

CONTEMPORARY MONOLOGUES

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Death of a Salesman

by Arthur Miller

BIFF:

Now here this, Willy. This is me. You know why I had no address for three months? I stole a suit in Kansas City and I was jailed. I stole myself out of every good job since high school. And I never got anywhere because you blew me so full of hot air I could never stand taking orders from anybody! That's whose fault it is! It's goddamn time you heard that!

I had to be boss big shot in two weeks, and I'm through with it! Willy! I ran down eleven flights with a pen in my hand today. And suddenly I stopped, you hear me?

And in the middle of that office building, do you hear this? I stopped in the middle of that building and I saw - the sky. I saw the things that I love in the world. The work and the food and the time to sit and smoke. And I looked at the pen and said to myself, what the hell am I grabbing this for?

Why am I trying to become what I don't want to be? What am I doing in an office, making a contemptuous, begging fool of myself, when all I want is out there, waiting for me the minute I say I know who I am! Why can't I say that, Willy?

Pop! I'm a dime a dozen, and so are you! I am not a leader of men, Willy, and neither are you. You were never anything but a hard-working drummer who landed in the ash-can like all the rest of them! I'm one dollar an hour, Willy!

I tried seven states and couldn't raise it! A buck an hour! Do you gather my meaning? I'm not bringing home any prizes anymore, and you're going to stop waiting for me to bring them home!

Pop, I'm nothing! I'm nothing, Pop. Can't you understand that? There's no spite in it anymore. I'm just what I am, that's all.

Will you let me go, for Christ's sake? Will you take that phoney dream and burn it before something happens?

The Call

by Patricia Cornelius

CHUNK:

You've got it all wrong. It come to me like a whack on the back of the head, like the floor's suddenly given way. An epiphany, that's what I'm having. Ever heard of an epiphany, Aldo? It's like God's spoken, like lightning, some fucking big moment of enlightenment.

And I'm having it. It's all crap. It's a big load of bull. A hoax. Someone major's pulling our leg, got us by the throat and is throttling us, got us boxed in, packed up.

Nothing— means—nothing. You got it? Once you got that, you're living free. Who says how life's meant to be? Who says what's good, what you should or shouldn't do?

Who in hell's got the right to measure a man's success? He did this, he did that, he got that job, he got paid a lot. Fuck off. He owns a house, a wife, two kids. So what?

He's a lawyer, a doctor, he's made a success of his life. No success story for the likes of us.

And you know what? I don't give a shit.

Finally it's clear to me. It's all crap. And I'm free of it at last.

Sweat

by Lynn Nottage

CHRIS:

I dunno. A couple minutes, and your whole life changes, that's it. It's gone.

Every day I think about what if I hadn't... You know... I run it and run it, a tape over and over again. What if. What if. What if. All night. In my head. I can't turn it off.

Reverend Duckett said, "Lean on God for forgiveness. Lean on God to find your way through the terrible storm." I'm leaning into the wind, I'm fuckin' leaning... And. A moment. And then there's Jason. Crossing Penn, you know, and I'm just chilling, looking in the window of Sneaker Villa, not thinking about anything.

He sees me. I see him. Neither of us could...um, move for a second. We...it was...I've been thinking about what I would do in that moment. How I would react, what I would say. I mean...fuck it. What we did was unforgivable...

Next thing I know I'm walking fast toward him, I don't know what I'm gonna do. But the emotions are right there in my chest. A fist pressing right there. Pressing. And I keep walking.

And I'm expecting him to walk away, do something, but he just stands there like he's been waiting on me all these years. And...we come face to face. Like right there. I can smell his breath, that's how close we are. I can see the fucking veins in his eyes. And my fists clench. My fingernails dig into the palms of my hands and then it just happens...weird...

We're hugging. Hugging. I don't know why.

And for the first time in eight years, I feel like I could go.

Radiance

by Louis Nowra

CRESSY:

You were created from dirt. Your father was dirt. He never raped her...it was me. He raped me! Under this house. Me! He did it to me! Under that burning house.

He was just one of Mum's boyfriends. If he walked down the street I don't think I'd even recognize him. Mum was in town. He was going to drive away but his car had no petrol, so he went and bought a can. He sucked on a tube to get it flowing into the tank.

I was playing under the house. Then suddenly he was there. He had this screwdriver. I tried to fight him but he was too strong. As he was doing it he kept kissing me with his mouth stinking of petrol. The pain – all the awful pain through my body like he was stabbing me in two.

He said he'd kill me if I told Mum. I stayed under the house for hours trying to clean myself with some old rags.

Then a few months later I realized I was having that man's baby. I tried to keep it from her. You know what happened when I told her? She hit me. She said I was lying, that it was one of the local boys and I was blaming her boyfriend. She didn't believe me.

I had you in that house. In my bed. I was twelve. Twelve, Nona.

I hated Mum for not believing me. But at least she kept you, pretended you were hers.

That's not your mother. I'm your mother, Nona. You were born because your so-called Black Prince raped me. Just a filthy pig smelling of petrol.

We kept it a secret. I was ashamed. She was ashamed. But I'm not ashamed of you. I'm telling you the truth. You're my flesh and blood, my daughter. You're my blood. My blood is yours, Nona!

I named you because you were mine. That's all Mum would allow me to do – name you, Nona... I want you to know the truth. You have to know the truth.

Fool for Love

by Sam Shepard

EDDIE:

And we walked right through town. Past the donut shop, past the miniature golf course, past the Chevron station. And he opened the bottle up and offered it to me. Before he even took a drink, he offered it to me first. And I took it and drank it and handed it back to him. And we just kept passing it back and forth like that as we walked until we drank the whole thing dry. And we never said a word the whole time.

Then, finally, we reached this little white house with a red awning, on the far side of town. I'll never forget the red awning because it flapped in the night breeze and the porch light made it glow.

It was a hot, desert breeze and the air smelled like new cut alfalfa. We walked right up to the front porch and he rang the bell and I remember getting real nervous because I wasn't out for a expecting to visit anybody. I thought we were just out for a walk.

And then this woman comes to the door. This real pretty woman with red hair. And she throws herself into his arms. And he starts crying. He just breaks down right there in front of me. And she's kissing him all over the face and holding him real tight and he's just crying like a baby.

And then through the doorway, behind them both. I see this girl. She just appears. She's just standing there, staring at me and I'm staring back at her and we can't take our eyes off each other.

It was like we knew each other from somewhere but we couldn't place where. But the second we saw each other, that very second, we knew we'd never stop being in love.

The Libertine

by Stephen Jeffreys

ELIZABETH BARRY:

You have no understanding, do you? You have comprehended – just – that I am tired of being your mistress and your solution is to conscript me into becoming your wife.

It is not being a mistress I am tired of, John. I am tired of you. I do not wish to be your wife. I wish to continue being the creature I am.

I am no Nell Gwyn, I will not give up the stage as soon as a king or a lord has seen me on it and, wishing me to be his and his alone, will then pay a fortune to keep me off it.

I am not the sparrow you picked up in the roadside, my love. London walks into this theatre to see me – not George's play nor Mr Betterton. They want me and they want me over and over again.

And when people desire you in such a manner, then you can envisage a lifetime of money amassed through your own endeavours. That is riches.

'Leave this gaudy, gilded stage.'

You're right, this stage is gilded. It is gilded with my future earnings.

And I will not trade those for a dependency on you. I will not swap my certain glory for your undependable love.

People, Places and Things

by *Duncan Macmillan*

EMMA:

With a play you get instructions. Stage directions. Dialogue. Someone clothes you. Tells you where to be and when. You get to live the most intense moments of a life over and over again, with all the boring bits left out. And you get to practise. For weeks. And you're applauded. Then you get changed. Leave through stage door. Bus home. Back to real life. All the boring stuff left in. Waiting. Temping. Answering phones and serving canapés. Nothing permanent. Can't plan. Can't get a mortgage or pay for a car. Audition comes in. Try to look right. Sit in a room surrounded by people who look just like you, all after the same part.

Never hear back. Or if you get the part it'll be sitting around in rehearsal and backstage making less than you did temping. Make these friendships with people, a little family, fall in love onstage and off and then it's over and you don't see them again. You try not to take it personally when people who aren't as good as you get the parts. When you go from being the sexy ingénue to the tired mother of three.

But you keep going because sometimes, if you're really lucky, you get to be onstage and say things that are absolutely true, even if they're made-up. You get to do things which feel more real to you, more authentic, more meaningful than anything in your own life. You get to speak poetry, words you would never think to say but which become yours as you speak them.

When he shall die
Take him and cut him out in little stars,
And he will make the face of heaven so fine
That all the world will be in love with night,
And pay no worship to the garish sun.

It feels like Lydia wants me to acknowledge some buried trauma but there isn't any. I played Antigone and every night my heart broke about her dead brother. Then my own brother died and I didn't feel anything. I missed the funeral because I had a matinee. I'm not avoiding talking to the Group because I've got something to hide. It's the opposite. If I'm not in character I'm not sure I'm really there. I'm already dead. I'm nothing. I want live a hundred lives and be everywhere and fight against the infinitesimal time we have on this planet.

Acting gives me the same thing I get from drugs and alcohol. Good parts are just harder to come by.

I really miss my brother.

Dags

by Debra Oswald

GILLIAN:

All right. I'm going to admit something I never thought I'd admit to anyone ever. I've got a crush on Adam. Head over heels. Uncontrollable passion, etcetera.

Unrequited passion, of course. Now I know this sounds like I'm throwing away everything I've said so far. And I guess I am. I know every girl at school except Monica is in love with him. I know he'd never go for a dag like me. I know it's hopeless. I know all that.

But I can't help it. Just thinking he might look at me, my heart starts pounding like mad. And then I worry about whether he can tell my heart's going crazy, and I have to act really cool.

This crush – it's like a disease. Do you know – oh, I'm almost too embarrassed to admit this – Adam misses the bus sometimes. 'Cos he's chatting up some girl or something. And do you know what I do? I get off the bus after one stop and walk back to school, so I can hang round the bus stop hoping he'll turn up. Just so I can ride on the same bus with him. Isn't that the most pathetic thing you've ever heard?

I'm crazy. I can lie here for hours thinking about him. Writing these movies in my head where Adam and me are the stars. I try to imagine how he'd notice me and fall hopelessly in love with me and all that. Like, one of my favourites is that the bus breaks down one day in this remote place and there we are stranded together. He discovers that I was this really fascinating woman all along. Far more interesting than all those silly girls at school.

But – I say that I can't bear to be just another notch on his belt. So Adam has to beg me to go out with him. Grovel almost. That's a pretty over-the-top version.

Up the Road

by John Harding

IAN:

Hey, brother, how do I look? Or have you been watching me for a while.

I never got to tell you about the places I've been or the people I've met. I've travelled a bit. Went to Coober Pedy, had a go at mining. First day on the job I fell down a shaft and broke my arm. Decided mining wasn't for me. Some way or another I ended up in Canberra.

You used to brylcreem my hair for me. I used to love the way you'd grab my ears like motor cycle handles and twist them? Vroom vroom. And that toy sheep we used to fight over.

I was just talking with Auntie about it. Had a bit of a blue with Susie. She's been at my throat since I got back. They've all been having a go at me.

They reckon it's easy. But they've never been off the bloody mission. They reckon I'm a coconut. She's a fiery woman. It's bloody fresh up here, isn't it? Those boots of yours keep you warm? I got a big electric heater at home. I bought my own place now. What a whitefella, eh?

A real house. Double brick. And I'm the only one in it. Well, you got the family up here. What've I got? I hate being alone. You all keep leaving me alone. Mum, dad, you. Now Uncle Kenny's gonna be up here. Yous'll be fucking right.

What the fuck's going on? They're punishing me. Are you punishing me too? I didn't want to leave, Nat. They all told me to go. They made me go away. Not do nothing. I fucking hated 'em. They did jack shit.

Those cops killed you and they did jack shit. Are you ashamed of me for that, my brother?

If it was me they'd killed, you would've rode your horse into the fucken station and torn those cunts apart. That's what I wanted to do. But they made me go away.

I thought you were a king and they killed you like a fucken dog. I'm sorry, Nat, I'm sorry. You knew I'd be back. You knew I'd be back here with you. It's fresh, eh?

I love you, Nat. I love you, brother.

(sings) Amazing Grace how sweet the sound / That saved a wretch like me / I once was lost but now I'm found / Was blind but now I see.

Note: this character is Indigenous Australian

Red

by John Logan

KEN:

Bores you?! Bores you?! – Christ almighty trying working for you for a living! The talking-talking-talking-jesus-christ-won't-he-ever-shut-up titanic self-absorption of the man!

You stand there trying to look so deep when you're nothing but a solipsistic bully with your grandiose self-importance and lectures and arias and let's-look-at-the-fucking - canvas-for-another-few-weeks-let's-not-fucking-paint-let's-just-look.

And the pretension! Jesus Christ, the pretension! I can't imagine any other painter in the history of art ever tried so hard to be SIGNIFICANT! You know, not everything has to be so goddam IMPORTANT all the time! Not every painting has to rip your guts out and expose your soul! Not everyone wants art that actually HURTS!

Sometimes you just want a f— still life or landscape or soup can or comic book! Which you might learn if you ever actually left your god— hermetically-sealed submarine here with all the windows closed and no natural light – BECAUSE NATURAL LIGHT ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH FOR YOU!

But then nothing is ever good enough for you! Not even the people who buy your pictures! Museums are nothing but mausoleums, galleries are run by pimps and swindlers, and art collectors are nothing but shallow social climbers.

So who is good enough to own your art?! Anyone?! Or maybe the real question is: who's good enough to even see your art? . . . Is it just possible no one is worthy to look at your paintings? . . . That's it, isn't it? . . .

We have all been weighed in the balance and have been found wanting.

You say you spend your life in search of real human beings, people who can look at your pictures with compassion. But in your heart you no longer believe those people exist. . .

So you lose faith... So you lose hope. . . So black swallows red.

My friend, I don't think you'd recognize a real human being if he were standing right in front of you. Never mind.

The Seagull

by Anton Chekhov

KONSTANTIN:

She loves me. She loves me not. She loves me. She loves me not. She loves me. She loves me not.

You see! My own mother doesn't love me! How can she? She wants to live! She wants to love! She wants to wear the most extraordinary clothes. But I'm twenty-five! Her son is twenty-five! I'm a constant reminder to her that she is no longer young.

When I'm not here she's thirty years old. When I am she's fifty and she hates me for it. And she is furious with me because I hate the kind of theatre she has made all her life. To her it's everything. To me it's arid and tired and conventional and boring.

Unless you take great care of it the theatre can be the most tedious, old-fashioned, prejudiced, elitist form there is. You go to her theatre. The curtain rises on these rooms. These horrible little rooms. And everybody's there. Standing in their lights. In their horrible clothes. So wretchedly elegant. And they imagine, they honestly imagine that they can show us anything about how people live.

They think they understand how people live and they try passing on all their deep understanding in these vile banal messages and morals in their vile banal plays. And every play is exactly the same. Every idea is exactly the same. Every performance is exactly the same. Every speech is exactly the same. Every image is exactly the same. They make me want to scream. They make me want to run away screaming.

We need something new. We need new ways of thinking. We need new forms. If we don't have them then it would honestly be better to have nothing at all.

Julie (After Strindberg)

by Polly Stenham

KRISTINA:

I hold your hair up when you're sick. I pick you up after your abortion. I wash your bloodstained underwear. I get up most days and I serve you.

But I tell myself, it's not her fault. She's a nice girl. It could be the other way round. She treats me well. She treats me like a person. She didn't write history. She's just snared in the story like me. Sometimes she even makes it possible for us to both pretend that we're not hostage to our situation. Sometimes when we're talking in the kitchen we can both pretend that it's all pretend.

And that makes the job, sort of bearable, that we both have moments of pretending. That it all isn't so fucked. That it all isn't so fucking unfair. You see all I had here, was a tiny bit of dignity.

But even that you've snatched, and it wasn't even precious to you. I don't think you even knew I had it. That I need it. I don't think you know what it's like to need something. Just what it's like to want. And want. And want. Because, what you've done, what you've just done, is worse than sex with someone you shouldn't.

That's child's play really. It's ordinary. It's the oldest trick in the book. What you've actually done is you've turned the light on. When we'd both agreed to sometimes have it off.

In what you've done, you've reiterated everything. In your action is the whole world. Of taking and taken. You are wrong. You are what's wrong.

Blue Window by Craig Lucas

LIBBY:

I used to be married to a dentist. We bought a big apartment on East 71st Street.

We'd been married about three months. I was standing by the window. It was late afternoon. Everything was blue, as blue as it can be before it gets black.

And Marty said, come out on the terrace. I said, I don't have any clothes on. And he brought me this little robe and we walked out on the terrace. We'd only lived there two months. And he kissed me, and I put my head back to look up at the sky.

Our reflections were in the glass. And I put my head back - we lived on the seventh floor, there was another one above us - and we leaned, he leaned, I set my back against the rail...and it just...we were gone. We were over. I saw our reflections leave the window.

And I didn't black out. I thought, very clearly, this is bad. This is real.

And it's true, you see everything pass before your eyes. Everything. Slowly, like a dream.

And Marty was...climbing up me...and screaming...and we turned over once...and we went through an awning, which saved my life. And I broke every bone in my face. I have a completely new face. My teeth were all shattered, these are all caps.

I was in traction for ten months. And Tom came to see me every week, every day sometimes. Marty's family.

We sued the building. I mean, they never even attached it to the wall. It wasn't even attached. It was just a rail, a loose rail.

There was another one on another floor, the same thing could have happened.

I landed on him. I killed him. I can't - it's seven years.

I can't have anybody hold me. I can't ever be held.

The Cherry Orchard

by Anton Chekhov

LOPAKHIN:

I did. I bought it.

You should see your faces. I bought it. God my head is spinning. I can't even talk. – I got it! The estate is mine. The cherry orchard is mine! Mine! My God! Am I drunk? Or am I mad? Maybe I've gone mad and it's all a dream. Don't you laugh at me! Nobody laughs at me anymore – you understand? Nobody! – Ha! – If only my dad was alive to see me now. His little boy who couldn't even spell his own name! The kid they all used to beat up and who had to run around in winter with no shoes on his feet! I have bought an estate. And not just any old estate. The estate. The Big House. The very estate where my grandfather, my dad's father, was a serf. A bonded man. A slave. Wasn't even allowed in the kitchen. – I'm dreaming. This must be a fantasy and I'm gonna wake up in prison.

She dropped her keys. Well, they're not hers anymore. They're mine.

Hear that? That's the sound of progress. – What are you all sitting around for? Where's the music? Come on everybody, let's dance, let's dance all night and then when the sun comes up I'll go out into that orchard with an axe and cut the bloody thing down myself. We're building the future here, a future everyone can enjoy!

Oh Jesus. Why didn't you listen to me? Why? I tried to tell you, didn't I? Didn't I try to help. Someone had to buy it. Oh God. If only we could start our miserable, messed up lives all over again!

Love

by Patricia Cornelius

LORENZO:

The moment I saw you I thought, you are beautiful, really beautiful, so beautiful, and small. Beautiful and small.

I loved you. I saw you and I couldn't keep my hands off you. Wanted to touch you, pick you up, feel your beautiful little body in my hands.

Something about how little you were, how I could hold you, how I could lift you right off the ground, made me feel a big man. And a good man, a really good man.

I wanted to look after you. Never wanted that before. Now look at you. Fuck. Look at you, you're nineteen and you look like an old crow.

Fuck. Look at you. You used to have some pride in the way you looked, dressed up you looked beautiful. It felt good to be seen with you. Like, feast your eyes on this, and she's mine.

Now who wants you, looking the way you look, who'd come near you?

You're a slag, an old rag. Get up. Fucking get up would you, you fucking useless scrag. Get up!

Fen

by Caryl Churchill

MARGARET:

I thought I would be nervous but I'm not. Because Jesus is giving me strength to speak. I don't know where to begin because I've been unhappy as long as I can remember.

My mother and father were unhappy too. I think my grandparents were unhappy. My father was a violent man. You'd hear my mother, you'd say, 'Are you all right, mum?' But that's a long time ago.

I wasn't very lucky in my marriage. So after that I was on my own except I had my little girl. Some of you knew her. But for those of you who didn't, she couldn't see. I thought at first that was why she couldn't learn things but it turned out to be in her head as well. But I taught her to walk, they said she wouldn't but she did. She slept in my bed, she wouldn't let me turn away from her, she'd put her hand on my face.

It was after she died I started drinking, which has been my great sin and brought misery to myself and those who love me. I betrayed them again and again by saying I would give it up, but the drink would have me hiding a little away. But my loving sisters in Christ stood by me. I thought if God wants me he'll give me a sign, because I couldn't believe he really would want someone as terrible as me. I thought if I hear two words today, one beginning with M for Margaret, my name, and one with J for Jesus, close together, then I'll know how close I am to him. And that very afternoon I was at Mavis's house and her little boy was having his tea, and he said, 'More jam, mum.'

So that was how close Jesus was to me, right inside my heart. That was when I decided to be baptised. But I slid back and had a drink again and next day I was in despair. I thought God can't want me, nobody can want me. And a thrush got into my kitchen.

I thought if that bird can fly out, I can fly out of my pain. I stood there and watched, I didn't open another window, there was just the one window open. The poor bird beat and beat round the room, the tears were running down my face. And at last as it found the window and went straight through into the air.

I cried tears of joy because I knew Jesus would save me. So I went to Malcolm and said 'Baptise me now because I'm ready'. I want to give myself over completely to God so there's nothing else of me left, and then the pain will be gone and I'll be saved.

Without the love of my sisters I would never have got through.

Things I Know To Be True

by Adam Lovell

ROSIE:

Berlin. A winter coat. A travel bag. A red nose. And a broken heart. I'm standing on the platform at the train station. It's cold, the train is late and my socks are wet. I'm not quite sure how I got here or where I'm meant to go next.

I met him four nights ago and he was the most beautiful boy I had ever seen. His name was Emmanuel and he came from Madrid. I'd been travelling by myself for three months. The great European adventure. Mum and Dad said don't go by yourself. It's too dangerous.

I'll meet people, I told them. I'll be fine. But meeting people is harder than you think. Everything is so beautiful. Everything is exactly what I was expecting it to be. And yet somehow I want it to be more.

I skype home once a week and tell Mum and Dad what an amazing place Europe is. I tell them I'm having the best time because I can't bear the thought of them being disappointed for me. And when I skype my brother Mark, I pretend the camera on my iPad is broken because he knows me and he will see it in my face. He'll see that it's all a mess and he'll tell me to come home. But I can't go home. Not yet, I mean then, I couldn't go home then because it would be such a... defeat.

I don't know what it's meant to be. I don't know what I'm meant to do. I keep wondering when it will start. Life. When will life start.

And then there he is. At a club in Mitte. Dancing. With his shirt off and I think, wow, that guy can really dance. And then he looks over at me. Me? And I am gone. I pretend not to be. I try to be cool. To make it seem like I'm not interested. But I am so interested. And we dance until the sun comes up. And as we come out of the club into the light, I think this is it. This is life. I am living.

And when he kisses me I want to cry. Because I'd never been kissed like that. And I'd never been kissed where he kissed me or touched quite like that. Three days. Three days we stayed in bed.

On the third night I watch him sleeping and I do that thing you shouldn't do. I think about the future. I imagine taking him home to meet Mum and dad and my sister and my brothers and how they will all love him, like they love me.

Then he wakes up and he looks at me as if he knows what I'm thinking and as if he wants to get up and run so I kiss him on his lips before he can. And he smiles. And I'm gone all over again. And we make love, so tenderly, so sweetly and after, as I drift off to sleep, lying on his chest, listening to the beat of his heart, thinking, I could listen to this for the rest of my life. I think this is it, is this what falling in love is?

And when I wake up in the morning he's gone... Along with four hundred euros from my wallet, my iPad, my camera, my favourite scarf and a large piece of my heart.

The Children

by Lucy Kirkwood

ROSE:

It'll sound silly but. You were who I wanted to be when I grew up. I thought, one day I'll be like Hazel. I won't smoke cigarettes and I'll wear suncream and plan the week's meals ahead and get a slow cooker and not just buy sandwiches from petrol stations and I'll keep the bathroom really clean not just give it a wipe when people are coming over and I'll stop crying all the time and I'll do exercise and have a really neat handbag and do washing regularly not just when I've run out of knickers and stop losing earrings and not stay awake reading till four in the morning and feel like shit the next day and I'll find out how tracker mortgages work and be fifteen minutes early to everything and most of all most of all I'll know when I've had enough.

But I never quite got there. And I think it's a bit late now. And then tonight I saw your washing outside, on the line, and I thought about you, pegging it out, and how many times in your life you'd done that and no one noticed.

And I thought, that woman holds up the world. So that's why, really.

Honour

by Joanna Murray-Smith

SOPHIE:

I wish—I wish I was more... Like you. Like you. You're so—you're so clear. You seem so clear about things. Whereas I'm—I'm so—I can never quite say what I'm—even to myself, I'm so inarticulate.

Some nights I lay awake and I go over the things I've said. Confidently. The things I've said confidently and they— they fall to pieces.

And where there were words there is now just—just this feeling of—of impossibility. That everything is— there's no way through it—

I used to feel that way when I was very small. That same feeling. Not a childish feeling— well, maybe. As if I was choking on—as if life was coming down on me and I couldn't see my way through it. What does a child who has everything suffer from? Who could name it? I can't. I can't.

But it was a—a sort of—I used to see it in my head as jungle. Around me. Surrounding me. Some darkness growing, something—organic, alive—and the only thing that kept me— kept me— here—was the picture of Honor and of Gus. Silly.

Because I'm old now and I shouldn't remember that anymore. Lying in bed and feeling that they were there; outside the room in all their—their warmth, their—a kind of charm to them. Maybe you're right and it was—not so simple as it looked, but they gave such a strong sense of—love for each other and inside that—I felt—I felt loved. And since I've gotten older I don't feel—

I feel as if all that— all the—everything that saved me has fallen from me and you know, I'm not a kid any more. No. I'm not a kid any more. But I still feel—I need—I need—

Sorry.

SHAKESPEARE MONOLOGUES

- ANGELO from *Measure for Measure*
- ANTONY from *Julius Caesar*
- BENEDICK from *Much Ado About Nothing*
- CASSIUS from *Julius Caesar*
- EDMUND from *King Lear*
- GAOLER'S DAUGHTER from *The Two Noble Kinsman*
- HELENA from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
- HERMIONE from *The Winter's Tale*
- HOTSPUR from *Henry IV*
- IAGO from *Othello*
- ISABELLA from *Measure for Measure*
- JAQUES from *As You Like It*
- JOAN LA PUCELLE from *Henry IV*
- JULIA from *Two Gentlemen of Verona*
- JULIET from *Romeo and Juliet*
- LADY PERCY from *Henry IV*
- LAUNCE from *Two Gentlemen of Verona*
- PHOEBE from *As You Like It*
- PORTIA from *The Merchant of Venice*
- PRINCE HENRY from *Henry IV*
- ROMEO from *Romeo and Juliet*
- ROSALIND from *As You Like It*

Measure for Measure, Act 2, Scene 2 by William Shakespeare

ANGELO:

What's this, what's this? Is this her fault or mine?
The tempter or the tempted, who sins most?
Ha!
Not she: nor doth she tempt: but it is I
That, lying by the violet in the sun,
Do as the carrion does, not as the flower,
Corrupt with virtuous season. Can it be
That modesty may more betray our sense
Than woman's lightness? Having waste ground enough,
Shall we desire to raze the sanctuary
And pitch our evils there? O, fie, fie, fie!
What dost thou, or what art thou, Angelo?
Dost thou desire her foully for those things
That make her good? O, let her brother live!
Thieves for their robbery have authority
When judges steal themselves. What, do I love her,
That I desire to hear her speak again,
And feast upon her eyes? What is't I dream on?
O cunning enemy, that, to catch a saint,
With saints dost bait thy hook! Most dangerous
Is that temptation that doth goad us on
To sin in loving virtue: never could the strumpet,
With all her double vigour, art and nature,
Once stir my temper; but this virtuous maid
Subdues me quite. Even till now,
When men were fond, I smiled and wonder'd how.

Julius Caesar, Act 3, Scene 1

by William Shakespeare

ANTONY:

O, pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth,
That I am meek and gentle with these butchers!
Thou art the ruins of the noblest man
That ever lived in the tide of times.
Woe to the hand that shed this costly blood!
Over thy wounds now do I prophesy,--
Which, like dumb mouths, do ope their ruby lips,
To beg the voice and utterance of my tongue--
A curse shall light upon the limbs of men;
Domestic fury and fierce civil strife
Shall cumber all the parts of Italy;
Blood and destruction shall be so in use
And dreadful objects so familiar
That mothers shall but smile when they behold
Their infants quarter'd with the hands of war;
All pity choked with custom of fell deeds:
And Caesar's spirit, ranging for revenge,
With Ate by his side come hot from hell,
Shall in these confines with a monarch's voice
Cry 'Havoc,' and let slip the dogs of war;
That this foul deed shall smell above the earth
With carrion men, groaning for burial.

Much Ado About Nothing, Act 2, Scene 3 by William Shakespeare

BENEDICK:

This can be no trick: the conference was sadly borne. They have the truth of this from Hero. They seem to pity the lady: it seems her affections have their full bent. Love me! Why, it must be requited. I hear how I am censured: they say I will bear myself proudly, if I perceive the love come from her; they say too that she will rather die than give any sign of affection. I did never think to marry: I must not seem proud: happy are they that hear their detractions and can put them to mending. They say the lady is fair; 'tis a truth, I can bear them witness; and virtuous; 'tis so, I cannot reprove it; and wise, but for loving me; by my troth, it is no addition to her wit, nor no great argument of her folly, for I will be horribly in love with her. I may chance have some odd quirks and remnants of wit broken on me, because I have railed so long against marriage: but doth not the appetite alter? a man loves the meat in his youth that he cannot endure in his age. Shall quips and sentences and these paper bullets of the brain awe a man from the career of his humour? No, the world must be peopled. When I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live till I were married. Here comes Beatrice. By this day! she's a fair lady: I do spy some marks of love in her.

Julius Caesar, Act 1, Scene 2 by William Shakespeare

CASSIUS:

I know that virtue to be in you, Brutus,
As well as I do know your outward favour.
Well, honour is the subject of my story.
I cannot tell what you and other men
Think of this life; but, for my single self,
I had as lief not be as live to be
In awe of such a thing as I myself.
I was born free as Caesar; so were you:
We both have fed as well, and we can both
Endure the winter's cold as well as he:
For once, upon a raw and gusty day,
The troubled Tiber chafing with her shores,
Caesar said to me 'Darest thou, Cassius, now
Leap in with me into this angry flood,
And swim to yonder point?' Upon the word,
Accoutred as I was, I plunged in
And bade him follow; so indeed he did.
The torrent roar'd, and we did buffet it
With lusty sinews, throwing it aside
And stemming it with hearts of controversy;
But ere we could arrive the point proposed,
Caesar cried 'Help me, Cassius, or I sink!'
I, as Aeneas, our great ancestor,
Did from the flames of Troy upon his shoulder
The old Anchises bear, so from the waves of Tiber
Did I the tired Caesar. And this man
Is now become a god, and Cassius is
A wretched creature and must bend his body,
If Caesar carelessly but nod on him.
He had a fever when he was in Spain,
And when the fit was on him, I did mark
How he did shake: 'tis true, this god did shake;
His coward lips did from their colour fly,
And that same eye whose bend doth awe the world
Did lose his lustre: I did hear him groan:
Ay, and that tongue of his that bade the Romans
Mark him and write his speeches in their books,
Alas, it cried 'Give me some drink, Titinius,'
As a sick girl. Ye gods, it doth amaze me
A man of such a feeble temper should
So get the start of the majestic world
And bear the palm alone.

King Lear, Act 1, Scene 2 by William Shakespeare

EDMUND:

Thou, nature, art my goddess; to thy law
My services are bound. Wherefore should I
Stand in the plague of custom, and permit
The curiosity of nations to deprive me,
For that I am some twelve or fourteen moon-shines
Lag of a brother? Why bastard? wherefore base?
When my dimensions are as well compact,
My mind as generous, and my shape as true,
As honest madam's issue? Why brand they us
With base? with baseness? bastardy? base, base?
Who, in the lusty stealth of nature, take
More composition and fierce quality
Than doth, within a dull, stale, tired bed,
Go to the creating a whole tribe of fops,
Got 'tween asleep and wake? Well, then,
Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land:
Our father's love is to the bastard Edmund
As to the legitimate: fine word – legitimate!
Well, my legitimate, if this letter speed,
And my invention thrive, Edmund the base
Shall top the legitimate. I grow; I prosper:
Now, gods, stand up for bastards!

The Two Noble Kinsmen, Act 2, Scene 4 by William Shakespeare

GAOLER'S DAUGHTER:

Why should I love this gentleman? 'Tis odds
He never will affect me. I am base,
My father the mean keeper of his prison,
And he a prince. To marry him is hopeless;
To be his whore is witless. Out upon 't!
What pushes are we wenches driven to
When fifteen once has found us! First, I saw him;
I, seeing, thought he was a goodly man;
He has as much to please a woman in him,
If he please to bestow it so, as ever
These eyes yet looked on. Next, I pitied him,
And so would any young wench, o' my conscience,
That ever dreamed, or vowed her maidenhead
To a young handsome man. Then I loved him,
Extremely loved him, infinitely loved him!
And yet he had a cousin, fair as he too.
But in my heart was Palamon, and there,
Lord, what a coil he keeps! To hear him
Sing in an evening, what a heaven it is!
And yet his songs are sad ones. Fairer spoken
Was never gentleman. When I come in
To bring him water in a morning, first
He bows his noble body, then salutes me thus:
"Fair, gentle maid, good morrow. May thy goodness
Get thee a happy husband." Once he kissed me;
I loved my lips the better ten days after.
Would he would do so ev'ry day! He grieves much —
And me as much to see his misery.
What should I do to make him know I love him?
For I would fain enjoy him. Say I ventured
To set him free? What says the law then?
Thus much for law or kindred! I will do it,
And this night, or tomorrow, he shall love me.

A Midsummer Night's Dream, Act 1, Scene 1

by William Shakespeare

HELENA:

How happy some o'er other some can be!
Through Athens I am thought as fair as she.
But what of that? Demetrius thinks not so;
He will not know what all but he do know:
And as he errs, doting on Hermia's eyes,
So I, admiring of his qualities:
Things base and vile, folding no quantity,
Love can transpose to form and dignity:
Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind;
And therefore is wing'd Cupid painted blind:
Nor hath Love's mind of any judgement taste;
Wings and no eyes figure unheedy haste:
And therefore is Love said to be a child,
Because in choice he is so oft beguiled.
As waggish boys in game themselves forswear,
So the boy Love is perjured every where:
For ere Demetrius look'd on Hermia's eyne,
He hail'd down oaths that he was only mine;
And when this hail some heat from Hermia felt,
So he dissolved, and showers of oaths did melt.
I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight:
Then to the wood will he to-morrow night
Pursue her; and for this intelligence
If I have thanks, it is a dear expense:
But herein mean I to enrich my pain,
To have his sight thither and back again.

The Winter's Tale, Act 3, Scene 3 by William Shakespeare

HERMIONE:

Sir, spare your threats:
The bug which you would fright me with I seek.
To me can life be no commodity:
The crown and comfort of my life, your favour,
I do give lost; for I do feel it gone,
But know not how it went. My second joy
And first-fruits of my body, from his presence
I am barr'd, like one infectious. My third comfort
Starr'd most unluckily, is from my breast,
The innocent milk in its most innocent mouth,
Haled out to murder: myself on every post
Proclaimed a strumpet: with immodest hatred
The child-bed privilege denied, which 'longs
To women of all fashion; lastly, hurried
Here to this place, i' the open air, before
I have got strength of limit. Now, my liege,
Tell me what blessings I have here alive,
That I should fear to die? Therefore proceed.
But yet hear this: mistake me not; no life,
I prize it not a straw, but for mine honour,
Which I would free, if I shall be condemn'd
Upon surmises, all proofs sleeping else
But what your jealousies awake, I tell you
'Tis rigor and not law. Your honours all,
I do refer me to the oracle:
Apollo be my judge!

Henry IV, Part 1, Act 1, Scene 3 by William Shakespeare

HOTSPUR:

My liege, I did deny no prisoners.
But I remember, when the fight was done,
When I was dry with rage and extreme toil,
Breathless and faint, leaning upon my sword,
Came there a certain lord, neat, and trimly dress'd,
Fresh as a bridegroom; and his chin new reap'd
Show'd like a stubble-land at harvest-home;
He was perfum'd like a milliner;
And 'twixt his finger and his thumb he held
A pouncet-box, which ever and anon
He gave his nose and took't away again;
Who therewith angry, when it next came there,
Took it in snuff; and still he smiled and talk'd,
And as the soldiers bore dead bodies by,
He call'd them untaught knaves, unmannerly,
To bring a slovenly unhandsome corse
Betwixt the wind and his nobility.
With many holiday and lady terms
He question'd me; amongst the rest, demanded
My prisoners in your majesty's behalf.
I then, all smarting with my wounds being cold,
To be so pester'd with a popinjay,
Out of my grief and my impatience,
Answer'd neglectingly I know not what,
He should or he should not; for he made me mad
To see him shine so brisk and smell so sweet
And talk so like a waiting-gentlewoman
Of guns and drums and wounds,--God save the mark!--
And telling me the sovereign'st thing on earth
Was parmaceti for an inward bruise;
And that it was great pity, so it was,
This villanous salt-petre should be digg'd
Out of the bowels of the harmless earth,
Which many a good tall fellow had destroy'd
So cowardly; and but for these vile guns,
He would himself have been a soldier.
This bald unjointed chat of his, my lord,
I answer'd indirectly, as I said;
And I beseech you, let not his report
Come current for an accusation
Betwixt my love and your high majesty.

***Othello*, Act 1, Scene 3**

by William Shakespeare

IAGO:

Thus do I ever make my fool my purse:
For I mine own gain'd knowledge should profane,
If I would time expend with such a snipe.
But for my sport and profit. I hate the Moor:
And it is thought abroad, that 'twixt my sheets
He has done my office: I know not if't be true;
But I, for mere suspicion in that kind,
Will do as if for surety. He holds me well;
The better shall my purpose work on him.
Cassio's a proper man: let me see now:
To get his place and to plume up my will
In double knavery--How, how? Let's see --
After some time, to abuse Othello's ear
That he is too familiar with his wife.
He hath a person and a smooth dispose
To be suspected, framed to make women false.
The Moor is of a free and open nature,
That thinks men honest that but seem to be so,
And will as tenderly be led by the nose
As asses are.
I have't. It is engender'd. Hell and night
Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light.

Measure for Measure, Act 2, Scene 4 by William Shakespeare

ISABELLA:

To whom should I complain? Did I tell this,
Who would believe me? O perilous mouths,
That bear in them one and the self-same tongue,
Either of condemnation or approval;
Bidding the law make court'sy to their will:
Hooking both right and wrong to the appetite,
To follow as it draws! I'll to my brother:
Though he hath fallen by prompture of the blood,
Yet hath he in him such a mind of honour.
That, had he twenty heads to tender down
On twenty bloody blocks, he'd yield them up,
Before his sister should her body stoop
To such abhorr'd pollution.
Then, Isabel, live chaste, and, brother, die:
More than our brother is our chastity.
I'll tell him yet of Angelo's request,
And fit his mind to death, for his soul's rest.

As You Like It, Act 2, Scene 7 by William Shakespeare

JAQUES:

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players:
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.
And then the whining school-boy, with his satchel
And shining morning face, creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,
Full of strange oaths and bearded like the pard,
Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,
Seeking the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice,
In fair round belly with good capon lined,
With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws and modern instances;
And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts
Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon,
With spectacles on nose and pouch on side,
His youthful hose, well saved, a world too wide
For his shrunk shank; and his big manly voice,
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,
That ends this strange eventful history,
Is second childishness and mere oblivion,
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

Henry VI, Part 1, Act 5, Scene 4

by William Shakespeare

JOAN LA PUCELLE:

First, let me tell you whom you have condemn'd:
Not me begotten of a shepherd swain,
But issued from the progeny of kings;
Virtuous and holy; chosen from above,
By inspiration of celestial grace,
To work exceeding miracles on earth.
I never had to do with wicked spirits:
But you, that are polluted with your lusts,
Stain'd with the guiltless blood of innocents,
Corrupt and tainted with a thousand vices,
Because you want the grace that others have,
You judge it straight a thing impossible
To compass wonders but by help of devils.
No, misconceived! Joan of Arc hath been
A virgin from her tender infancy,
Chaste and immaculate in very thought;
Whose maiden blood, thus rigorously effused,
Will cry for vengeance at the gates of heaven.

Two Gentlemen of Verona, Act 1, Scene 2 by William Shakespeare

JULIA:

This babble shall not henceforth trouble me.
Here is a coil with protestation!

Tears the letter

O hateful hands, to tear such loving words!
Injurious wasps, to feed on such sweet honey
And kill the bees that yield it with your stings!
I'll kiss each several paper for amends.
Look, here is writ 'kind Julia.' Unkind Julia!
As in revenge of thy ingratitude,
I throw thy name against the bruising stones,
Trampling contemptuously on thy disdain.
And here is writ 'love-wounded Proteus.'
Poor wounded name! my bosom as a bed
Shall lodge thee till thy wound be thoroughly heal'd;
And thus I search it with a sovereign kiss.
But twice or thrice was 'Proteus' written down.
Be calm, good wind, blow not a word away
Till I have found each letter in the letter,
Except mine own name: that some whirlwind bear
Unto a ragged fearful-hanging rock
And throw it thence into the raging sea!
Lo, here in one line is his name twice writ,
'Poor forlorn Proteus, passionate Proteus,
To the sweet Julia:' that I'll tear away.
And yet I will not, sith so prettily
He couples it to his complaining names.
Thus will I fold them one on another:
Now kiss, embrace, contend, do what you will.

***Romeo and Juliet*, Act 3, Scene 2**

by William Shakespeare

JULIET:

Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds,
Towards Phoebus' lodging: such a wagoner
As Phaethon would whip you to the west,
And bring in cloudy night immediately.
Spread thy close curtain, love-performing night,
That runaway's eyes may wink and Romeo
Leap to these arms, untalk'd of and unseen.
Lovers can see to do their amorous rites
By their own beauties; or, if love be blind,
It best agrees with night. Come, civil night,
Thou sober-suited matron, all in black,
And learn me how to lose a winning match,
Play'd for a pair of stainless maidenhoods:
Hood my unmann'd blood, bating in my cheeks,
With thy black mantle; till strange love, grown bold,
Think true love acted simple modesty.
Come, night; come, Romeo; come, thou day in night;
For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night
Whiter than new snow on a raven's back.
Come, gentle night, come, loving, black-brow'd night,
Give me my Romeo; and, when he shall die,
Take him and cut him out in little stars,
And he will make the face of heaven so fine
That all the world will be in love with night
And pay no worship to the garish sun.
O, I have bought the mansion of a love,
But not possess'd it, and, though I am sold,
Not yet enjoy'd: so tedious is this day
As is the night before some festival
To an impatient child that hath new robes
And may not wear them. O, here comes my nurse!

Henry IV Part 1, Act 2, Scene 3 by William Shakespeare

LADY PERCY:

O, my good lord, why are you thus alone?
For what offence have I this fortnight been
A banish'd woman from my Harry's bed?
Tell me, sweet lord, what is't that takes from thee
Thy stomach, pleasure and thy golden sleep?
Why dost thou bend thine eyes upon the earth,
And start so often when thou sit'st alone?
Why hast thou lost the fresh blood in thy cheeks;
And given my treasures and my rights of thee
To thick-eyed musing and cursed melancholy?
In thy faint slumbers I by thee have watch'd,
And heard thee murmur tales of iron wars;
Speak terms of manage to thy bounding steed;
Cry 'Courage! to the field!' And thou hast talk'd
Of sallies and retires, of trenches, tents,
Of palisadoes, frontiers, parapets,
Of basilisks, of cannon, culverin,
Of prisoners' ransom and of soldiers slain,
And all the currents of a heady fight.
Thy spirit within thee hath been so at war
And thus hath so bestirr'd thee in thy sleep,
That beads of sweat have stood upon thy brow
Like bubbles in a late-disturbed stream;
And in thy face strange motions have appear'd,
Such as we see when men restrain their breath
On some great sudden hest. O, what portents are these?
Some heavy business hath my lord in hand,
And I must know it, else he loves me not.

Two Gentlemen of Verona, Act 2, Scene 3 by William Shakespeare

LAUNCE:

Nay, 'twill be this hour ere I have done weeping. All the kind of the Launces have this very fault. I have received my proportion, like the prodigious son, and am going with Sir Proteus to the Imperial's court. I think Crab, my dog, be the sourest-natured dog that lives: my mother weeping; my father wailing; my sister crying; our maid howling; our cat wringing her hands, and all our house in a great 600 perplexity; yet did not this cruel-hearted cur shed one tear. He is a stone, a very pebble stone, and has no more pity in him than a dog. A Jew would have wept to have seen our parting. Why, my grandam, having no eyes, look you, wept herself blind at my parting. Nay, I'll show you the manner of it. This shoe is my father. No, this left shoe is my father; no, no, this left shoe is my mother; nay, that cannot be so neither. Yes, it is so, it is so: it hath the worser sole. This shoe with the hole in it is my mother; and this my father. A vengeance on't, there 'tis. Now, sit, this staff is my sister; for, look you, she is as white as a lily, and as small as a wand. This hat is Nan, our maid. I am the dog. No, the dog is himself, and I am the dog. O, the dog is me, and I am myself. Ay; so, so. Now come I to my father: 'Father, your blessing.' Now should not the shoe speak a word for weeping; now should I kiss my father; well, he weeps on; now come I to my mother. O that she could speak now like a wood woman! Well, I kiss her. Why, there 'tis: here's my mother's breath up and down. Now come I to my sister: mark the moan she makes. Now the dog all this while sheds not a tear; nor speaks a word; but see how I lay the dust with my tears.

As You Like It, Act 3, Scene 5

by William Shakespeare

PHOEBE:

Think not I love him, though I ask for him:
'Tis but a peevish boy; yet he talks well;
But what care I for words? yet words do well
When he that speaks them pleases those that hear.
It is a pretty youth: not very pretty:
But, sure, he's proud, and yet his pride becomes him:
He'll make a proper man: the best thing in him
Is his complexion; and faster than his tongue
Did make offence his eye did heal it up.
He is not very tall; yet for his years he's tall:
His leg is but so so; and yet 'tis well:
There was a pretty redness in his lip,
A little riper and more lusty red
Than that mix'd in his cheek; 'twas just the difference
Between the constant red and mingled damask.
There be some women, Silvius, had they mark'd him
In parcels as I did, would have gone near
To fall in love with him; but, for my part,
I love him not nor hate him not; and yet
I have more cause to hate him than to love him:
For what had he to do to chide at me?
He said mine eyes were black and my hair black:
And, now I am remember'd, scorn'd at me:
I marvel why I answer'd not again:
But that's all one; omittance is no quittance.
I'll write to him a very taunting letter,
And thou shalt bear it: wilt thou, Silvius?

The Merchant of Venice, Act 4, Scene 1

by William Shakespeare

PORTIA:

The quality of mercy is not strain'd,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is twice blest;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown;
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
But mercy is above this sceptred sway;
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
Though justice be thy plea, consider this,
That, in the course of justice, none of us
Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy;
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much
To mitigate the justice of thy plea;
Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

Henry IV, Part 1, Act 1, Scene 2 by William Shakespeare

PRINCE HENRY:

I know you all, and will awhile uphold
The unyoked humour of your idleness:
Yet herein will I imitate the sun,
Who doth permit the base contagious clouds
To smother up his beauty from the world,
That, when he please again to be himself,
Being wanted, he may be more wonder'd at,
By breaking through the foul and ugly mists
Of vapours that did seem to strangle him.
If all the year were playing holidays,
To sport would be as tedious as to work;
But when they seldom come, they wish'd for come,
And nothing pleaseth but rare accidents.
So, when this loose behavior I throw off
And pay the debt I never promised,
By how much better than my word I am,
By so much shall I falsify men's hopes;
And like bright metal on a sullen ground,
My reformation, glittering o'er my fault,
Shall show more goodly and attract more eyes
Than that which hath no foil to set it off.
I'll so offend, to make offence a skill;
Redeeming time when men think least I will.

Romeo and Juliet, Act 2, Scene 2 by William Shakespeare

ROMEO:

He jests at scars that never felt a wound.

JULIET appears above at a window

But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks?
It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.
Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,
Who is already sick and pale with grief,
That thou her maid art far more fair than she:
Be not her maid, since she is envious;
Her vestal livery is but sick and green
And none but fools do wear it; cast it off.
It is my lady, O, it is my love!
O, that she knew she were!
She speaks yet she says nothing: what of that?
Her eye discourses; I will answer it.
I am too bold, 'tis not to me she speaks:
Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
Having some business, do entreat her eyes
To twinkle in their spheres till they return.
What if her eyes were there, they in her head?
The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars,
As daylight doth a lamp; her eyes in heaven
Would through the airy region stream so bright
That birds would sing and think it were not night.
See, how she leans her cheek upon her hand!
O, that I were a glove upon that hand,
That I might touch that cheek!

As You Like It, Act 3, Scene 5 by William Shakespeare

ROSALIND:

And why, I pray you? Who might be your mother,
That you insult, exult, and all at once,
Over the wretched? What though you have no beauty,--
As, by my faith, I see no more in you
Than without candle may go dark to bed--
Must you be therefore proud and pitiless?
Why, what means this? Why do you look on me?
I see no more in you than in the ordinary
Of nature's sale-work. 'Od's my little life,
I think she means to tangle my eyes too!
No, faith, proud mistress, hope not after it:
'Tis not your inky brows, your black silk hair,
Your bugle eyeballs, nor your cheek of cream,
That can entame my spirits to your worship.
You foolish shepherd, wherefore do you follow her,
Like foggy south puffing with wind and rain?
You are a thousand times a properer man
Than she a woman: 'tis such fools as you
That makes the world full of ill-favour'd children:
'Tis not her glass, but you, that flatters her;
And out of you she sees herself more proper
Than any of her lineaments can show her.
But, mistress, know yourself: down on your knees,
And thank heaven, fasting, for a good man's love:
For I must tell you friendly in your ear,
Sell when you can: you are not for all markets:
Cry the man mercy; love him; take his offer:
Foul is most foul, being foul to be a scoffer.
So take her to thee, shepherd: fare you well.