**Parados** – The royal palace in Thebes

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|  | Enter the **CHORUS** of Theban elders |
|  | **CHORUS** |
|  | O ray of sunlight, |
|  | most beautiful that ever shone |
|  | on Thebes, city of the seven gates, |
| 130 | you’ve appeared at last, |
|  | you glowing eye of golden day, |
|  | moving above the streams of Dirce, |
|  | driving into headlong flight |
|  | the white-shield warrior from Argos, |
| 135 | who marched here fully armed, |
|  | now forced back by your sharper power. |
|  | **CHORUS LEADER** |
|  | Against our land he marched, |
|  | sent here by the warring claims |
|  | of Polyneices, with piercing screams, |
| 140 | an eagle flying above our land, |
|  | covered wings as white as snow, |
|  | and hordes of warriors in arms, |
|  | helmets topped with horsehair crests. |
|  | **CHORUS** |
|  | Standing above our homes, |
| 145 | he ranged around our seven gates, |
|  | with threats to swallow us |
|  | and spears thirsting to kill. |
|  | Before his jaws had had their fill |
|  | and gorged themselves on Theban blood, |
| 150 | before Hephaistos’ pine-torch flames |
|  | had seized our towers, our fortress crown, |
|  | he went back, driven in retreat. |
|  | Behind him rings the din of war— |
|  | his enemy, the Theban dragon-snake, |
| 155 | too difficult for him to overcome. |
|  | **CHORUS LEADER** |
|  | Zeus hates an arrogant boasting tongue. |
|  | Seeing them march here in a mighty stream, |
|  | in all their clanging golden pride, |
|  | he hurled his fire and struck the man, |
| 160 | up there, on our battlements, as he began |
|  | to scream aloud his victory. |

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| **CHORUS** |
|  | The man swing down, torch still in hand, |
|  | and smashed into unyielding earth— |
|  | the one who not so long ago attacked, |
| 165 | who launched his furious, enraged assault, |
|  | to blast us, breathing raging storms. |
|  | But things turned out not as he’d hoped. |
|  | Great war god Ares assisted us— |
|  | he smashed them down and doomed them all |
| 170 | to a very different fate. |
|  | **CHORUS LEADER** |
|  | Seven captains at seven gates |
|  | matched against seven equal warriors |
|  | paid Zeus their full bronze tribute, |
|  | the god who turns the battle tide, |
| 175 | all but that pair of wretched men, |
|  | born of one father and one mother, too— |
|  | who set their conquering spears against each other |
|  | and then both shared a common death. |
|  | **CHORUS** |
|  | Now victory with her glorious name |
| 180 | has come, bringing joy to well-armed Thebes. |
|  | The battle’s done—let’s strive now to forget |
|  | with songs and dancing all night long, |
|  | with Bacchus leading us to make Thebes shake. |