GONERIL
My most dear Gloucester.
O, the difference of man and man:
To thee a woman's services are due;
My fool usurps my body.

OSWALD
Madam, here comes my lord.

Enter Albany.

GONERIL
I have been worth the whistle.

ALBANY
You are not worth the dust which the rude wind
Blows in your face. [I fear your disposition:
That nature which contemns its origin
Cannot be bordered certain in itself.
She that herself will sliver and disbranch
From her material sap, perforce must wither
And come to deadly use.

GONERIL
No more; the text is foolish.

ALBANY
Wisdom and goodness to the vile seem vile;
Filths savory but themselves. What have you done?
Tigers not daughters, what have you performed?
A father, and a gracious aged man,
Whose reverence even the head-lugged bear would lick,
Most barbarous, most degenerate, have you maddened.
Could my good brother suffer you to do it?
A man, a prince, by him so benefitted!
If that the heavens do not their visible spirits
Send quickly down to tame these vile offenses,
It will come,
Humanity must perforce prey on itself,
Like monsters of the deep.

GONERIL
Milk-livered man,
That bear's a cheek for blows, a head for wrongs; 52
Who hast not in thy brows an eye discerning 53
Thine honor from thy suffering; [that not know'st
Fools do those villains pity who are punished 55
Ere they have done their mischief. Where's thy drum? 56
France spreads his banners in our noiseless land,
With plumed helm thy state begins to threaten, 58
Whilst thou, a moral fool, sits still and cries 59
"Alack, why does he so?"]

ALBANY
See thyself, devil:
Proper deformity seems not in the fiend
So horrid as in woman.

GONERIL
O vain fool!

ALBANY
Thou chang'd and self-covered thing, for shame
Bemonster not thy feature. Were't my fitness
To let these hands obey my blood,
They are apt enough to dislocate and tear
Thy flesh and bones. Howe'er thou art a fiend,
A woman's shape doth shield thee.

GONERIL
Marry, your manhood — mew!]

28 My . . . body i.e., my idiot husband wrongfully possesses me
1 . . . whistle "I used to be worth welcoming home," alluding to the proverbial poor dog who is "not worth the whistle" 33 contemns despises 34 Canons . . . certain can have no secure boundaries
35 sliver and disbranch cut herself off and split away 37 deadly we destructiveness 43 head-lugged dragged by a chain around its neck (and thus ill-tempered) 44 maddened driven mad 45 brother-in-law 51 Milk-livered cowardly 52 for fit for 53–54 discerning . . . suffering that can distinguish what affects your honor (and thus must be resisted) from what must be endured 55 Foils i.e., only fools 56 drum i.e., why are you not mustering your army? 57 France the King of France; noiseless silent (without the sound of military drums) 58 thy . . . threat begins to threaten thy state (a famous crux, much emended)
59 moral moralizing 62 Proper . . . not a deformed nature does not appear
62 vain silly, worthless 63 self-covered hiding your true nature 64 Were't . . . fitness if it were appropriate for me 65 blood passion 67 Howe'er although 69 Marry . . . mew lock up your manhood; marry = an interjection, originally an oath on the name of the Virgin Mary