the rest?

Crito. That's so.

Socrates. All right. And if he disobeys
The one, he fails to follow that opinion,
Ignores those praises, hearing rather those
Of many who lack knowledge of his training,
Will he not suffer harm?

Crito. Of course he will.

Socrates. What is that harm? Where does it lead? What part
Of him who disobeys does it affect?

Crito. The harm is to his body, which is ruined.

Socrates. Well said. Consider other matters now.
Let's not attempt to list them all; instead
Let's focus on the ones we have discussed:
The just and unjust, shameful, beautiful,
The good and bad. In all these matters should
We follow the opinion of the many,
And fear it, or instead seek out the one,
If there is one with knowledge of these things,
Before whom we feel fear and we feel shame
More strongly than when we're before the others?
If we ignore his guidance, we shall harm
And sully that which in ourselves becomes
Improved when we act justly and destroyed
By actions that are contrary to justice.
Or is there nothing in what I have said?

Crito. There certainly is something, Socrates.

Socrates. Now if we ruin that which is improved
By health and which is worsened by disease,
Ignoring the opinions of the ones
Who know, is life worth living? In that case
What's ruined is the body, is it not?

Crito. It is.

Socrates. And is it worth living that life
Inside a ruined and degraded body?

Crito. It isn't.

Socrates. Well, and what of living life
When we've corrupted that part of ourselves
That's harmed by unjust action and improved
By actions that are just? Or do we think

That part of us, whatever it may be,
 Concerned with justice and injustice has
 Less value to ourselves than does the body?

Crito. We don't think that.

Socrates. It has, in fact, more value?

Crito. Much more.

Socrates. Then we should not have much concern
 For what the many say of us. Instead
 Let's care for the opinions of the one
 Who understands both justice and injustice,
 And knows the truth itself. Accordingly,
 You weren't right to say that we should care
 About the statements made by many men
 Concerning what is just and beautiful
 And good, and what is not. "Yet," one might say,
 "The many can condemn a man to death."

Crito. Yes, Socrates. That's obvious, and one
 Might say it.

Socrates. And, my admirable friend,
 The argument that we've rehearsed remains,
 I think, exactly as it was before.
 Consider, if you will, the following.
 Does it remain the same, or has it changed
 To say the most important thing is not
 One's life itself, but living the good life?

Crito. It stays the same.

Socrates. And what of saying this:
 The life that's good, the life that's beautiful,
 The life that's just, these three are all the same.
 Does that still hold, or does it not?

Crito. It does.

Socrates. And so far we've agreed it falls to us
 To ascertain this: Is it right to get
 Me out of here when the Athenians
 Have not acquitted me? If it is right,
 Then we will try to do it; but if not,
 Then we will set the whole idea aside.
 Regarding questions raised concerning money,
 And reputation, bringing up of children,
 Those questions are the province of the ones
 Who put a man to death as easily
 As they would bring that man to life again,
 If only they were able, without thinking.
 The ones I mean are the majority.
 In our case, though, we've made an argument;
 It tells us to concern ourselves with this,
 And only this: Would we be in the right
 To give our money and our gratitude
 To those who get me out of here, and to
 Ourselves as well for aiding the escape;
 Or would it be that we commit a wrong

In doing all of this? If it appears
 These actions are unjust, then we've no need
 To take into account the consequence
 Of staying here, of whether we will die
 Or we will suffer in some other way,
 Instead of doing wrong.

Crito. I think you put
 That beautifully, Socrates, but then
 What is it we should do?

Socrates. Let's answer that
 By joint examination, my dear friend.
 If you can make objection while I speak,
 Then make it; I'll attend to what you say.
 But if you've no objection, my dear Crito,
 Refrain from saying what you've said before
 So often, that I must escape and flout
 The will of the Athenians. I think
 It is important that I can persuade you
 Before I act, so that I do not act
 Against your wish. Determine, do we start
 With adequate foundation? Answer me
 When asked according to what you think best.

Crito. I'll try.

Socrates. Is it the case we say that one
 Must never do a wrong act willingly,
 Or do we say that one must do a wrong
 In one way, and not do it in another?
 Do we say doing wrong is never good
 Or admirable, as we've done before?
 Or have those arguments been swept away
 Because of what's occurred the last few days?
 Can it be at our age we failed to notice
 The way in which, for some time, we have held
 Discussions that we thought were serious
 But were no different from what children do?
 Above all, is the truth what we believed
 It was, agree majority or not,
 Whether it falls on us to suffer things
 Much worse than we do now, or whether we
 Are treated gently? Do we still proclaim
 That doing wrong in every way brings harm
 And shame upon the one who does it? Do
 We say these things or do we not?

Crito. We do.

Socrates. It follows one must never do a wrong.

Crito. That's right.

Socrates. Nor, when he's wronged, must one inflict
 A wrong in answer, as most men believe,
 Because it's never right to do a wrong.

Crito. That seems to be the case.

- Socrates.* Should one inflict
A harm upon another, Crito?
- Crito.* No.
It seems one must refrain from doing that.
- Socrates.* But what if one is harmed? Does it seem right,
As most would say, to answer with more harm?
- Crito.* It's never right.
- Socrates.* To injure is the same
As doing wrong.
- Crito.* That's true.
- Socrates.* So one should not
Inflict a harm in answer, nor should he
Cause injury to any man despite
The injury that man has caused to him.
Now, Crito, see if you agree with this,
Or if you have a contrary belief.
For I'm aware that few accept what I
Will say, and that there's little common ground
Between the ones who say it and the ones
Who say the opposite, and without fail
They hate each other's views. So carefully
Consider whether we have this in common,
And whether you agree, so we can make
This view the basis for what we discuss:
That neither doing nor returning wrong
Is ever right, not even when it's done
In payment for a harm that's done to us.
Or do you disagree? Do you not share
The view that I've proposed we build upon?
A long time I have held this view, and still
I hold it now. If you think otherwise,
Then tell me now. But if you still believe
This statement, which we both have made before,
Then hear what follows it.
- Crito.* I'll stick with it
And say that I agree. Continue, please.
- Socrates.* Then I will say what's next, or rather ask:
When one has reached agreement that is just
With someone, should he honor it, or cheat?
- Crito.* He should fulfill it.
- Socrates.* See what follows that.
Suppose we leave here, lacking the permission
That's given by the city. Would we cause
An injury to those who least deserve it?
And would we honor or would we be breaking
A just agreement?
- Crito.* I can't answer that,
Dear Socrates. I have no way to know.
- Socrates.* Consider this. Suppose we undertook
To rescue me from here (however one
Should say it), and suppose the city's laws⁵

Confronted us and asked, “What, Socrates,
 Do you intend to do? Does not the act
 That you are planning mean we’ll be destroyed,
 The laws, the city too, on your account?
 Or do you think that it is possible
 The city can continue when its courts
 Give toothless verdicts that are nullified,
 Are thwarted by the acts of private men?”
 What would we say in answer to this question,
 Or others like it? For it is the case
 That many arguments could be advanced,
 By orators who take the side of law,
 This law we are attempting to subvert,
 Which orders that the judgments of the courts
 Must be obeyed. Shall we say in response,
 “The city did me wrong, for its decision
 Was wrong.” Is that indeed what we should say?

Crito.

That is, by Zeus, our answer, Socrates!

Socrates.

Suppose then that the laws said, “Was it this
 That we agreed to, Socrates? Or did
 You say instead that you’d respect the judgments
 The city rendered?” If we wondered then,
 The laws perhaps would add this: “Socrates,
 Don’t ponder what we say but answer it,
 Proceeding in your customary way
 Of question and of answer. Tell us now,
 What accusation do you have to bring
 Against us and the city, such that you
 Are justified in wishing us destroyed?
 Were not your father and your mother wed
 Through us, and did this not permit your birth?
 Please tell us, is there anything amiss
 That you can see among the ones of us
 That set the rules of marriage?” I would say
 That I find nothing to object to there.
 “What of the laws concerned with nurturing
 Of babies, and with educating children?
 Were they remiss? Did they not well instruct
 Your father how to teach you in the arts
 And culture?” I would say those laws were fine.
 “All right,” they would continue. “After that,
 Your birth, your nurture, and your education,
 Can you deny that you are born of us
 And that you serve us? Is this claim not true
 Of you and of your forefathers as well?
 If that’s the case, then do you have the right
 To do to us the things we do to you?
 You couldn’t have insisted on this right
 Against your father, nor against your master,
 If one you had, to pay them back in kind
 For any harm they may have caused to you:
 Belittle them if they belittled you,

⁵ Here and below, Socrates imagines that the laws of Athens are personified beings that can engage in Socratic dialogue.

Or beat on them if they did this to you,
 And so with other things they may have done.
 Do you in fact believe you have this right
 To rise against your country and its laws?
 Do you believe if we decide that you
 Should be destroyed that to retaliate
 By seeking our destruction is correct?
 Will you indeed profess that this is right,
 You, Socrates, who care so much for virtue?
 You're wise; for all that wisdom don't you see
 Your country must receive the highest honor,
 More than you give your mother and your father,
 Your ancestors? It must be more revered,
 More sacred, it counts more among the gods
 And men with sense, and you must worship it,
 Must yield to it, propitiate its wrath
 More than your father's. If you can't persuade
 Your country, then you must obey its orders,
 Endure what it commands that you endure
 In silence, whether suffering or bondage.
 If it says, "Go to war," with the result
 You're wounded or you're killed, you must obey.
 To do these things is right; one must not yield,
 Retreat, or leave one's post.⁶ So too in court,
 Just as in war and in all other places,
 One must obey one's city and one's country,
 Or else one must persuade them to believe
 In justice as one sees it. To rise up
 Against your mother or against your father
 In violence is impious; much more so
 Is using violence against your country."
 What shall we answer, Crito? Do the laws
 Speak truth, or do they not?

Crito.

I think they do.

Socrates.

"Consider, Socrates," the laws might say,
 "If what we say is true, you do us wrong
 By planning what you plan. We gave you birth,
 We nurtured you, we educated you;
 To you and to the other citizens
 Of Athens we have given out a share
 Of all good things we could. Despite all that,
 We let each citizen who reaches manhood
 And who stays in the bounds we set, the laws,
 Who disagrees with us to take his leave:
 To pack up his possessions and remove
 Himself and them to anywhere he likes.
 Not one of us forbids this kind of move,
 If he finds fault with us or with the city.
 If any citizen would like to start
 A colony or join another state,
 He may do so and keep his property.
 We do say, though, that anyone who stays,

⁶ Compare the discussion of these points in the *Apology*.

Once he has seen how we conduct our courts
And manage our affairs in other things,
Has entered an agreement to obey
Instructions that we give. We say the one
Who disobeys commits three kinds of wrong.
The first is that he disobeys his parents.
The second is he disobeys the ones
Who brought him up. And third he disobeys
The laws that he agreed he would obey;
And if we are at fault he doesn't try
To make us better by persuading us.
For our part, we propose; we don't command
Without recourse. We give alternatives:
We say, 'You may persuade us if you can;
If not, you must conform to what we say.
This man does neither.' Therefore, Socrates,
If you proceed with what you have in mind,
You'll also do these wrongs, and so your guilt
Will be not least but most among the ones
In Athens who have disobeyed its laws."
And if I asked, "Why so?" they might respond
With justice that of all Athenians
I am among the ones who gave consent
Most fully to the contract that they cite.
They might well tell me, "Socrates, we have
Convincing proof that you were pleased with us
And with the city. Of all citizens
You lived here most consistently; you would
Not do this if you were not happy here.
You've never left the city even once,
Not for a festival or any reason
But military service; you've not stayed
In other cities, as most people do.
You never sought to know another city
With other laws; here you were satisfied.
"It seems you chose to be a citizen
Decisively, agreeing to our terms.
Moreover, you've had children in this city;
This shows it was congenial to you.
In court you had the opportunity
To choose the penalty of banishment.
Your plan is an attempt to choose it now
Without permission, when you could have asked
For it, and thereby had it with consent.
In court you said, 'I'm not afraid of death.'
You proudly said, 'Give me this punishment
Instead of exile.'⁷ Now it seems those words
Cause you no shame. You pay no heed to us,
The laws; instead you seek to wipe us out.
Your actions are those of the meanest slave:
You try to run away and try to shirk
The obligation that you undertook
To us, to live here as a citizen.

⁷ As related in the *Apology*.

So answer us, please, on this very point:
 Do we speak truth in saying you agreed,
 Not just in words but also in your deeds,
 To live according to the rules we set?"
 What is our answer, Crito? Must we not
 Agree with this?

Crito.

I think so, Socrates.

Socrates.

They might continue, "You have planned to break
 The covenant that you have made with us
 Without compulsion and without deceit,
 With ample time to say, 'Yes, I agree.'
 You lived here seven decades; all this time
 You could have gone away if you had thought,
 'I do not like the laws of Athens; here
 The obligations levied are unjust.'
 You didn't leave the city, go to Crete
 Or Sparta, where you say the governments
 Are good; nor did you seek another city,
 A Greek one or a foreign one. You have
 Been out of Athens less than those who have
 A disability, the lame, the blind.
 It's clear the city has been good to you
 More so than to its other citizens;
 And so have we, the laws, for how is it
 A city can exist without its laws?
 So will you now uphold our covenant?
 You will if we persuade you that you should,
 O Socrates, and you won't make yourself
 A laughing stock by fleeing from the city.
 "Consider the effect upon yourself,
 Upon your friends of doing such a wrong
 As breaking the agreement that we have.
 Your friends themselves would be in danger: they
 Might be cast out of Athens, disenfranchised,
 And stripped of property. As for yourself,
 If you go to a city that's nearby —
 Say Megara or Thebes, both well-governed —
 You'll go there as a public enemy.
 The ones who love their city will suspect
 This Socrates, destroyer of the laws.
 So too the jury will be more convinced
 The sentence that they passed on you was right:
 For one who's willing to destroy the laws
 Might also be a man who can corrupt
 The young and ignorant. Will you avoid
 Well-governed cities, seeking out the ones
 Where laws are lax and men less civilized?
 If this is what you do, will it be life
 Worth living? Will you interact with them
 And talk to them? Will you not be ashamed?
 What will you say? The same things you did here,
 That virtue and that justice are to men
 The things that they should value over all,
 Along with good behavior and the laws?"

Do you not think that Socrates would seem
To be a person who is insincere?
It seems that one must think so. Will you leave
Those places, go instead to Thessaly,
To Crito's friends? There you will have most room
For action and disorder. They'll enjoy
To hear, perhaps, of your absurd escape
From prison in disguise, a leather jerkin
Or something else that's used for subterfuge,
To alter one's appearance. Will there be
No one to say that you, likely to live
A short time more, clawed greedily at life,
And broke the city's most important laws?
This may be, Socrates, if you do not
Annoy the ones you meet; but if you do,
Such things will be the cause of your disgrace.

"You'll spend your time in flattering all men
And doing what they want. What will you do
In Thessaly but feast, as if you're there
For banqueting? As for your questioning
Regarding justice, virtue, and the rest,
Where will it be? You say you want to live
To help your children, that you'll bring them up
And educate them. How can you do that?
By bringing them along to Thessaly,
Where they are strangers, so they can enjoy
The kind of life you lead? Or will they be
Brought up and educated here, while you
Still live, but you are there? Of course your friends
Will tend to them. Will they look after them
If you're in Thessaly, but not if you
Go to the underworld? If they're your friends
And they are any good, one must assume
They'll bring your children up in either case.

"Please heed us, Socrates: we brought you up.
Don't value anything — your life, your children —
More than you value goodness, so when you
Arrive in Hades, this is what you have
In your defense before the rulers there.
If you escape from prison, you won't find
It better or more just or pious here,
Nor will your friends perceive that it is so,
Nor will there be advantage after death.
As matters stand you'll leave this Earthly realm,
If you depart, not being wronged by us,
The laws, but rather being wronged by men;
But if you leave here after shamefully
Returning wrong for wrong and injury
For injury, and breaking your agreement,
And causing harm to those you should protect —
Yourself, your friends, your country and its laws —
You'll be the target of our anger here;
Our brothers in the underworld, the laws
Down there will not receive you kindly. They

Will know you did your best to ruin us.
Do not let Crito sway your judgment here.
Instead do what we say.”

My dear friend Crito,

Please be assured these are the words I hear,
Just as the Korybantes⁸ hear their flutes.
They echo back and forth inside my head,
So that I can conceive of nothing else.
Regarding my beliefs, if you oppose
These words, the things you say will be in vain.
But speak if you have anything to say.

Crito. I’ve nothing else to tell you, Socrates.

Socrates. So let it be, dear Crito. Let us act
This way, the way the god is leading us.

References

Plato, *Five Dialogues*. Trans. G.M.A. Grube. Hackett Publishing Company, Inc. 1981.

⁸ Pronounced kor-EE-ban-tez. In Greek mythology, the Korybantes used drumming and dancing to worship the Phrygian goddess Cybele. See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korybantes>.