Hamlet

To be, or not to be, that is the question,
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them. To die, to sleep--
No more--and by a sleep to say we end
The heartache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to; 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wished. To die, to sleep;
To sleep, perchance to dream. Ay, there's the rub,
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil
Must give us pause. There's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life.
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
Th'oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of disprized love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of th'unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscovered country from whose bourn
No traveler returns, puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of.
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pith and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry
And lose the name of action. Soft you now,
The fair Ophelia!--Nymph, in thy orisons
Be all my sins remembered.
Ophelia
    Good my lord,
    How does your honor for this many a day?

Hamlet
    I humbly thank you, well, well, well.

Ophelia
    My lord, I have remembrances of yours
    That I have longèd long to redeliver.
    I pray you now receive them.

Hamlet
    No, not I. I never gave you aught.

Ophelia
    My honored lord, you know right well you did,
    And with them words of so sweet breath composed
    As made these things more rich. Their perfume lost,
    Take these again, for to the noble mind
    Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind,
    There, my lord.

[She offers Hamlet the remembrances.]

Hamlet
    Ha, ha! Are you honest?

Ophelia
    My lord?

Hamlet
    Are you fair?

Ophelia
    What means your lordship?

Hamlet
    That if you be honest and fair, your honesty should admit no discourse to your beauty.

Ophelia
    Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce than with honesty?

Hamlet
    Ay, truly, for the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd than the
    force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness. This was sometime a paradox, but now the
    time gives it proof. I did love you once.

Ophelia
    Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.
Hamlet
You should not have believed me, for virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it. I loved you not.

Ophelia
I was the more deceived.

Hamlet
Get thee to a nunnery. Why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest, but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me: I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more offenses at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do crawling between earth and heaven? We are arrant knaves all; believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery. Where's your father?

Ophelia
At home, my lord.

Hamlet
Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play the fool nowhere but in's own house. Farewell.

Ophelia
Oh, help him, you sweet heavens!

Hamlet
If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry: be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery. Go, farewell. Or if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool, for wise men know well enough what monsters you make of them. To a nunnery go, and quickly too. Farewell.

Ophelia
Oh, heavenly powers restore him!

Hamlet
I have heard of your paintings too, well enough. God hath given you one face, and you make yourselves another. You jig, you amble, and you lisp, and nickname God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance. Go to, I'll no more on't; it hath made me mad. I say we will have no more marriages. Those that are married already, all but one, shall live; the rest shall keep as they are. To a nunnery, go.

Exit.

Ophelia
Oh, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword,
Th'expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion and the mold of form,
Th'observed of all observers, quite, quite down,
And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,
That sucked the honey of his music vows,
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason  
Like sweet bells jangled out of tune and harsh,  
That unmatched form and feature of blown youth  
Blasted with ecstasy. Oh, woe is me  
T'have seen what I have seen, see what I see.
Guildenstern
   The Queen your mother, in most great affliction of spirit, hath sent me to you.

Hamlet
   You are welcome.

Guildenstern
   Nay, good my lord, this courtesy is not of the right breed. If it shall please you to make me a wholesome answer, I will do your mother’s commandment. If not, your pardon and my return shall be the end of my business.

Hamlet
   Sir, I cannot.

Rosencrantz
   What, my lord?

Hamlet
   Make you a wholesome answer; my wit’s diseased. But, sir, such answer as I can make, you shall command, or rather, as you say, my mother. Therefore no more, but to the matter. My mother, you say.

Rosencrantz
   Then thus she says: your behavior hath struck her into amazement and admiration.

Hamlet
   Oh, wonderful son, that can so 'stonish a mother! But is there no sequel at the heels of this mother's admiration? Impart.

Rosencrantz
   She desires to speak with you in her closet ere you go to bed.

Hamlet
   We shall obey, were she ten times our mother. Have you any further trade with us?

Rosencrantz
   My lord, you once did love me.

Hamlet
   And do still, by these pickers and stealers.

Rosencrantz
   Good my lord, what is your cause of distemper? You do surely bar the door upon your own liberty if you deny your griefs to your friend.

Hamlet
   Sir, I lack advancement.

Rosencrantz
   How can that be, when you have the voice of the King himself for your succession in Denmark?

Enter the Players, with recorders
Hamlet
  Ay, sir, but "while the grass grows"--the proverb is something musty.--Oh, the recorders. Let me see one. [He takes a recorder.] To withdraw with you, why do you go about to recover the wind of me, as if you would drive me into a toil?

Guildenstern
  Oh, my lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly.

Hamlet
  I do not well understand that. Will you play upon this pipe?

Guildenstern
  My lord, I cannot.

Hamlet
  I pray you.

Guildenstern
  Believe me, I cannot.

Hamlet
  I do beseech you.

Guildenstern
  I know no touch of it, my lord.

Hamlet
  It is as easy as lying. Govern these ventages with your fingers and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops.

Guildenstern
  But these cannot I command to any utt'rance of harmony. I have not the skill.

Hamlet
  Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me! You would play upon me, you would seem to know my stops, you would pluck out the heart of my mystery, you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass, and there is much music, excellent voice in this little organ, yet cannot you make it speak. S'blood, do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you fret me, you cannot play upon me.
Clown
   Is she to be buried in Christian burial, when she willfully seeks her own salvation?

Other
   I tell thee she is; therefore make her grave straight. The crowner hath sat on her, and finds it Christian burial.

Clown
   How can that be, unless she drowned herself in her own defense?

Other
   Why, 'tis found so.

Clown
   It must be se offendendo, it cannot be else, for here lies the point: if I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act, and an act hath three branches: it is to act, to do, and to perform. Argal, she drowned herself wittingly.

Other
   Nay, but hear you, Goodman Delver.

Clown
   Give me leave. Here lies the water; good. Here stands the man; good. If the man go to this water and drown himself, it is, will he, nil he, he goes. Mark you that. But if the water come to him and drown him, he drowns not himself. Argal, he that is not guilty of his own death shortens not his own life.

Other
   But is this law?

Clown
   Ay, marry, is't, crowner's quest law.

Other
   Will you ha the truth on't? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out o'Christian burial.

Clown
   Why there thou say'st, and the more pity that great folk should have count'nance in this world to drown or hang themselves more than their even-Christen. Come, my spade. There is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers, and gravemakers. They hold up Adam's profession.

Other
   Was he a gentleman?

Clown
   'A was the first that ever bore arms.

Other
   Why, he had none.
Clown
What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the Scripture? The Scripture says Adam digged. Could he dig without arms? I'll put another question to thee. If thou answerest me not to the purpose, confess thyself--

Other
Go to.

Clown
What is he that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter?

Other
The gallows-maker, for that frame outlives a thousand tenants.

Clown
I like thy wit well, in good faith, the gallows does well. But how does it well? It does well to those that do ill. Now, thou dost ill to say the gallows is built stronger than the church. Argal, the gallows may do well to thee. To't again, come.

Other
"Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?"

Clown
Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.

Other
Marry, now I can tell.

Clown
To't.

Other
Mass, I cannot tell.

Clown
Cudgele thy brains no more about it, for your dull ass will not mend his pace with beating; and when you are asked this question next, say "a grave-maker." The houses he makes lasts till doomsday. Go get thee in, and fetch me a stoup of liquor.

Song.
In youth when I did love, did love,
Methought it was very sweet
To contract--oh--the time for--my behove,
Oh, methought there--a--was nothing--a--meet.
King

    What is the cause, Laertes,

    That thy rebellion looks so giant-like?--
    Let him go, Gertrude. Do not fear our person.
    There’s such divinity doth hedge a king
    That treason can but peep to what it would,
    Acts little of his will.--Tell me, Laertes,
    Why thou art thus incensed?--Let him go, Gertrude.--
    Speak, man.

Laertes

    Where is my father?

King

    Dead.

Laertes

    How came he dead? I'll not be juggled with.
    To hell, allegiance! Vows, to the blackest devil!
    Conscience and grace, to the profoundest pit!
    I dare damnation. To this point I stand,
    That both the worlds I give to negligence,
    Let come what comes, only I'll be revenged
    Most throughly for my father.

King

    Who shall stay you?

Laertes

    My will, not all the world.
    And for my means, I'll husband them so well
    They shall go far with little.

King

    Good Laertes,

    If you desire to know the certainty
    Of your dear father, is't writ in your revenge
    That, swoopstake, you will draw both friend and foe,
    Winner and loser?

Laertes

    None but his enemies.

King

    Will you know them, then?
Laertes
    To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my arms,
    And, like the kind life-rend'ring pelican,
    Repast them with my blood.

King
    Why, now you speak
    Like a good child and a true gentleman.
    That I am guiltless of your father's death,
    And am most sensibly in grief for it,
    It shall as level to your judgment 'pear
    As day does to your eye.
Polonius
   How now, Ophelia, what's the matter?
Ophelia
   Oh, my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted!
Polonius
   With what, i'th name of God?
Ophelia
   My lord, as I was sewing in my chamber,
   Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbraced,
   No hat upon his head, his stockings fouled,
   Ungartered, and down-gyved to his ankle,
   Pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other,
   And with a look so piteous in purport
   As if he had been loosèd out of hell
   To speak of horrors, he comes before me.
Polonius
   Mad for thy love?
Ophelia
   My lord, I do not know,
   But truly I do fear it.
Polonius
   What said he?
Ophelia
   He took me by the wrist, and held me hard.
   Then goes he to the length of all his arm,
   And with his other hand thus o'er his brow
   He falls to such perusal of my face
   As 'a would draw it. Long stayed he so.
   At last, a little shaking of mine arm,
   And thrice his head thus waving up and down,
   He raised a sigh so piteous and profound
   As it did seem to shatter all his bulk
   And end his being. That done, he lets me go,
   And with his head over his shoulder turned
   He seemed to find his way without his eyes,
   For out o'doors he went without their helps,
   And to the last bended their light on me.
Polonius

Come, go with me. I will go seek the King.
This is the very ecstasy of love,
Whose violent property fordoes itself
And leads the will to desperate undertakings
As oft as any passion under heaven
That does afflict our natures. I am sorry.
What, have you given him any hard words of late?

Ophelia

No, my good lord, but as you did command
I did repel his letters, and denied
His access to me.

Polonius

That hath made him mad.
I am sorry that with better heed and judgment
I had not quoted him. I feared he did but trifle
And meant to wrack thee; but beshrew my jealousy!
By heaven, it is as proper to our age
To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions
As it is common for the younger sort
To lack discretion. Come, go we to the King.
This must be known, which, being kept close, might move
More grief to hide than hate to utter love.
Come.