

Name: _____
Class: _____
Date: _____

Poem #1: *the light of a traitor*

CHORUS:

Oh Light of the Sun,
Oh most glorious light that ever shone
Upon Thebes of the Seven Gates,
Across Dirce's streams,
Oh eye of the golden sun,
Oh then did you shine
Upon the Man from Argos
With his Gleaming Armor.
Polyneices!
Running in unbridled fear now
In the harsh blaze of your dawn.

Polyneices!

He had come in bitter quarrel with his brother.
Screaming shrill, like an eagle he flew above our land.
Covered with a wing white as snow
He came, weapons and feathered crests bristling
In the sun.

Polyneices!

He stood above our city's homes, hovered there,
Spears thirsty for blood,
A black circle of death.
And then, before the flames of war could burn our tower's crown,
Before he could slake his jaws' thirst with our blood,
He was turned back
The war god screamed at his back.
Thebes rose like a dragon behind him.
Zeus hates the boasts of a proud tongue.
And seeing the enemy rolling on like a mighty stream
In arrogant clash of gold
He struck the man who rushed to our towers' height
Struck him down with a bolt of fire
Before his mouth could scream the cry of victory.

Polyneices!
Traitor!

To the echoing ground he fell, twisting hard,
Fire yet in his hand.
This man, who in mad attack had raged against us in
his hate.
And the War God, flailing blood,
Marked now one, now another for black death.

Seven Captains stood at the Seven Gates,
Seven against Seven.
They lowered their weapons, yielded to the might
Of Zeus who turns the battle.

All but those brothers in blood,
Two bred of one father one mother,
They alone hurled their spears
And found a common share of death.

Polyneices!
Eteocles!

Now
Victory whose name is Fame
Dances in the joy of Thebes,
City of warriors.

But

Let us forget these rough wars.
Let us worship at the shrines of the gods.
Let us dance through the dark night
And Bacchus will lead us,
God of Thunder, Lord of Thebes.

Ah now comes Creon, son of Menoecus,
King of Thebes, our new king, appointed by this new twist of Fate.
What plan beats in his mind?
Why has he called the Council of Elders?
Why has he summoned us all?

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COURT THEATRE

TONY AWARD WINNING

Poem #2: *men's work*

CHORUS:

What a remarkable piece of work is man.
In the tossed waves of winter
He dares the bucking back of the sea
When the swells swirl heavy.

Year in year out he pummels the earth,
Earth, undying, greatest of the goddesses,
Pliant mother,
As the plows turn her soil
And the mules plod on her tireless breast.

The birds of the air he nets and brings to earth,
And the wild beasts of the hills.
With nets he traps the tribe of fish from the deep,
Nets fingered with skill.
He is lord over the savage mountain lion,
Masters the long-haired horse and the bull
That has never known the pain of the yoke.

He knows the language of the tongue.
He knows thought that has wings.
He knows the passions that create cities.

And he has found refuge from the arrows
Of rain and hail.
He can do everything. And yet he can do nothing,
Nothing in the face of the death that must come.

He has cured disease.
But he cannot cure death.
His mind is rich in thought.
His mind feeds on hope.
But Good comes and Bad comes.

Human laws are frail.
Divine laws live in truth.
Keep the laws of the gods and cities stand high.
Cities fall when arrogant excess keeps court.

COURT THEATRE
TONY
AWARD
WINNING

Never will the transgressor
Break bread at my table.

(The Watchman enters with Antigone)

My mind splits in pain.
This is Antigone.
Anguished daughter
Of an anguished father.

Oh god, what can this mean?

It cannot be that you have broken the king's law!
You are caught in shame, in shame!

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COURT THEATRE

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Poem #3: *time out of mind*

CHORUS:

Happy is the man whose life has never tasted pain.
For when a house is shaken by the gods
No generation escapes.
The curse lives, ever surging onward,
Like the wave that swells
When the north winds whip the sea
And the black depths spew their sand
And the storm winds rumble off the distant cliffs.
Time out of mind I have seen the sorrows
Of this house, seen them loom and come
Crashing down upon the children.
Grief upon grief.
No generation can escape. A god always strikes.
And now the last light is dimmed.
The last root of the tree of Oedipus
Is cut by the bloody knife.
The god of death wills it,
Madness and Fury have made it so.

Zeus, no man can surpass the majesty of your power.
It is forever young.
Sleep cannot bedim its glory
Nor the endless moving of the months of time.
Yours is the kingdom of Olympus's
Shining heights,
Yours the power and the glory
Time past, now, and forever.
But in the life of man
No pride can escape the anger of the gods
Their breathless wanderings bring some men profit,
Some men mere emptiness.

Ambition stalks the ignorant
Until knowledge comes through fire.
This saying holds the wisdom of truth:
"The man who believes the bad to be good
Lives in the grip of the curse of god."
His pleasure is brief, his doom eternal.

My Lord, here is your only son, Haimon.
Does he come in grief for Antigone,
In anger for the loss of his bride?

(Enter Haimon)

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COURT THEATRE

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Poem #4: *smiles as she kills*

CHORUS:

Love! Invincible god!
You take whatever we possess.
You sleep in the soft bed
Of a young girl's cheeks.
You can cross all oceans,
Move at ease through the wild.
Not the immortal gods,
Not Man who lives but a day
Can escape your embrace.
He who possesses you goes mad.

Even the just man loses his mind.
You twist him into injustice.

You made this quarrel
Of a father and a son,
Provoking shared blood.

Desire shines in the eyes
Of a beautiful bride,
Shines, conquers, and the ordered world
Dissolves.
For Aphrodite
Smiles as she kills.

(Antigone enters in chains or under guard)

Ah, now my world dissolves. I see Antigone
Going to that chamber where all men sleep.
I cannot hold back my tears.

But in honor and bright fame
You walk into the darkness.
Untouched by wasting sickness,
Not slain by savage swords,
Head high and alone among mortals
You walk in life down to the house
Of Death.

COURT THEATRE
TONY
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She was a god and born of gods.
We are mortal and born to die.
But in death, like her, you will find fame
For your life and for your death.
You have gone like a god to your fate.

You risked all, my child.
You climbed to the summit of high Justice.
And you fell, perhaps paying for your father's pain.

You honored the dead.
We honor you. But power cannot be thwarted.
You chose. You die.

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COURT THEATRE

TONY AWARD WINNING

Poem #5: *fate moves on*

CHORUS:

My child, my child.
Danae suffered like you,
Locked in a prison of bronze,
Both bedchamber and tomb,
Where the sun could not brush her face.
She was a princess too.
In her, Zeus sowed his seed
In a shower of gold.

Fate moves on relentless.
Man cannot hide.
Not Wealth nor War
Nor castle Walls
Can escape its power.

The son of Dryas, quick to anger,
Raged against the god,
Scorned his power.
Dionysus locked him deep
Within a tomb of rock.

And when his madness slowly dripped away,
He knew that he had mocked the majesty
Which now had buried him.

For he had tried to stop the ecstasy
And the fire divine,
Stop the haunting music of the hills.

There is a place where black rocks divide the sea.
Salmidessus.
There the savage god of war
Watched the blood wounds dealt to infant eyes,
Watched the mistress blind her lover's sons,
Plunging the bloody shuttle, gouging deep
Those eyes that never would look on vengeance

They wept tears of blood,

Wept for the fate that gave them birth,
Wept for their mother, woeful queen.
She was a princess too.
Her father, the North Wind, had raised her
In his far-off cave, cradled by storms,
Never to run free in the sun's warm light.
She shares her endless fate with you,
My child, my child.

(enter Teiresias led by a boy)

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COURT THEATRE

TONY AWARD WINNING

Poem #6: *the grieving sea*

CHORUS:

Dionysus! God of our city! God of many names!
Oh help us now!
Semele's golden child!
Born of thunder,
Spinner of Mysteries' Dreams!
Bacchus! You wash your body in our sacred waters.
Women wild with your will within them
Whirl in the night of the seed of dragons!

Help us now!
God of many names!

The nymphs laugh on the hills.
And in the glow of burning torches
You come to us,
You come from the mountains where your ivy clings
And the waters of Kastalia wash you clean.

We cry your name aloud! Evoi Evoi.
You are our god, our Lord of Thebes,
This is your city,
Thebes where your mother birthed and died.

We are sick, diseased.
Heal us now, heal us now.
Come to us across the grieving sea.
You make the stars dance in the black sky of night.
You hear the echo of eternal silence.
Son of Zeus, bring the whirlwind of your ecstasy
And help us now.