Lear & Gonz. Act I scene 4

To be such men as may besort your age,
Which know themselves, and you.

LEAR  Darkness and devils!

Saddle my horses; call my train together.
Degenerate bastard, I'll not trouble thee:
Yet have I left a daughter.

GONERIL  You strike my people, and your disordered rabble
Make servants of their betters.

Enter Albany.

LEAR  Woe that too late repents. — [O, sir, are you come?]
Is it your will? Speak, sir. — Prepare my horses.
Ingratitude! thou marble-hearted fiend,
More hideous when thou show'st thee in a child
Than the sea monster.

ALBANY  Pray, sir, be patient.

LEAR  Detested kite, thou liest.

My train are men of choice and rarest parts,
That all partic alurs of duty know
And in the most exact regard support
The worships of their name. O most small fault,
How ugly didst thou in Cordelia show!
Which, like an engine, wrenched my frame of nature
From the fixed place; drew from my heart all love
And added to the gall. O Lear, Lear, Lear!

Beat at this gate that let thy folly in
[Strikes his head.]
And thy dear judgment out. Go, go, my people.

ALBANY  My lord, I am guiltless, as I am ignorant
Of what hath moved you.

LEAR  It may be so, my lord.

Hear, Nature, hear; dear goddess, hear:
Suspend thy purpose if thou didst intend
To make this creature fruitful.
Into her womb convey sterility,
Dry up in her the organs of increase,
And from her derogate body never spring
A babe to honor her. If she must teem,
Create her child of spleen, that it may live
And be a thwart disnatured torment to her.

Let it stamp wrinkles in her brow of youth,
With cadent tears fret channels in her cheeks,
Turn all her mother's pains and benefits
To laughter and contempt, that she may feel
How sharpest than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child. Away, away!

Exit. 285

ALBANY  Now, gods that we adore, whereof comes this?

GONERIL  Never afflict yourself to know more of it,
But let his disposition have that scope
As dotage gives it.

Enter Lear.

LEAR  What, fifty of my followers at a clap?
Within a fortnight?

ALBANY  What's the matter, sir?

LEAR  I'll tell thee. [To Gonzero] Life and death, I am ashamed
That thou hast power to shake my manhood thus!
That these hot tears, which break from me perforce,
Should make thee worth them. Blasts and fogs upon thee!

Th' unentended woundings of a father's curse
Pierce every sense about thee! Old fond eyes,
Beweep this cause again I'll pluck ye out
And cast you, with the waters that you lose,
To temper clay. [Yea, is it come to this?]
Ha! Let it be so. I have another daughter,
Who I am sure is kind and comfortable.
When she shall hear this of thee, with her nails
She'll flay thy wolvishe visage. Thou shalt find
That I'll resume the shape which thou dost think
I have cast off forever.

Exit [Lear with Kent and Attendants].

245 besort befit 247 Saddle . . . together (Most editors send some knights off to do Lear's bidding, but it is more likely that everyone is immobilized with astonishment; he has to order the horses saddled again at line 253.) 258 Detested kite detestable bird of prey 259 parts qualities 261 in re gard with the most scrupulous attention 262 worships honor 264 engine machine 264–265 my . . . place the structure of my being from its foundations 267 this gate presumably his head 272 derogate debased 273 spleen malice 276 thwart dis natured perverse, unnatural 281 cadent falling; fret wear 282 pains care 285 s.d. The fool apparently remains onstage. 288 disposition mood 294 perforce i.e., against my will 296 unentended woundings wounds too deep to be probed 297 fond foolish 298 Beweep if you weep over 299 lose let loose 300 temper soften 302 comfortable comforting 308–9 partial . . . To biased . . . by 316 sure surely be sent 317 halter noose