

SEEKING SOCRATES

CHORUS 8: THE HOUR DRAWS NEAR



In Athens, executions were conducted within a day or two after the condemned had completed his trial. But, an exception had to be made in Socrates' case. It was considered a bad omen to put prisoners to death while a sacred ship brought tribute to the temple of Apollo at Delos. So the city waited for the vessel's return.

As they did, many whose lives had been touched by the old philosopher came to his prison cell to bid him goodbye. He would not allow displays of grief, and even sent his wife home on several occasions due to her outbursts. Instead, he took to writing poetry, and engaging in his favorite pastime—philosophy.

Crito was not the only one who had attempted to arrange his escape. Even the jailors were eager to have him set free. And although most of his jurors had voted for death, few of them now had the heart to see him actually die.

But death it would be, by hemlock, a lethal poison made from a weed in the carrot family. Those present as the moment approached had to marvel at the calm with which Socrates greeted his end. He did not know what awaited him after death, but that voice inside was quiet. So, somehow, he felt...all would be well.