

Body of Men

We cannot be released from them:
they are not traps; the myths
of them mislead. The statue of The Thinker
is straining, not straining to think —
the thought degrades the act and Atlas,
who holds the world up second by second
does not think because to think would be the slip
that brings apocalypse.

Hippolyta, Amazon leader, and
each of her warriors in Scythia cut one breast off
in order to draw back and let fly an arrow more smoothly
and understand: it was not in the name of some thought
they cut one breast off: It was to draw back
and let fly an arrow more smoothly.

Sisyphus, who strains
for the rest of time against the rock's weight
and the unending rise of the hill
will not be released because he understands
his punishment isn't his endless task; his punishment
is his endless thought of it.

Paul T Hogan
From Points of Departures, 2008