



# SEVEN

by

AURETTA STERRANTINO

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*In transit.  
On unknown roads.  
Passages.  
Landscapes.  
And doors now lost.*

*Between the fingers of a palm  
- hollow -  
in the crack under the smile  
in the hurricane dance*

*they slide  
they flow  
they roll.*

*Stones upon stones.*

*Among the wrinkles of a trunk  
- dead -*

*groove  
burrow  
pulsing sound box*

*they beat  
they tremble  
they mark the time.*

*large heaps  
of rocks  
in the womb of a backdrop,  
at the mercy of the winds  
in the grip of the currents.*

*In the white womb of a breath,  
carved into the transient instant,*

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*shapes,  
without lines or contours,  
consecrated to the movement in progress;*

*tears  
sharper than crystals,  
shining wounds  
in salt granules;*

*flint,  
sharp edge.*

*On a stem.  
On a stem.*

*The wind whips,  
the rain  
beats*

*water*

*- it beats water -  
- water -  
- water -*

*beyond the surface, beyond the sea.  
The wide sea.*

*The light  
suspended  
suspends*

*undertow's rocks  
rocks in progress.*



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*Stones.*

*Missed prophylaxes  
nuclear mitoses  
osmotic membranes*

*split  
wandering*

*dynamites and stray squibs.*

*Stones.*

*On the rocks.*

*On the road.*

*En viaje.*

*By chance.*

*One day*

*at night*

*for hours.*

*Words*

*like actions.*

*Collisions.*

*And jumping*

*of stones*

*on the water.*

*On the ground.*

*The land.*

*The land.*

*The land.*

*Adesso.*

*Ahora.*

*Aquí.*

*Here.*

*Now and here.*

*Hic et nunc.*

*Now.*

*Here.*

*Here.*

*Now and here.*

*Here and now.*



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*Nel momento presente,*  
ἐνθάδε, ἐνταῦθα  
νῦν γε  
ἐν τῷ χρόνῳ,  
ἐν τῷ παρόντι.  
*Nel momento presente.*  
Le moment est présent.  
Le moment est perdu.  
El momento es un instante.  
Perdido.  
Aquí. Ahora.  
En el tiempo que pasa.  
Aquí. Ahora.  
Now and here.  
Ici et maintenant.  
Aquí.  
Ahora.

*In the present moment.*  
*Here, here*  
*Just now*  
*In this moment*  
*In the present*  
*In the present moment.*  
*The moment is now.*  
*The moment is lost.*  
*The moment is an instant.*  
*Lost.*  
*Here. Now.*  
*In the passing time.*  
*Here. Now.*  
*Now and here.*  
*Here. Now.*  
*Here.*  
*Now.*

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## ZERO HOUR

**ETEOCLES** – – *Kadmeia* – –

**POLYNICES** – – *Kadmeia* – –

**ETEOCLES** – – *Kadmeia* – –

**POLYNICES** *Cadmus Rock.*

Πόλις τῶν ἑπτά.  
[City of Seven]

**ETEOCLES** *City of Seven.*

**POLYNICES** Πόλις τῶν ἑπτά...  
[City of Seven...]

**ETEOCLES** *City of Seven.*

**POLYNICES** ...ἐπὶ τοὺς ἑπτά.  
[...against the Seven]

**ETEOCLES** ...*against the Seven.*

**POLYNICES** – – *Kadmeia* – –

**ETEOCLES** – – *Kadmeia* – –

**POLYNICES** – – *Kadmeia* – –

**ETEOCLES** *Cadmus Rock.*

**POLYNICES** *City of Seven.*

**ETEOCLES** Πόλις τῶν ἑπτά.  
[City of Seven]



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**POLYNICES** *City of Seven.*

**ETEOCLES** Πόλις τῶν ἐπτά...  
[City of Seven]

**POLYNICES** *...against the Seven.*

**ETEOCLES** ...ἐπὶ τοὺς ἐπτά.  
[against the Seven]

**POLYNICES** ὦ Καδμείας ἱερὸν τεῖχος...  
[Sacred walls of Cadmus' Rock]

**ETEOCLES** *Sacred walls of Cadmus' Rock...*  
  
Στόμα Δίρκας...  
[Source of Dirke]

**POLYNICES** *Source of Dirke...*

ὦμοι Καδμεία...  
[Alas, Cadmea]

**ETEOCLES** Cadmus' Rock...

**POLYNICES** ... ὄμμα ἐλεύθερον.  
[...free eye]

**ETEOCLES** ... free eye.

**POLYNICES** Cadmus' Rock...

**ETEOCLES** Καδμεία μεγάλη.  
[Big Cadmea]

**POLYNICES** ...big.



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Cadmus' Rock...

**ETEOCLES** Καδμεία εὐίππος.  
[Cadmea, with beautiful horses]

**POLYNICES** ... with beautiful horses.

**ETEOCLES** Καδμεία καὶ πύλαι ἑπτάστομοι σεαυτοῦ.  
[Cadmea, and your gates with seven mouths]

**POLYNICES** Cadmea and your gates with seven mouths.

**ETEOCLES** – – Kadmeia – –

**POLYNICES** – – Kadmeia – –

**ETEOCLES** – – Kadmeia – –

**POLYNICES** Cadmus' Rock...

**ETEOCLES** Ἑπτάπυλος.  
[With seven gates.]

**POLYNICES** Ἑπτάπυργος.  
[With seven towers.]

**ETEOCLES** Καλλίπυργος,  
[with beautiful towers.]

**POLYNICES** Εὐάρματος.  
[with strong war chariots.]

**ETEOCLES** Πολυάρματος.  
[with many war chariots.]

**POLYNICES** Φιλόρματος.  
[lover of war chariots.]





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**ETEOCLES** Καδμεία ἀγλά.  
[Refulgent Cadmea.]

**POLYNICES** Rocca di Cadmo,  
rifulgente.

**ETEOCLES** Ἐγύγια Καδμεία.  
[Ancient Cadmea]

**POLYNICES** Antica.

**ETEOCLES** Ἐγύγια πυλώματά σου.  
[your gates are ancient.]

**POLYNICES** Your gates are ancient.

**ETEOCLES** ὦμοι Καδμεία...  
[Alas, Cadmea]

**POLYNICES** Rocca di Cadmo...

**ETEOCLES** ...φιλοθύτων δέ τοι πόλεος ὀργίων.  
[The city celebrate sacrifices and mysteries.]

**POLYNICES** The city celebrate sacrifices and mysteries.

**ETEOCLES** Μνήστορες ἐστέ μοι.  
[Be you for me custodians of their memory.]

**POLYNICES** Be you  
for me  
custodians of their memory.

**ETEOCLES** Μνήστορες ἐστέ μοι.



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[Be you for me custodians of their memory.]

**POLYNICES** Cursed...

**ETEOCLES** ...the curses...

**POLYNICES** ...of deaths...

**ETEOCLES** ...that generate...

**POLYNICES** ...deaths.

**ETEOCLES E** *Kadmeia...*

**POLYNICES**

**POLYNICES** Σὰ δ' ἔρις ἐστί.  
[Yours is the contention.]

**ETEOCLES** ... yours is the contention.

**POLYNICES** Οὐκ ἔρις...  
[No, not contention]

**ETEOCLES** No, not contention...

**POLYNICES** ...ἀλλὰ φόνος...  
[...but carnage...]

**ETEOCLES** ...carnage...

**POLYNICES** ...φόνω.  
[on carnage.]

**ETEOCLES** ... on carnage.

**POLYNICES** Αἶμα δεινόν...



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[Terrible bood...]

**ETEOCLES** Terrible bood...

**POLYNICES** ...αἶμα λυγρόν.  
[...fatal blood.]

**ETEOCLES** ... fatal blood.

**ETEOCLES** Ὀμοὶ Καδμεία, πόλις τῶν ἐπτά,  
**E POLYNICES** πόλις τῶν ἐπτά ἐπὶ τοὺς ἐπτά.

[Alas, Cadmea, city of Seven,  
city of Seven against the Seven]

**POLYNICES** -- Kadmeia --

**ETEOCLES** -- Kadmeia --

**POLYNICES** -- Kadmeia --

**EETEOCLES E** Πόλις τῶν ἐπτά,  
**POLYNICES** πόλις τῶν ἐπτά ἐπὶ τοὺς ἐπτά.

[City of Seven,  
city of Seven against the Seven]

**EETEOCLES** -- *Kadmeia* --

**POLYNICES** -- *Kadmeia* --

**EETEOCLES** -- *Kadmeia* --

**EETEOCLES** Πόλις τῶν ἐπτά,  
**E POLYNICES** πόλις τῶν ἐπτά ἐπὶ τοὺς ἐπτά.

[City of Seven,



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city of Seven against the Seven]

**ETEOCLES** – – *Kadmeia* – –

**POLYNICES** Land  
of Cadmus.

**ETEOCLES** Cadmus' Land

**POLYNICES** – Land of Cadmus –

**ETEOCLES** Son of Agenor...

**POLYNICES** – Land of Cadmus –

**ETEOCLES** brother of Europa...

**POLYNICES** – Land of Cadmus –

**ETEOCLES** slayer of the serpent, Ares' monter...

**POLYNICES** – Land of Cadmus –

**ETEOCLES** sower of teeth...

**POLYNICES** – Land of Cadmus –

**ETEOCLES** ...founder of the Spartoi's city

**POLYNICES** – Land of Cadmus –

**ETEOCLES** Harmonia's...

**POLYNICES** – son of Ares and Aphrodite –

**ETEOCLES** ...husband.

**POLYNICES** And father...



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- ETEOCLES** ...of  
Polydorus
- POLYNICES** Who fathered  
Labdacus  
from whom he was born,
- ETEOCLES** ...Laius...
- POLYNICES** ... against the will of the gods...
- ETEOCLES** ... my father's...
- POLYNICES** ... father.
- ETEOCLES** Oe-di-pus!
- POLYNICES** Oe-di-pus!
- ETEOCLES** *Do not sow in the furrow that generates children.*
- POLYNICES** – *Do not sow* –
- ETEOCLES** *Do no violence to the Gods.*
- POLYNICES** – *Not to the Gods* –
- ETEOCLES** *Eusébeia.*
- POLYNICES** *Eusébeia.*
- ETEOCLES E** *Eusébeia.*
- POLYNICES**
- ETEOCLES** *If you'll give birth to a child,  
that son will kill you.*
- POLYNICES** *And your whole house ...*
- ETEOCLES E** – *tutta* –
- POLYNICES**

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**ETEOCLES** – *Kadmeia* –

**POLYNICES** – *all of it* –

**ETEOCLES E** *Your whole house will be flooded with blood.*

**POLYNICES**

**POLYNICES** *It will be flooded with blood.*

**ETEOCLES** This whole land...

**ETEOCLES E** – *Kadmeia* –

**POLYNICES**

**ETEOCLES** *...flooded with blood.*

*Whole  
this  
land*

**POLYNICES** – blind in the mind –

**ETEOCLES** my father  
sowed.

**POLYNICES** He sowed the mother  
– Giocasta –  
and fathered two daughters.

**ETEOCLES** – Antigone e Ismene –

**POLYNICES** My sisters.

**ETEOCLES** And fathered two sons  
whom he then



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cursed.

**POLYNICES** Two sons  
whom he then  
cursed.

**ETEOCLES** Oedipus  
generates,  
generates...

**POLYNICES** – by sowing his own seed –

**ETEOCLES** ...a terrible pestilence.

**POLYNICES** And deaths.  
And sorrows.  
And crying.  
And dryness  
and deserts.

**ETEOCLES** Suspended in anxiety  
does not decipher  
the present.

**POLYNICES** The past is dark to him.

**ETEOCLES** Naked,  
he dips the foot into the truth  
and whole Lethe recedes.

**POLYNICES** The fog disappears around him.

**ETEOCLES** The things dulling veil falls.

**POLYNICES** And then he sees.  
And he knows.

**ETEOCLES** And, suffering every misfortune,



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**POLYNICES** – blind in the eyes –

**ETEOCLES** he leaves the burden of government to his two sons.

**POLYNICES** One year for Eteocles...

**ETEOCLES** One for Polyneices.

**POLYNICES** One year for Polyneices.

**ETEOCLES** One for Eteocles.

**POLYNICES** One year for Eteocles...

**ETEOCLES** One for Polyneices.

**POLYNICES** One year for Polyneices.

**ETEOCLES** One for Eteocles.

**ETEOCLES** Now.

**POLYNICES** Now.

**ETEOCLES** Now.

**POLYNICES** The agreements  
are  
broken.

**ETEOCLES** The bonds of oaths  
are broken.

**POLYNICES** Eteocles does not want to leave the power.

**ETEOCLES** Polyneices is preparing to breach the walls with an army.





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The war is upon us.

**POLYNICES** *Seven for seven gates against Seven for seven gates.*

**ETEOCLES** – – Καδμεία – –  
πόλις τῶν ἑπτά,  
πόλις τῶν ἑπτά ἐπὶ τοὺς ἑπτά.

[– – Cadmeia – –  
City of Seven,  
city of Seven against the Seven]

– – Καδμεία – –  
πόλις τῶν ἑπτά,  
πόλις τῶν ἑπτά ἐπὶ τοὺς ἑπτά.

[– – Cadmeia – –  
City of Seven,  
city of Seven against the Seven]

**POLYNICES** March, move forward, take up and dance.  
Aim, target, load and throw.

**ETEOCLES** March, move forward, take up and dance.  
Aim, target, load and throw.

**ETEOCLES E** March, move forward, take up and dance.

**POLYNICES** Aim, target, load and throw.

**POLYNICES** In cycle  
end and beginning,  
nonstop  
action is word.

**ETEOCLES** In cycle  
turning wheel,



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turning and spinning,  
destroys and passes away,  
distorts, sculpts, shocks.

It hurts.

Rewind.

**ETEOCLES E** March, move forward, take up and dance.

**POLYNICES** Aim, target, load and throw.

**POLYNICES** In circle,  
hug that strangles,  
it clanches and then strangles  
it clanches you and strangles you.

**ETEOCLES** It's a breath  
and it flows quickly.

**POLYNICES** Quickly.

**ETEOCLES** The river  
flows.

**POLYNICES** Quickly  
quickly  
it flows.

**ETEOCLES** It slides and flows.

**POLYNICES** It slides and flows.

**ETEOCLES** The Eternal is not  
the womb that immortalises  
faded imprints  
of broken freckles,  
changing impressions.

**POLYNICES** The Earth trembles  
at our step



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which brings death,  
that brings war.

**ETEOCLES** Quickly,  
it beats and tramples,  
it passes and does not stay.

**POLYNICES** The Earth trembles,  
the Earth that generates and governs everything.

**ETEOCLES** It trembles  
suddenly.  
It trembles,  
contaminated, punched, punished.

The shadow  
trembles,  
the water  
trembles,  
the path  
trembles.

**POLYNICES** All the Earth trembles  
but I don't give up.

I do not give up.

**ETEOCLES** It's *miasma*  
without salvation.

**POLYNICES** It's *miasma*  
of death and violence.

**ETEOCLES** Baths of sacred waters.  
I dip my hands.  
I immerse my thoughts.

**POLYNICES** Baths of waters

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– sacred –

I dive.  
I immolate myself.  
I implore justice.

**ETEOCLES** The monster, the pain, the death:  
fear, hurt, fate.

**POLYNICES** The monster, the pain, the fate:  
the Earth wounded to death.

**ETEOCLES E** – – *Kadmeia* – –

**POLYNICES**

**ETEOCLES** First the Sphinx, then the plague, perhaps the war.

**POLYNICES** First the Sphinx, then the plague, now the war.

I march, I move forward, I take up and I dance.

Invoke the gods,  
I invoke Justice.

I aim, I target, I load and I throw.

In its groove I keep my step.

I march, I move forward, I take up and I dance.

Invoke the gods,  
I invoke Justice.

I aim, I target, I load and I throw.



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**ETEOCLES** Death. Infinite death.  
Death for this land,  
without mourning,  
without complaint.

**POLYNICES** *I march, I move forward, I take up and I dance.*

**ETEOCLES** – – *Kadmeia* – –

**POLYNICES** *I aim, I target, I load and I throw.*

**ETEOCLES** Foreshadowing mourners prophesy,  
invoking Apollo Mantico.  
And young wives and mothers with whitened heads  
around the altar,  
around the altar.

**POLYNICES** *I march, I move forward, I take up and I dance.*

**ETEOCLES** They tremble,  
they call for a truce.

But the wing rises.  
That wing rises black,  
it rises and glides,  
that black wing  
glides with lightness,  
it opens  
immense  
and glides  
and doesn't move away.

**POLYNICES** *I aim, I target, I load and I throw.*

**ETEOCLES** That black wing is heavy  
like a canvas blanket.

**POLYNICES** *I march, I move forward, I take up and I dance.*



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**ETEOCLES** Thick blanket.

**POLYNICES** *I aim, I target, I load and I throw.*

**ETEOCLES** White linen cloth  
hanging on a thread,  
hanging on a thread.

Curtain moved by the wind  
of bodies swallowed up in the fixity of passing away,  
dancing figures on the black wing,  
that black wing that rises,  
it rises and glides,

petticoat

the crying mother is disheveled,  
the wife is disheveled,  
the slave  
far away.

**POLYNICES** *I march, I move forward, I take up and I dance.*

**ETEOCLES** Queen of yesterday.

**POLYNICES** I aim, I target, I load and I throw.  
I march, I move forward, I take up and I dance.

*(whispering, ad lib., while Eteocles speaks)*

*I aim, I target, I load and I throw.  
I march, I move forward, I take up and I dance.  
I aim, I target, I load and I throw.*

**ETEOCLES** A sea of white foam swells;  
rumbles



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unstoppable roar.

Dust

gets up.

Smoke.

Land.

Land beaten by heavy footsteps  
of men on the march.

– one-two one-one two one-two one-two –

Like water

that beats the rock,

fine dust

thick

of dense clouds.

Immense.

The advancing army

is a roar,

a wave of land,

a noise that penetrates the eyes.

Nitrites nitrates,

freshly shod hooves.

Clangour clangour clangour,

screeching

of iron

of cuts

of sharp threats

of trumpet blasts

that call strongly.

Far away

close

the war



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impends,  
the death  
impends.

**POLYNICES** (*whispering, while Eteocles speaks*)

*I march, I move forward, I take up and I dance.  
I aim, I target, I load and I throw.*

*I march, I move forward, I take up and I dance.  
I aim, I target, I load and I throw.*

**ETEOCLES** Cadmus' city.  
Cadmus' citizen,  
Who governs you says appropriate words,  
suitable for the moment that consumes quickly.  
And women in prayer  
and faraway women  
and women  
future slaves.  
Women praying for their ship,  
city that falters...

Ἐν τῇ θαλάσῃ,  
τό τάραγμα,  
ὁ παραγμός,  
ἡ τάραξις  
ταράσσει τὴν ναῦν,  
ταράσσει τὴν χθόνα,  
ταράσσει πάντα.

Θρέονται φοβερὰ μεγάλα τ' ἄχη.

[On the sea  
the disarray,  
the confusion  
the upheaval  
capsizes the ship,  
it overturns the earth





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it troubles everything.

(The women) scream in fear because of profound anguish.]

**POLYNICES** I march, I move forward, I take up and I dance.  
I aim, I target, I load and I throw.

**ETEOCLES** Τάσσω, διατάσσω, παρατάσσω.  
[I order, I line up, I arrange.]

And in line  
the arranged ranks  
are champing at the bit,  
orderly.  
They wait for the signal.

**POLYNICES** Argos' citizens,  
stay ready for the draw.  
Flour, wine, honey,  
a lace, a coin, a remembrance  
give to Adrastus' chariot  
for the parents, for the home that awaits.

**ETEOCLES** Cadmus' citizens,  
flour, wine, honey,  
a kiss, a caress, a greeting  
to the women who cry,  
to the women who scream,  
to the women who tremble  
for the husband not yet dead,  
for the son not yet wounded,  
for the city not yet defeated.  
Here is the seer,  
bird herder,  
without the light of the eyes,



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here he peers with the ears and the mind.

Here you are,  
winged responses,  
clear  
omens

like letters engraved on stone:

*tonight*

**POLYNICES** Let's slaughter this bull...

**ETEOCLES** *On the assault!*

**POLYNICES** ...on this black shield of chaos...

**ETEOCLES** *brothers against brothers.*

**POLYNICES** ...dipping the hands in the black blood.

**ETEOCLES** *Tonight.*

**POLYNICES** For Ares, who feeds on blood!  
For Enyò, who calls for massacre without mercy!  
For Phòbos, who sows uncontrolled terror!

**ETEOCLES** *Against us.*

**POLYNICES** Let's vow to destroy this city...

**ETEOCLES** *Now!*

**POLYNICES** Let's vow to raze everything to the ground...

**ETEOCLES** Rush to the battlements, the walls, the towers, the  
gates.

**POLYNICES** Let's vow to plunder all the goods...



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**ETEOCLES** Take up your weapons, cram into the parapets, lurk  
in the corridors, plant yourself at the access points.

**POLYNICES** Or, while we'll dying,  
let's vow to soak this land  
of our own blood.

**ETEOCLES** Defend the Mother, the Earth that gave birth to us all.

**POLYNICES** Victory or death!



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## FIRST HOUR

**ETEOCLES** Shhh!

Silence is what is needed.

Uninterrupted silence.

The eyelids

open wide,

enemies of sleep,

they remain fixed to open their gaze.

Nobody around here.

Nobody.

Φυλάσσω.

[I keep watch]

I keep watch.

Shhh!

I hear the rustling of leaves...

a thin whisper of wind?

The loose land is buzzing, it seems to me.

It's a quiet stomping...

The gait seems familiar to me, determined and light.

Is there anyone?

**POLYNICES** Brother...

**ETEOCLES** Brother... I seemed to hear your step, brother.

**POLYNICES** It seemed to me that I saw you, but it was only a



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shadow.

**ETEOCLES** I'm here.

**POLYNICES** You are here, motionless.

**ETEOCLES** And you, where are you? You are here?

**POLYNICES** I'm here. I'm here under the cover of night.  
You're alone?

**ETEOCLES** Yes, I am alone.

**POLYNICES** Don't lie to me.

**ETEOCLES** I don't.

**POLYNICES** Will you call the guards?

**ETEOCLES** No, I will not.  
And you? Are you alone too?

**POLYNICES** Yes, I'm alone.

**ETEOCLES** You are armed...

**POLYNICES** You are too.

**ETEOCLES** You have come to kill me.

**POLYNICES** No. And you, will you kill me?

**ETEOCLES** I couldn't...

**POLYNICES** You couldn't.  
I could not.



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## SECOND HOUR

**ETEOCLES** Have you branches of suppliant?

**POLYNICES** I don't need it.

**ETEOCLES** You should have them.

**POLYNICES** I don't need it.

**ETEOCLES** Does anyone know you're here?

**POLYNICES** The shadows of our past.

**ETEOCLES** It's risky. They might scream for the assault.

**POLYNICES** They already say 'traitor'.

**ETEOCLES** Do not listen to them.

**POLYNICES** You said it first.

**ETEOCLES** Not me. I don't...

**POLYNICES** Brother...

**ETEOCLES** Brother...

**POLYNICES** Son of my own father...

**ETEOCLES** Son of your own brother...

**POLYNICES** Son of my own mother...

**ETEOCLES** Son of your own grandmother...

**POLYNICES** Brother of your sisters...

**ETEOCLES** Fratello delle tue sorelle...

**POLYNICES** Enemy?



# SEVEN

by AURETTA STERRANTINO

**ETEOCLES** Brother.

**POLYNICES** Brother...

**ETEOCLES** Son of your own father.

**POLYNICES** Son of my own brother.

**ETEOCLES** Son of your own mother.

**POLYNICES** Son of my own grandmother.

**ETEOCLES** Brother of my sisters.

**POLYNICES** Brother of your sisters.

**ETEOCLES** Enemy.

**POLYNICES** I come in peace.

**ETEOCLES** You, destroyer of cities?

**POLYNICES** I, son of this Earth.

# SEVEN

by AURETTA STERRANTINO

## THIRD HOUR

**ETEOCLES** Where do you come from?

**POLYNICES** From the darkness of a deep recess.

**ETEOCLES** Why were you there?

**POLYNICES** I have been forgotten.

**ETEOCLES** Not by me.

**POLYNICES** By you.

**ETEOCLES** And where will you go?

**POLYNICES** I came here. For you.

**ETEOCLES** For me?

**POLYNICES** For you.

**ETEOCLES** No, not for me.

**POLYNICES** For you, brother.  
I worry about you.

**ETEOCLES** You shouldn't.  
Instead, worry about your latest actions.

**POLYNICES** Your latest actions.

**ETEOCLES** You distort the reality.

**POLYNICES** And what is the reality?

**ETEOCLES** Two of us, here. Now.

**POLYNICES** That's what I'm here for.

**ETEOCLES** For what?





# SEVEN

by AURETTA STERRANTINO

**POLYNICES** To talk to you.

**ETEOCLES** Talking isn't much use anymore. At this point.

**POLYNICES** You're wrong. You're still in time.

**ETEOCLES** In time for what?

**POLYNICES** For Dike, Lady Justice.

**ETEOCLES** I act in her name.

**POLYNICES** Stop you, brother. It's still possible.

**ETEOCLES** It's late. You know it too.

**POLYNICES** I know I'm here, in front of you.



# SEVEN

by AURETTA STERRANTINO

## FOURTH HOURS

**ETEOCLES** I'm worry for you, brother.

**POLYNICES** Look elsewhere.  
Inside you.

**ETEOCLES** I cannot understand you.

**POLYNICES** Are we safe?

**ETEOCLES** We are, you are.

**POLYNICES** I feel like a stranglehold swallowing up my bowels.  
It's not fear.

**ETEOCLES** Fear is the enemy.

**POLYNICES** The enemy is at the gates.

**ETEOCLES** Shall I take up arms?

**POLYNICES** Run. Run fast.  
I run and the moon chases me.  
And her mouth painted  
blows snares,  
she whispers a rain of spearheads.  
I don't find shelter.

**ETEOCLES** Here, here you are safe.

**POLYNICES** Not for much longer.

**ETEOCLES** You are in my arms.  
In your brother's arms.

**POLYNICES** They are the ones that will give me death.

**ETEOCLES** Never!



# SEVEN

by AURETTA STERRANTINO

- POLYNICES** They will have to.  
Or mine will give it to you.
- ETEOCLES** It must not happen.
- POLYNICES** It's already happened.
- ETEOCLES** You are wrong.
- POLYNICES** We are at the seventh gate.
- ETEOCLES** In peace. You have come in peace – you said.  
Do you ask for a truce?
- POLYNICES** I'm not here for that.
- ETEOCLES** Then why are you here?
- POLYNICES** I wanted to talk to you.  
I wanted to tread this earth  
before attacking her,  
armed.  
I wanted to greet our sisters.  
I wanted to understand, to know...
- ETEOCLES** You already know everything.
- POLYNICES** I know we will die today.
- ETEOCLES** None of us will die.
- POLYNICES** We are at war, brother.  
Don't forget it.
- ETEOCLES** You talk too much to be a suppliant.
- POLYNICES** I have no branches.  
Do not forget it.
- ETEOCLES** Be silent, stranger...
- POLYNICES** I am an exile, by your command.

# SEVEN

by AURETTA STERRANTINO

An exile.  
This is my condemnation.

**ETEOCLES** We could...

**POLYNICES** What?

**ETEOCLES** Listen...

**POLYNICES** If it's no longer time to talk, it's no longer time to listen.

**ETEOCLES** What do you want then?

**POLYNICES** You could have called the guards...  
Why didn't you do it?

**ETEOCLES** Because you are my brother.  
We ran together as kids.

**POLYNICES** Clearly it's not enough.

**ETEOCLES** I can't understand you...

**POLYNICES** March, move forward, take up and dance.  
Aim, target, load and throw.

**ETEOCLES** I throw down my weapons.

**POLYNICES** I march, I move forward, I take up and I dance.  
I aim, I target, I load and I throw.

**ETEOCLES** (*with immediate defense movement*)  
Are they threats?

**POLYNICES** Facts...

**ETEOCLES** What facts?

**POLYNICES** Seven for seven gates against Seven for seven gates.

# SEVEN

by AURETTA STERRANTINO

## QUINTA ORA

**ETEOCLES** – Proetid Gate –

**POLYNICES** The first  
at the first gate.

**ETEOCLES** The first.

**POLYNICES** Against the first at the first gate.

**ETEOCLES** – Electran Gate –

**POLYNICES** The second.

**ETEOCLES** The second, the second.

**POLYNICES** At the second gate,  
against the second.

**ETEOCLES** The second, the second.

**POLYNICES** At the second gate.

**ETEOCLES** – Neistan Gate –

**POLYNICES** The third  
at third gate.

**ETEOCLES** Third gate.  
Third gate.  
Third gate.

**POLYNICES** Against the third at the third gate.

**ETEOCLES** Third gate.  
Third gate.  
Third gate.

**ETEOCLES** – Athena Onca Gate –



# SEVEN

by AURETTA STERRANTINO

- POLYNICES** The fourth at the fourth gate.
- ETEOCLES** At the fourth gate,  
the fourth.
- POLYNICES** Against the fourth at the fourth gate.
- ETEOCLES** At the fourth gate,  
the fourth.
- ETEOCLES** – North Gate –
- POLYNICES** The fifth  
at the fifth gate.
- ETEOCLES** Gate.  
Fifth gate.
- POLYNICES** Against the fifth at the fifth gate.
- ETEOCLES** Gate.  
Fifth gate.  
– Homoloid Gate –
- POLYNICES** The sixth  
at the sixth gate  
against the sixth at the sixth gate.
- ETEOCLES** (*whispering, while Polynices speaks*)  
*Sixth gate. Sixth gate. Sixth gate.*  
*Sixth gate. Sixth gate. Sixth gate.*
- POLYNICES** – Seventh gate –
- ETEOCLES** The seventh  
at the seventh gate.
- POLYNICES** Against the seventh at the seventh gate.
- ETEOCLES** Me. You.

# SEVEN

by AURETTA STERRANTINO

**POLYNICES** King against king.

**ETEOCLES** Brother against brother.

**POLYNICES** Enemy against enemy.  
One in front of the other.

**ETEOCLES** Not today.

**POLYNICES** There's little time left.

**ETEOCLES** I don't want...

**POLYNICES** You have more than one choice.  
Give me what I'm asking for.  
Or change gate.

**ETEOCLES** I cannot skirt.  
I have to protect this land.

**POLYNICES** Even if it means killing your brother, shedding your own  
same blood?

**ETEOCLES** I have to but I don't want.

**POLYNICES** You have to?

**ETEOCLES** I have to.  
But I do not want.

**POLYNICES** I have to, too.

**ETEOCLES** You have to?

**POLYNICES** I have to.  
But I don't want.

**ETEOCLES** Don't you want?

**POLYNICES** Blood summons blood.  
Violence summons violence.  
There is no salvation in war.



# SEVEN

by AURETTA STERRANTINO

- ETEOCLES** You talk wisely.  
But you came arms,  
with an army of skilled men,  
up to the Walls  
of our home.
- POLYNICES** Our house you said?
- ETEOCLES** Yes, our home.  
We were born here.  
Our father was born here.  
And our father's father.  
And so on until the founder of this lineage.  
Perhaps there is nothing more ours than this Land.
- POLYNICES** Your words and your actions don't agree.  
They move in different directions.  
You talk and act like a madman!
- ETEOCLES** I talk and act as it is appropriate.
- POLYNICES** Then  
– while you act –  
you should remember what you say...  
'our' means 'mine and yours'.  
Of both.  
I came in arms because you don't want to give up your  
turn.
- ETEOCLES** It's not a game, we don't roll dice.
- POLYNICES** I know it well.  
I'm not playing.  
It is you who must accept reality.
- ETEOCLES** And what would the reality be?
- POLYNICES** The seventh gate: win or die.  
And – while you win or die – others will win  
or they will die with you.



# SEVEN

by AURETTA STERRANTINO

**ETEOCLES** Win or die?

**POLYNICES** Yes.

And it is likely that if one of us will win  
the other will die.

**ETEOCLES** I don't want you to die.

**POLYNICES** I don't want it either.

**ETEOCLES** And I wouldn't want to die.

**POLYNICES** I wouldn't want it either.

**ETEOCLES** We could find an agreement...

**POLYNICES** We had an agreement and you didn't keep it.  
That's why I'm here.

**ETEOCLES** To bring death to your own Land.

**POLYNICES** In mine, in yours.  
In the Land you call ours but don't want to share.

**ETEOCLES** You have chosen the path of exile.

**POLYNICES** Not to become an exile. A landless person.  
dethroned, offended, humiliated.  
Then forgotten, deleted. Ignored.  
Now feared.  
Detested. Not well accepted.  
I chose to walk away  
– for the first year –  
for it to be yours.  
To give you time,  
as we had decided.  
So that you was alone and steady in command.

**ETEOCLES** And I am.

**POLYNICES** Yes, you are. But now it's my time.



# SEVEN

by AURETTA STERRANTINO

- ETEOCLES** Come back, the doors are open.  
Come back and bring your woman with you.  
But renounce command.  
Renounce to the war.
- POLYNICES** Mine is not a whim.
- ETEOCLES** It's desire for power.
- POLYNICES** It's you who doesn't want to surrender the rudder.
- ETEOCLES** You are the one willing to do anything.  
Your army is deployed out there.
- POLYNICES** Just one word from you.  
Remember: the promises that bind us are sacred.
- ETEOCLES** I don't understand what you want.
- POLYNICES** You know it well instead.
- ETEOCLES** You are double  
and sharp.  
Like a blade.
- POLYNICES** I'm true.  
I'm not hiding.
- ETEOCLES** Me neither.
- POLYNICES** You hide in the role you play.  
And you aren't capable and don't want to be anything  
else.
- ETEOCLES** And what should I be?
- POLYNICES** A good citizen.
- ETEOCLES** I am! I steer the ship!
- POLYNICES** It's time to surrender  
the rudder

# SEVEN

by AURETTA STERRANTINO

to the one who has the right to it.  
If this Land is ours  
– yours and mine –  
the rudder is ours, yours and mine.

**ETEOCLES** The power must not be shared.  
It depends on one. Only one.  
Otherwise it's chaos.

**POLYNICES** You don't protect this Land.  
You don't protect its inhabitants.  
You just protect your position.

**ETEOCLES** My position is a guarantee for this Land and its people  
inhabitants.

**POLYNICES** But can't you hear the women crying?

**ETEOCLES** I hear them...  
I hear them.  
They aren't capable to do anything else...  
They weaken us.

**POLYNICES** No, they remind us that there is something more.

**ETEOCLES** And what?  
The cries, the moans,  
weakness,  
paralysis...?  
The children, the parents,  
the brothers  
those we have lost?  
The deads  
we have  
buried?

**POLYNICES** Tears.  
Like lakes  
in which to be mirror.



# SEVEN

by AURETTA STERRANTINO

Depth  
to dig,  
to penetrate.  
Tears  
to immerse yourself in  
to see something bigger  
of me. Of you.  
Of what I want.  
Of what you want.  
Something bigger  
of what we  
we think it's right.

**ETEOCLES** The gods are at my side.

**POLYNICES** I wasn't talking about that.

**ETEOCLES** What were you talking about, then?

**POLYNICES** ...

At dawn we will launch the attack.

**ETEOCLES** At dawn we will be ready to strike back.

**POLYNICES** Change gate, at least this...

**ETEOCLES** I cannot. It would be a cowardly act...

**POLYNICES** I don't want to kill you.

**ETEOCLES** You will have to do it if you don't want me to kill you.

**POLYNICES** Our father's curse is fulfilled...

**ETEOCLES** The Tyche has placed me at the seventh gate.

**POLYNICES** You have chosen.  
You are choosing.

**ETEOCLES** And in doing so I fulfill my destiny.



# SEVEN

by AURETTA STERRANTINO

**POLYNICES** You condemn this Land.

**ETEOCLES** You have already done it.

**POLYNICES** I already did it.  
You've already done it.

*(Silence)*



# SEVEN

by AURETTA STERRANTINO

## SIXTH HOURS

**POLYNICES** Can you hear the lark?

**ETEOCLES** I hear it.

**POLYNICES** It seems to me that a ray  
light up the sky  
to the East...  
The twinkle of the stars begins to fade .  
Do you see it too?

**ETEOCLES** I see it.  
I see it too.

**POLYNICES** It's dawn...

**ETEOCLES** It's dawn, brother.

**POLYNICES** We are enemies.  
Now.

**ETEOCLES** Enemies...

**POLYNICES** Enemies...

**POLYNICES** March, move forward, take up and dance.  
Aim, target, load and throw.

**ETEOCLES** March, move forward, take up and dance.  
Aim, target, load and throw.

**ETEOCLES E** March, move forward, take up and dance.

**POLYNICES** Aim, target, load and throw.



# SEVEN

by AURETTA STERRANTINO

## SEVENTH HOUR

**ETEOCLES** This land...

**POLYNICES** – autumn rhododendron leaf –

**ETEOCLES** This land...

**POLYNICES** – that defies the gravity  
in the suspension of a slow fall  
that misleads, deceives –

**ETEOCLES** This land...

**POLYNICES** – with the veil of cyan –

**ETEOCLES** This land...

**POLYNICES** – dust, ash and earth –

**ETEOCLES** may it accept us...

**POLYNICES** – Eteocles e Polynices –

**ETEOCLES** ...brothers.

**POLYNICES** – Oedipus' sons –

**ETEOCLES** The seventh gate could tell about our worth.

**POLYNICES** Or the waters of the Dirce spring.

**ETEOCLES** Or the currents of the Ismenus.

**POLYNICES** Or the course of the Asopus  
which reaches sacred Eleusis.

**ETEOCLES** Now.  
In the dense weave  
that separates lights and shadows...



# SEVEN

by AURETTA STERRANTINO

**POLYNICES** – stretched out the limbs –

**ETEOCLES** We're seeking a shelter.

**POLYNICES** Struggling.

**ETEOCLES** One against the other.  
Struggling.

**POLYNICES** For this Land.

**ETEOCLES** Bringing death and mourning and pain to this Land...

**POLYNICES** And dust and ash  
and falls of nothing.

**ETEOCLES E** We

**POLYNICES** together  
enemies  
and brothers.

**ETEOCLES** March.

**POLYNICES** Move forward.

**ETEOCLES** Take up.

**POLYNICES** Dance.

**ETEOCLES** Aim.

**POLYNICES** Target.

**ETEOCLES** Load.

**POLYNICES** Throw.

**ETEOCLES** Lift up your arm, don't expose your side...

**POLYNICES** Straighten your leg, don't give way...

**ETEOCLES** Protect your neck...





# SEVEN

by AURETTA STERRANTINO

**POLYNICES** Hold your blood...

**ETEOCLES** Hold yourself up again.  
Hold me up again...

**POLYNICES** I hug you...

**ETEOCLES** Hug that strangles

**POLYNICES** It clanches and then strangles...

**ETEOCLES** It clanches me and strangles you.

**POLYNICES** It clanches me and strangles you.

**ETEOCLES E** March, move forward, take up and dance.

**POLYNICES** Aim, target, load and throw.

