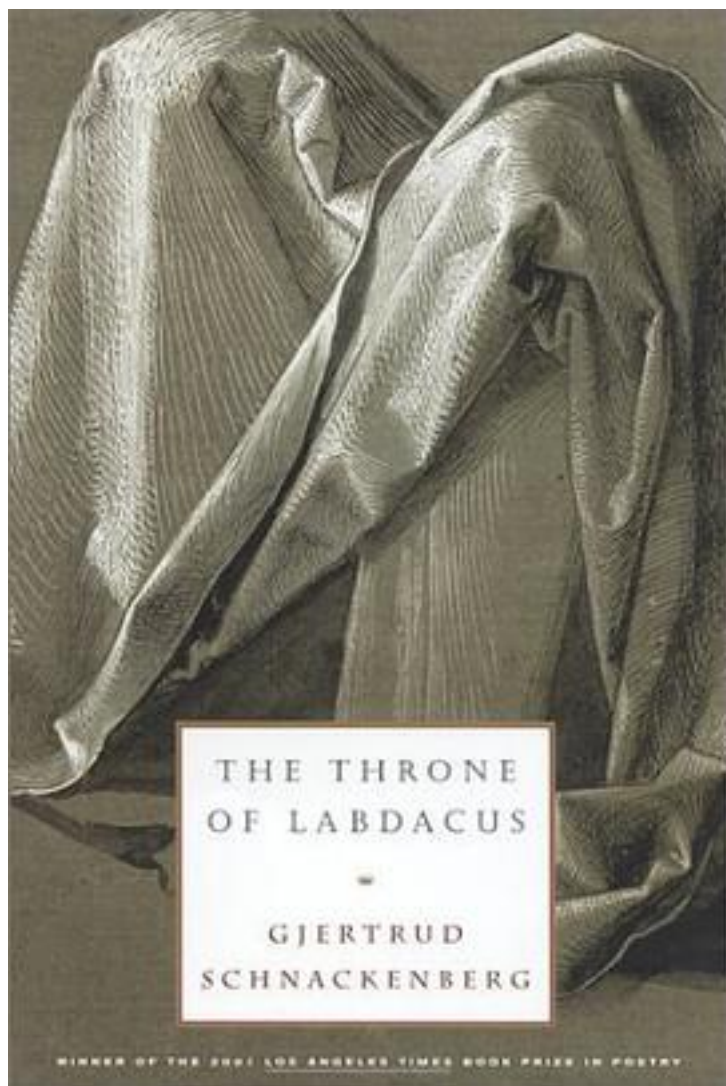


The Throne of Labdacus



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Winner of the 2001 "Los Angeles Times" Book Prize in Poetry.

A "New York Times Book Review" Notable Book of 2000.

The first warning passing through Thebes--

As small a sound

As a housefly alighting from Persia

And stamping its foot on a mound

Where the palace once was;

As small a moth chewing thread

In the tyrant's robe;

As small as the cresting of red

In the rim of an injured eye; as small

As the sound of a human conceived

A compelling, lyric telling of the story of Oedipus, and of "what happens outside the play," in the experience of the god who is its presiding oracle: Apollo, the god of poetry, music, and healing. Given the task of setting the Sophocles text to music, the god is woven reluctantly into its world of riddles, unanswered questions, partially disclosed objects, and ambiguous second-hand reports--a world where the gods, as much as humans, are subject to the binding claims of fate and necessity.

Gjertrud Schnackenberg draws upon ancient fragments and allusions to Oedipus and upon folk-tales about the origin of the Greek alphabet to present a vision of the tragedy's essential unknowableness, where the destinies of gods and humans secretly mingle in the unfolding of time, and where Zeus's laws, which suffuse the great tragedy's world, are as invisible and as inviolable as physical laws.

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