

1616

The Secrets and Passions of William Shakespeare

ACT ONE: SCENE ONE

Shakespeare's office: his Stratford home.

Late daytime

WILLIAM:

The thickening dark old crow
What do you fear? That prayers should drift so Will-less,
I would see my spirit booted and spurred, to leave this
hurting frame ..

And over thrown by *stumbling*, grave ward thoughts
I'll not remonstrate truth ...
I am dying
But the Offences, lapses and hard words
To, remember them all?
You owe reckonings crow
Nothing else can we call our own, but our death
And the narrow plot which holds our bones.

Make carrion of dead days
Pick their rinds for the fruits

....

(knocking)

Oh, the people and customs around the dying more terrify
than the thing itself
to have business but with one's self
is work enough
The door is locked daughters,
The fire is lit, the key?
No, Judith, I cannot find it
Peace daughters, are you mine?
You cause me doubt;
You would think to stay his heavy hand?

With light untaught gabble,

....

I have lived, swimming deep in flatteries:
Would come to earth, without petty evasions
I would be solitary

....

I am sorry
My ears are so strewn with sugar
As to be grown deaf, even to kindness
I am warm Suzanna,
And watch the birds make nests.

....

Yesterday they were chicks
Too late now to learn their hearts

....

What endures Father?
Wealth, reputation?
The magistrates took yours ...
With my chance at university

....

To see you sick in dread of rude gazes and giddy whispers
Your too mortal tears,
Washed off my esteem, watered my ambition
For all my beatings, I became no lawyer
But, your vagabond boy, *has* been called great
And I disputed lines,
Weighed souls,
Charted every human shore!
Though who now will read my maps?

....

Plutarch's... Life of Alexander"...
Alexander,
I was to write of you but the horizon moves
"Shall I die, and all this unconquered"
Always there is undiscovered country,
Always one battle more, you cracked crowns to Asia's rim:
Fighting for home
Though *you* never returned!

You knew, home makes conquerors again into skulking boys...

....

But I fought for this home.

Stratford's largest, a promise to you Anne

We grew cooped midst the stink and gears of leather works

Now, we've airy rooms:

I skulk here and you in there

Ahh William! Find the joy!

Pick fine dishes, leave the sour!

....

A birthday gift...

Ben Johnson's hand! The playwright!

(Reads) "This shares your open, free nature, has excellent taste and like your writing, has a slight overabundance."

....

It stinks, like an oyster man's drawers!

An overripe Dutch cheese!

Ugh! Indigestible as one of your tragedies,

Damn! these teeth

Ben, slow old galleon I should love to harry you again.

(losing it)

...as I grow older I know less ..

....

Glass windows... Father,

Had you died before I had them made?

Father ...

Come see your reflection

We are truly rich

.....

FATHER:

My reflection William?

The hollow eye, the wrinkled brow...

Sapless, weak, unable... rich?

....

WILLIAM:

Sans everything ...

I now ache
With what I once but wrote
Ben, Ben, is that you?
No, a mere shadow,
What endures Ben? What lasts?

BEN JONSON:
Our works Will!
Our second death comes when our name
Is spoken for the last time
I am having my plays printed Will,
What'll be your legacy?
The cow shit on your farm boots?

WILLIAM:
Pff Printing plays, who even reads sonnets now?...
You'll not earn back the paper Ben! ...
Nor would I
I'm not in fashion
England is barbarous; Loving only dumb shows and noise,
and I fear she shall not grow wiser Ben,
I made claim to discover
What men could not see of themselves ..
But on darker days think I did I Merely trim the pages
Of Plutarch, Ovid, Holinshed ... to my own small measures

I know Men's hearing has limits :
kings and shop keepers alike
see the greatest worth in their own looks and doggerels
and precious thought is often shattered on ideas already
firm settled in the mind
which being petrified are invulnerable to sense
knowing that, did I over polish the substance
to fashion flattering reflections of lesser men?
There is some necessity in this
For art's disorderly motives disquiet
the upright, the common herd and the born favoured alike
So she must equivocate three times

seem a, saint,
play the servile devil
and sugar truths lest they be spat back

ahh (spurns him)
I am well hid in my creations

But My new works do not sing, like sweet Fletcher's, or
scourge like yours Ben
But I hold them close
And like all fond fathers, think them the wisest of all.
I'd not have *them* age to be scorned like old men,
For having less truth than tongue.
I shall burn them!
My book buried, with me
All loves and labours lost Ben

....

He is not here?
What lasts?
why on aching days do we extend our defeats with the
invention of new injuries

Would that my dear son had lived...

SCENE TWO

WILLIAM:

Jon... Jon...

The vagrant woman has returned to harangue me at my
window

(To the beggar) yes I know of the enclosures...

I am sorry that they took your land...

But is the famine my affair?

I have no food.

What is that look?

Yes, 'tis a fine house...but I am poor in minutes!

You'd steal my last few? ...and hang?

What profit then to your child?

My guard, no Jon do but warn her.
Begging is an offence, under the old queen you'd been
flogged through the streets!

(To Jon)

No, let her rave.

Were we burdened thus, as much or more we should
ourselves complain."

I quote myself, Crow! Your invention is grown so
threadbare

You snatch at discarded feathers,

That hollow look, has me disquieted

True, mother, my grain stores *are* full.

But father has it "a thrown scrap invites gulls to swarm,"

I master *words* but, what rejoinder

That deep *silence* wherein the hungry, fear not even of
death?

Anne wears that look, does she starve?

.....

The poor *are* wronged Mother:

"To watch and do nothing: makes evil acts common"

....

But I learned silence, through bloody example; as a boy...
Uncle Edward's house, Edward, drunk and railing:

EDWARD ARDEN:

I will not suffer hell to lose the old religion ...

Let my words spill to the street!

My only crime is to be catholic in a godless age!

WILLIAM:

His Gardener: old Hugh, calls me from the door

HUGH:

Come see the Garden Will,

What's the matter lad?

WILLIAM:

What bids the flowers die,

And not the gorse, Hugh?

HUGH:

They but sleep through winter,
Save their blooms for sunnier days
Oh, here's a penny of sugar for ye lad.

WILLIAM:

Uncle's words had him butchered.
His family implicated in a plot, against the Queen.
He was executed,
Old Hugh, dragged from his unkempt plot
To be tortured, till broken and toothless
He confessed to being a catholic priest in hiding.
I saw uncle's head displayed
His lips: bloodless and blackened,
Taught me silence and equivocation

....

My plays have liquor for all thirsts:
I wrote the Jew's pain, flattered his enemy,
Played grievances of king and commoner,
I'm catholic, protestant, faithful and faithless to all men-
With a penny for the takings.
Anne ... walks above...
Women have such economy...
They can accuse with a footstep,
She is in mourning
She has been for years!
And now "*the will*"
I left her the bed!
Am I cruel?
She has few years left
And then, I'll not have her grease-mawed relatives take
our daughter's home!
Home,
In form, only
It is an unfinished play

A rabble of uneasy timbers edging stillborn dreams

....

SCENE THREE

A summer's meadow under the willow

That delicate stooped to the river

I 18, you 26,

I wrap words around you:

"Those lips that Love's own hand did make" hmm

A woman's heart ...

Read aright will arouse to heat,

But is quickly closed, should be studied daily and nightly.

Though, to keep new interest in an old book is hard.

Our wedding, your flowers... simple....white,

How were they named? ...

You met my brother Gilbert for the first time...

The look you shared.

....

A Players company came to Stratford:

And you lodged with us,

Augustine Phillips, actor!

Your stories, poise...

Those foreign clothes,

Preposterous and wonderful!

AUGUSTINE:

You'd know of London?

My little spear shaker?

Tis... a raw hunger of impious fuckery

That feeds `pon itself!

Small rooms, vehement lives, rich and poor

Hawk and prey, tumbled into one another

She expends weak souls, her children die and the old
suffer

....

Yet there is money too will

Your sonnets have merit

The new play factories need writers, and actors.

Be apprentice to the theatre
But keep your wife's land in Stratford.
You will live longer here, all is cleaner:
The food, the air and the women

....

SCENE FOUR

WILLIAM:

The Rose Theatre, with Augustine:

Kydd's Spanish Tragedy

Aleyn was masterful.

I would never hold a stage like him,

The play loved, though weak

Then a bear fight:

Bears blinded, with beatings, starvation and collars forced
to fight

Dogs rip their flesh.

Pitiful

....

Though a commonplace for Augustine,
Who watches a human fight in the crowd.

AUGUSTINE:

Look Will, Those two stinkards; daggers drawn In hot
dispute.

S'blood they'll bring down that pillar!

Henslowe fears for his theatre.

And the noble with him

Is patron of our company.

Appease them Will!

WILLIAM:

With what?

I have no weapon!

AUGUSTINE:

No weapons!

Henslowe will have apoplexy! ...

Extemporise! ...
Use your will... shake your spear
Show your strength as an actor.

WILLIAM:
One said:

FIRST MECHANICAL
Ee pissed in me ale!
Take 'im down!

SECONDMECHANICAL:
He gived Meg the pox!
Ave this ye puke fish!

WILLIAM:
I extemporised in the manner of the Spanish tragedy:
"Gentles All!
The fault it lies,
In love for ale and women's sighs,
For they being but rarely good,
Will often steal your livelihood,
Men are all constant though,
So kiss and undo harms,
And go unbruised in each's arms."
Cack!
But they laughed and all went together, Augustine said:

AUGUSTINE:
Twas well-done Shakebear!
You've impressed them my pup!
.....You are hired.
Now, sweep the stage!

WILLIAM:
A Brave new world of
Nobles, Clowns, and Harlots
From School I'd classics, history, disputation

Father taught me to draw beauty from raw stuff,
Turn a penny from a craft
From Mother I'd old tales, women's wisdom
Now Augustine taught me to act, to forge truth from
deception and in the theatre, this country boy learned how
to: steal the dreams of kings
And to sell them back with interest

....

See me then:

YOUNG WILL:

I sweep, oyster shells, blood, and piss
From the theatre floor,
I mend plays, act and...
I advise gentlemen on the cleanest of the whores
That gull the building

WILLIAM:

Anne asks:

ANNE:

"What of your London life?
The song has London as the
Flower of all cities? "

YOUNG WILLIAM:

Oh my love,
It is a life... Unimagined in the country!
London is a sea sucking in all scummy channels of the
realm...
Everyone is 20, drunken, fighting for my purse!
Glad I am that Augustine is my guide.
(*Passes him a cape*)

AUGUSTINE:

Thank you, d'you like it?
It's Flemish.
Take care Will...London is all theatre,

Spies and rumour abound,
For, people kept in fear of foreigners,
Miss the abuses of their own masters.
We lodge in Shoreditch! Will, I shall introduce you to
everyone... There is a tide in the affairs of men:
Take the current, or lose your ventures

WILLIAM:

I did,
but saw many bound In the shallows and miseries Of
Shoreditch inns
and brothels.
Here, playwright Kit Marlowe
killed William Bradley in a duel!
Who now remembers Marlowe's eyes?
wild oceans
You were there ... Richard Burbage You'd live to sail
Henry, Hamlet, Lear and Othello... Through their
tempests and calms
The finest actor I ever knew
We swelled, With a thousand future voyages, at our prow,
Now all in our wakes, Diminished to
ebbing memory
When you die So will my name;
The young Earl of Southampton
Liked my looks, and patronised my poems.

SOUTHAMPTON:

William,
I'm overcome
This line is delicious,
"Graceless, 'tween frozen conscience and hot-burning will...
Close your eyes Will;
Even Plato enjoyed the company of men,
Even Alexander.
Close your eyes, or fix them on the portrait of mother
if it helps...

WILLIAM:

You judge?

Starvation and recognition conspire to make whores of us all

But, to wear my fine words He gave me a small fortune...

I was a sweep of vanity

Titus, Romeo, my histories,

Some here cannot believe I wrote my works...

I was a man of the times thought my my verse to ever live young.

WILLIAM:

Well, time will spoil prides sweet sauce,

Then, I'd my twin joys: Little Judith

and Hamnet; farm foods, London goods,

Our best days Anne..?

Anne?

Silence

The still of a country night,

Cradle to a calm conscience,

But a restive soul yearns for the noise and flesh of London

...

I was a loving witness and ear, to the lives and deaths of the city.

Water was unclean,

All drank beer and were fish eyed or floundering, in drinks aftermath.

Dear Kit Marlowe at the mermaid

MARLOWE:

I am happy that London is drunk

For a city dancing at the brim of inebriation between beds, and bloodshed

I most susceptible to Poetry.

I have had it said on stage that

Religion is but a childish toy"

The fear they felt!

Is it not passing brave, to be a playmaker?

We are cuckoos Will, and push to make space...
We do not build nests
Like puritan sparrows
Drab birds and all alike..
Yet as eagles, do we raise the blood of life
To crimson splendour.
To boys wine and brave living

WILLIAM:

Kit was our darling,
I hear now the laughter of London's young playwrights...
Nashe: melancholy drunk, in stained black Satin, Peele:
pox ill and fawning
And you were there
Robert Greene: proud, degraded, bitter...
Laying a hand on a serving girl's knee:

GREENE:

Softly my fingers up this curtain heave,
And make me happy stealing by degrees.
First bare her legs, then creep up to her knees!
A touch and sigh a mannerly thigh
A pox on leaving when I am nigh
Ow!

WILLIAM

She spits 'pon him, Greene vomits 'pon my Stratford made
boot and all laugh!
These: the university-educated elite,
Though all broke...'cept Marlowe, who was betimes sent to
Italy a secret spy
As an actor I was paid nightly,
Not just once for the play, as writers.
I'd business in Stratford; I had money
But with no University was not a gentleman
I was disentitled to the name of poet,
And why else Greene?

GREENE:

For, if a real poet has forty Pound in his purse together,
He neither buys land nor merchandise with it,
But a month's commodity of sack, wenches and capons!"

WILLIAM:

But, good doctor...such a prescription leads the purse to a low ebbe?

GREENE:

I have nothing it is true Shakebags!
But 'tis actors have stolen my money!
I sold "Orlando Furioso"
To the Queens Players for twenty nobles,
They sold it to the Admirals Men for as much more!
A host of privateering, ball sucking cod fleas!

WILLIAM:

This is the business Greene, without players
There would be no playing....

GREENE:

There is no faith to be held with the puppets that speak
from our mouths!
You actors get by scholars your whole living!

WILLIAM:

I am half a writer Greene!

GREENE:

Yes, Shakespeare!
You are... half a writer indeed

....

WILLIAM:

But scribbling players would draw up the future:

Theatre's closed for plague, But all swam well with me, I
gave loans at interest.

While you sank penniless, calling to my rooms to:

(To Greene)

"Lend you money?"... You offer no surety Greene,
But some old works already sold to other companies.
The theatres are closed,
I cannot help.

GREENE:

So I must feel the storm and starve,
While you are fed with cakes?
There are not three good men left un-hanged in London
And one is lost to this cold September night

WILLIAM:

You died, a whore wept over you
In that filthy room, midst the stink of Pickle herrings and
vinegared wine

Your last pamphlet called me "waspy ant and upstart
crow"... I won the publisher's apology I was Shylock:
"Yesterday you call'd me dog, And for these courtesies
I'll lend you thus much moneys?"

Or like Hal...

Breaking through foul and ugly mists That would strangle
me.

I let him die,

Find who I am

I write with sweet compassion

Is this Will a changeling?

Plays and reputation make melody of us,

But we are raw cacophony:

A din of tempers dear and vicious

....

20 years have past; kit Marlowe? Stabbed,
Your reckless tongue; tied by secret authority.
Kyd, tortured, Many imprisoned.
Ben, even you carry the brand for Tyburn

BEN

A reminder Will,
The Poets leash is tight,
His neck slight

WILL:

Cheer me with a tale Augustine

AUGUSTINE:

I have one, Fakespeare!
Recall that once after Burbage played Richard the third
A country wife followed him saying:

WIFE:

"Take Me Rich- hard in the Kings costume" ...
He arranges to meet her, after finishing the ale you buy
him.
Then you sneak back to his lodgings to have her first!
He knocks saying "Rich- hard is at the door" ...

WILLIAM:

But William the Conquer- her came before.
I was not the dutiful country husband I wished

....

But what of Anne and Brother Gilbert?
as if cold thought, might exempt hot betrayal
I slid, through London's forest of fine limbs and
Black Luce came.
Beautiful Moorish whore, hot coal in the ashen London
crowd
To warm my nights, light my skin, and keep me deep in
passions heat
I bruise your lips!
At home...
Anne was shrewish.
The law does not permit us to break with a marriage
I pushed her and Gilbert closer and asked nothing

SCENE FIVE

...TIME

Seeing even Drake and Raleigh, mocked at court for their
piping country voices

I let the Thames wash the Avon from my tongue.

London: '96 I Write: King John,

A Thursday anda heavy blow at my door.

....

Gilbert!

Yes...you are most welcome..

Brother sit, sit.

Why so grave..?

Was it a labour to find me? ...

Tax collectors here are, blood enrapt lice,

To avoid them, one must change lodgings as others do
shirts.

Well, you have upturned my stone brother;

It is good to see you...do not think me discourteous...

But I am writing Gilbert, and delays can have dangerous
ends...

What has happened?

Your eye carries a weight of death...

Unload your news!

Nay then, forestall your tongue! This I will not hear!

How long sick?

I was not there!

Oh did he call for me?

How long, your search for me?

Oh that's long...

Oh Hamnet, too late

I am sorry my son, my prettiest poem.

I thank you for your Sorrow Gilbert

Though tis straw `gainst time's immolations.

Cannot mend hearts,

Nor bring him laughing hither.

Still, lend me your lonely sorrow

I'll find it fellows!

Rake to myself all old griefs, to congregate and eclipse the joys he once gave.

For on this day, there is no harder torment than happiness remembered,

Or... consoling word!

God hath sucked the honey of his breath!

Too late to bury him; to bury my son

Did Gilbert see Luce, run from my rooms, stockings in hand?

He saw my fine new bed, and the stains

....

Anne's heart closed...

I thirty, you near forty ...

Affection grew shallow, Loss fathomless

Even now grief fillsthe room of my absent child,

Lies in his bed, Walks up and down with me,

Puts on his pretty looks,

Repeats his words, remembers me, of all his gracious parts...

Marlowe, had it pat,

The world is a godless chaos of atoms!

All one cold season,

Grace, a meagre dream of summer

How memory steeped are grown the things of the world

Yet how pregnant with future loss

....

Was I harsh with Gilbert?

Susanna said it is excellent to have a giant's mind

But tyrannous to use it as a giant,

To breathe into stone!

I Bought this: New place...

and gained my family A coat of arms!

Well black Luce did,

Relive lust

She had a tongue can persuade without oratory.

YOUNG WILL:

Father! I've won our coat of arms!
We are gentlemen, father.
Tis I,
Will. Your son!

....

WILLIAM:
107 acres, the noise of visitors,
Anne's silence
Ben Jonson is jailed for a satire, which closes the theatres!
Nights without applause
Here and in London

....

YOUNG WILL:
Emilia Lanier: Italian poet,
Riggish, untameable
Playing sweet music
I envy those jacks that nimble leap,
To kiss the tender inward of thy hand,
Give them thy fingers,
Me, thy lips to kiss
From Italy, my soul's treasure house,
Your fingers little songs in loves language,
Walk me through Venice and Padua!

OLD WILL
I love you

....

Mad in pursuit and possession
Dark skin, cloves, Musk,
Your husband
A waste of shame.
We ruined all!

....

I never stood upon the Rialto
This cold country annoys my bones
Crow would've been an Italian swallow
But he flies against the rain

Like a drab sparrow....
I drink, but work always
The theatre's re-open and
I Bring Ben Jonson, to write for us!

BEN:
You should read more Horace, Shagspeare.
You have some animal wit but,
You write more of an Italy you never saw, than of London!
You steal your plots, stew up times, tempests, fairies,?
You throw the sea into whatever country you wish!
There is no regulation to your work.

WILLIAM:
Ben
I speak of the politic minds and hearts of all men,
Horace's poetica can kiss my arse!
I am Ovid's man...
Change, magic , love...
Beware lest your
regulation drive these things from the world:
Art is a bastard shifting thing!

BEN:
And so are you Will!

SCENE SIX:

WILLIAM:
The theatre's landlord says:

LANDLORD:
You've made my land a nest of drunks and whores;
I'm forced to raise the fees again"

WILLIAM
We cannot pay his rents He wants our building...
Old James Burbage, father of Richard and of the theatre

pours his fortune and blood into the Blackfriars monastery.
residents stop its conversion.
He loses all and to his sons whispers:
"My heart bursts, boys my old heart bursts."
His funeral felt the death of our great romances
Where Augustine said to Richard:

AUGUSTINE:

The landlord has the grounds.
But it was your poor father's timber!
We should dismantle the fucker, and rebuild it over the
river!
By's blood the little pig swiver'll be left
king of a mud heap!

....

WILLIAM:

December '98. The landlord celebrates Christmas and his
new building at his country home,
While a band of brothers, at the cold Thames a happy few
take back our theatre beam by beam.
Old Burbage's widow through defiant tears shouts:
"Leave no stick for the measles to steal"
Across the Thames, we built the Globe.
Hemmings! Condell! Burbage! Augustine! Kemp!! and I
become sharers in the finest playhouse in town.
3,000 people a night Henry the Fifth' over-leaps
Marlowe.

....

And the earl of Southampton calls at my lodgings:

SOUTHAMPTON:

Mr Shakespeare, how you've grown!
A gentleman now shh Willy. You owe me favours.
We desire *you*, to stage 'Richard the Second' for us.

WILLIAM:

We? my Lord? Um
But it is banned my lord

At least the deposition scene,
Which you might remember
Describes the overthrow of Elizabeth's ancestor...

SOUTHAMPTON:
Shh Willy, we like it!
And will pay 40 Shillings over your ordinary fee.

WILLIAM:
All's well then.
Very good... but, 'tis an old forgotten play my lord.
You must speak to Augustine Phillips or Hemming's or...
I will, I fear, be out of town, rather, um precipitate
business.
I, not liking his "WE" was in Stratford when 'Richard the
Second' was shown.
Shortly Augustine comes down to find me.

AUGUSTINE:
So Shakefleur!
While you've been in the country gelding, pippins, grafting
pigs or whatever foul rural dissipations engage you
The Earl of Southampton and his friend the Earl of Essex
Have attempted a full scale farking rebellion!
And William... it started, with your little play!

Essex, like your Southampton is a pretty thing but mentally
speaking a caution against keeping it in the family.
They took so long to pick suitable shirts that they were late
for their own farking rebellion
All are arrested,
Essex is to be executed
And I am questioned by the Privy Council about your play!
I say:
"Tis old and out of favour and we were offered a large fee
from a noble man."

They let me go But, the queen is incensed and we are
summonsed to play 'Richard the Second', complete, at
court...

All of it!

And all of us!

WILLIAM:

Gods Balls!

....

Ne'r such a sweat did I feel...at an audience!

Essex's was the queen's darling.

She sat powdered, greying, illegible, as cold slate...

As Burbage played King Richard: lonely, betrayed and
about to be taken by his enemies:

"For you have but mistook me all this while.

I live with bread like you, feel want,

Taste grief, need friends:

And, I see you Elizabeth; bury a tear

You weep...

As if like Essex *I* had seen you wigless,

Face unpainted...

Intruded upon your poor mortality,

We blew from the hot court pale as ashes! ...

And you stop me:

ELIZABETH:

Mr Shakespeare: we like your comedies;

They are happier and cost less, than executions.

Something for twelfth night perhaps?

WILLIAM:

I will, what you will, your majesty.

....

With few kind ears left, She could not *today* arrest the
popular players,

but tomorrow?

Julius Caesar asked dangerous questions

But, I was to continue to make much ado about nothing, as
you like it

....

Though such plays gave our clown, too much reign.

WILLIAM:

Kemp! I entreat you once more
Speak only what is set down for you
You continue to extemporise
And fart over my best lines!

KEMP:

I make Laughter William.
Your jokes are tortured and your tragedy torment

WILLIAM:

Because you set the barrenest spectators to laugh
and kill the tale!

KEMP:

Kiss my tale!

WILLIAM:

That is your concluding fart with our company!

WILLIAM:

He danced from London to Norwich,
Played a little, slipped into obscurity
Where penniless he died...
To make powerful enemies, is to collude in one's own
downfall...
Once we were friends, but I offered no help
My best self is in my works
And I confess That to reach it I have at times trod down
too hard
My comedies darkened with the times.
In London I slept with bad dreams...
Not always alone.

Half respectable in Stratford,
Tainted like the dyer's hand in my world,
I wrote Hamlet...
A son who, lived even beyond the tale.
All was there the growing madness of my father,
My deep love of Emilia,
My betrayal and cruelties to Anne, the queen's tear...my
heavy death...
so light in her hand.
All the uncertainties and disease of the time.

....

250 pounds a year, Three houses in Stratford, 107 acres of
land And Queen Elizabeth, last of her line Died, Of lonely
melancholy.
She died of her age and her age died,.

SCENE SEVEN: THE NEW KING

WILLIAM:

All suspicions and contagions, Of her reign seeped from the
mud; Rich, and poor parted further,
Puritans railed against sinful theatre, James of Scotland is
king, and Augustine comes to my lodgings.

AUGUSTINE:

Shakesqueer! I've Sherris, mutton pies and news...
We are made The King's Men We... my love, are farking
courtiers
and you the first playwright to be a royal servant!

WILLIAM:

In our new livery, carrying the king's canopy above his
head at the coronation Augustine whispered:

AUGUSTINE:

So Shakescene, the small town mongrel is a pedigree with
all privileges!
How do you feel?

WILLIAM:

I feel I shall shit my britches and lose all my hair!

AUGUSTINE:

Ahh Shakefear, they are but symptoms of pox! Make trifles of your terror, ensconce yourself into seeming knowledge. We are paid, nothing lasts.

WILLIAM:

To be at court is to be amongst birds and foxes ... never to know which you are.

What of our new king, Augustine?

AUGUSTINE:

he's charmless and gives away England's treasures to sycophants...

We should try to please him!

WILLIAM:

What number of men eat the king and he sees em not!
He gave me this: Spanish ring.

SCENE EIGHT

In Southwark, The Globe could play on
through plague,

But even now in dreams I hear cries of those boarded up in
their houses to die.

The gunpowder plot bruised London further

With dark imaginings

which sent friends of Father and Anne to the gallows.

Hung, drawn quartered,

Their hearts ripped from their living bodies...

No Anne I will not

plea for them

I cannot take such risks

Fear murdered my sleep. I sought to gain favour, with
Macbeth.

Change after change till James's murderous ancestor
Banquo became a martyr.
Riots, plagues a seedless frost.
Have we not seen the best of our time?
Stratford burned, Children starved I stored grain.
You criticise? Like that vagrant.
Do you offer a bed for those that starve in your streets?
There are no more Alexanders, and No more saints.
Our words are monumental,
Our actions meagre.
Mothers accuse me, I have lived long in that
Silence of women that makes reason unreasonable and
Pulls at the unspeakable in a man to undo him. I am the
kings fool!
But a kept bird has more time to cry: Othello, Measure for
Measure, Lear, Winter's Tale, Coriolanus, Macbeth...
A Cold new year's... St Mary's Southwark. I bury my little
brother, Edmund.
Only twenty seven an actor, a hired man.
I wrote him a few parts.
Anne has Gilbert's forearm...
Is that nothing?
Edmunds grave,
Few knew him ... they want my favours...
Susanna gave me a granddaughter:
Childish arts, mirth and laughter give life a shape.
Holy Trinity Church to bury my mother
My parents, their world their religion washed away.
I miss Emilia... and
Anne as we once were.
And then Sweet Augustine,
Who brought me to London,
Guided my hand, joked and listened to all.
My best half who lent me all qualities
That I neglected to breed in myself: Died.
Time mocked us!
The Blackfriars theatre is at last ours.

One late night I saw there, Crouched on the stage in
darkness,
The ghost of my mother.
An image of a woman of the catholic faith, weeping in a
night-time chapel...
It was Burbage!

BURBAGE:

Will! My father's... dream Will
...it killed him.
The ham-headed clotpole!
Satirize it
Seven hundred seats gold threaded costumes...Pearl dusted
faces
shimmering phantoms...
We triple the normal fee dad!
But Augustine is dead Will!
We unhomed the tenants for this Will
What is this pomp, rule, and reign?
but earth and dust?
Augustine is dead!
Will there still be cakes and ale?
Can we not have it all?
Just once?

WILLIAM:

I say nothing, but only think:
"All golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust."
And weep, For old Shoreditch,
Marlowe, Greene, dear Augustine and the others,
We made great reckonings in little rooms
fought ...With old wisdoms
And beat the rough ore Of our English speech, Into fine
silver
To see it become
Mere currency At court and law,
Our art, and

So many lives thrown, Upon the dealing board...

SCENE NINE WILLIAM:

I'd always one eye upon my barns of grain,
But the other on the duplicities our masters
Those, courtly school boys demented with privilege and
authority
Mock my self
Once, I wanted to be them,
Then I made them pompous,
Then, aimed at their enlightenment
Conclude whisper Wasted words
I am sick
with The flatteries I made
But who has not fed honey
To sweeten a master
I have peddled a thousand rusty saws
To untutored critics, and
Foppish lords,
to coin each gold truth And told myself
"These equivocations are the mere peel of me
And within I am true".
Express the irony
But the core
decays When all around is chewed
So many now dead:
Hamnet, my father..
My mother... all my brothers.
The Globe burned.
I saved this!
Augustine and I carried this over the river one winter.
Look for support
Remember Augustine?
The Spanish tragedy?
At the end all die! I am that play
re writ, extemporised upon by time like the ship, A
ghost of the original...

Only in name, the same poor vessel it was.
Calm self
It so cold!?
10 fireplaces and still this hideous damp in the bone!
I am dying
Come light the fire! Light the fire...
It is lit.

It roars ... and so do I... Escape which is not my nature...
Will, you become a tyrant in your house...
To be forgiven
Though I feel as a lamb in winter...
Would be held in arms ...
What of it
But, what will suffice when we pine for former friends ...
Rage against injustice
Sherris, mutton pies or news?
Reflect
I'm a drab bird Emila,
No Anthony
That blind clown
My tragedy and comedy
Is to see the terrible and beautiful All,
The bleakness and jests Of the course

Anne, Once our eyes joined For day then
When Gilbert brought you ribbons, You laughed
like, a young girl.
He loved you, Hated how you diminished in my light...
I know you loved him, Did you act on it?
No... this is what I always hid from my heart.
You stayed true. I had women and you...
What were they called? Our wedding flowers?

"I lie with you and you with me"
I would tell our son now that we can offer the suffering of
life
nothing But tenderness

Judge actions But people, are Frail and
always unfinished
Oaks fall
But Tender gestures
Like the Willow on the Avon Bend To outlast all
The wise
have no need of beautiful fictions ...
Mother could barely read
But, while others cursed the storm
She could find all heaven in the sweet scent of rain
I left you the bed Anne
Because it is fixed to the floor.
Our daughter and her doctor will tend on you.
What Anne? The flowers... ahh yes, they were...sweet
Williams
Oh!
Being, not being, voice and silence
Are all of the same thread.
Can you smell the rain ?