From *Romeo and Juliet*

Prologue:

Chor. Two households, both alike in dignity,

In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,

From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,

Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.

From forth the fatal loins of these two foes

A pair of star-cross’d lovers take their life;

Whose misadventur’d piteous overthrows

Do with their death bury their parents’ strife.

The fearful passage of their death-mark’d love,

And the continuance of their parents’ rage,

Which, but their children’s end, nought could remove,

Is now the two hours’ traffick of our stage;

The which if you with patient ears attend,

What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.

From *Richard II*

Act III, Scene ii:

K. Rich. No matter where. Of comfort no man speak:

Let’s talk of graves, of worms, and epitaphs;

Make dust our paper, and with rainy eyes

Write sorrow on the bosom of the earth;

Let’s choose executors and talk of wills:

And yet not so—for what can we bequeath

Save our deposed bodies to the ground?

Our lands, our lives, and all are Bolingbroke’s,

And nothing can we call our own but death,

And that small model of the barren earth

Which serves as paste and cover to our bones.

For God’s sake, let us sit upon the ground

And tell sad stories of the death of kings:

How some have been depos’d, some slain in war,

Some haunted by the ghosts they have depos’d,

Some poison’d by their wives, some sleeping kill’d;

All murder’d: for within the hollow crown

That rounds the mortal temples of a king

Keeps Death his court, and there the antick sits,

Scoffing his state and grinning at his pomp;

Allowing him a breath, a little scene,

To monarchize, be fear’d, and kill with looks,

Infusing him with self and vain conceit

As if this flesh which walls about our life

Were brass impregnable; and humour’d thus

Comes at the last, and with a little pin

Bores through his castle wall, and farewell king!

Cover your heads, and mock not flesh and blood

With solemn reverence: throw away respect,

Tradition, form, and ceremonious duty,

For you have but mistook me all this while:

I live with bread like you, feel want,

Taste grief, need friends: subjected thus,

How can you say to me I am a king?

“Sonnet LV”

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments

Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rime;

But you shall shine more bright in these contents

Than unswept stone, besmear’d with sluttish time.

When wasteful war shall statues overturn,

And broils root out the work of masonry,

Nor Mars his sword nor war’s quick fire shall burn

The living record of your memory.

’Gainst death and all-oblivious enmity

Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find room

Even in the eyes of all posterity

That wear this world out to the ending doom.

So, till the judgment that yourself arise,

You live in this, and dwell in lovers’ eyes.

“Sonnet CXXX”

My mistress’ eyes are nothing like the sun

Coral is far more red than her lips’ red:

If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;

If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head. I have seen roses damask’d, red and white,

But no such roses see I in her cheeks;

And in some perfumes is there more delight

Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.

I love to hear her speak, yet well I know

That music hath a far more pleasing sound:

I grant I never saw a goddess go,—

My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground:

And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare

As any she belied with false compare.

“Sonnet CXXXVIII”

When my love swears that she is made of truth

I do believe her, though I know she lies,

That she might think me some untutor’d youth,

Unlearned in the world’s false subtleties.

Thus vainly thinking that she thinks me young,

Although she knows my days are past the best,

Simply I credit her false-speaking tongue:

On both sides thus is simple truth supprest.

But wherefore says she not she is unjust?

And wherefore say not I that I am old?

O! love’s best habit is in seeming trust,

And age in love loves not to have years told:

Therefore I lie with her, and she with me,

And in our faults by lies we flatter’d be.

From *Macbeth*

Act I. Scene vii:

*A Room in the Castle.*

*Hautboys and torches. Enter, and pass over the stage, a Sewer, and divers Servants with dishes and service. Then, enter MACBETH.*

Macb. If it were done when ’tis done, then ’twere well

It were done quickly; if the assassination

Could trammel up the consequence, and catch

With his surcease success; that but this blow

Might be the be-all and the end-all here,

But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,

We’d jump the life to come. But in these cases

We still have judgment here; that we but teach

Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return

To plague the inventor; this even-handed justice

Commends the ingredients of our poison’d chalice

To our own lips. He’s here in double trust:

First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,

Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,

Who should against his murderer shut the door,

Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan

Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been

So clear in his great office, that his virtues

Will plead like angels trumpet-tongu’d against

The deep damnation of his taking-off;

And pity, like a naked new-born babe,

Striding the blast, or heaven’s cherubin, hors’d

Upon the sightless couriers of the air,

Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,

That tears shall drown the wind. I have no spur

To prick the sides of my intent, but only

Vaulting ambition, which o’er-leaps itself

And falls on the other.—

*Enter LADY MACBETH.*

How now! what news?

Lady M. He has almost supp’d: why have you left the chamber?

Macb. Hath he ask’d for me?

Lady M. Know you not he has?

Macb. We will proceed no further in this business:

He hath honour’d me of late; and I have bought

Golden opinions from all sorts of people,

Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,

Not cast aside so soon.

Lady M. Was the hope drunk,

Wherein you dress’d yourself? hath it slept since

And wakes it now, to look so green and pale

At what it did so freely? From this time

Such I account thy love. Art thou afeard

To be the same in thine own act and valour

As thou art in desire? Wouldst thou have that

Which thou esteem’st the ornament of life,

And live a coward in thine own esteem,

Letting ‘I dare not’ wait upon ‘I would,’

Like the poor cat i’ the adage?

Macb. Prithee, peace.

I dare do all that may become a man;

Who dares do more is none.

Lady M. What beast was ’t, then,

That made you break this enterprise to me?

When you durst do it then you were a man;

And, to be more than what you were, you would

Be so much more the man. Nor time nor place

Did then adhere, and yet you would make both:

They have made themselves, and that their fitness now

Does unmake you. I have given suck, and know

How tender ’tis to love the babe that milks me:

I would, while it was smiling in my face,

Have pluck’d my nipple from his boneless gums, And dash’d the brains out, had I so sworn as you

Have done to this.

Macb. If we should fail,—

Lady M. We fail!

But screw your courage to the sticking-place,

And we’ll not fail. When Duncan is asleep,

Whereto the rather shall his day’s hard journey

Soundly invite him, his two chamberlains

Will I with wine and wassail so convince

That memory, the warder of the brain,

Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason

A limbeck only; when in swinish sleep

Their drenched natures lie, as in a death,

What cannot you and I perform upon

The unguarded Duncan? what not put upon

His spongy officers, who shall bear the guilt

Of our great quell?

Macb. Bring forth men-children only;

For thy undaunted mettle should compose

Nothing but males. Will it not be receiv’d,

When we have mark’d with blood those sleepy two

Of his own chamber and us’d their very daggers,

That they have done ’t?

Lady M. Who dares receive it other,

As we shall make our griefs and clamour roar

Upon his death?

Macb. I am settled, and bend up

Each corporal agent to this terrible feat.

Away, and mock the time with fairest show:

False face must hide what the false heart doth know. [Exeunt.