

*Britannicus* by Jean Racine

NERO:

Awakened by some curious desire,  
I rose that night... and saw her.  
Sad, raising to heaven her eyes, wet with tears,  
Shining through the torches and weapons,  
Unadorned, in the simple beauty  
Of one who has been pulled from sleep.  
What do I want? I do not know.  
Shadows, torches, shouting and silence  
The fierceness of her proud kidnappers...  
And her sweetness.  
I wanted to speak, but my voice was lost.  
Then, in solitary, her image.  
In vain I tried to distract myself.  
But, before my eyes, her. I imagined talking to her,  
I loved her tears until I was sinking.  
Sometimes, but too late, I asked forgiveness;  
I used sighs, and even threats.  
Busy with my new love  
My eyes waited for the day I would  
Behold again her perhaps too beautiful image.  
Now here you are, Narcissus.  
What do you say?