

LEAR Ha ! Goneril with a white beard ? They flattered me like a dog, and told me I had the white hairs in my beard ere the black ones were there. To say 'ay' and 'no' to everything that I said ! 'Ay' and 'no' too was no good divinity. When the rain came to wet me once, and the wind to make me chatter ; when the thunder would not peace at my bidding ; there I found 'em, there I smelt 'em out. Go to, they are not men o' their words. They told me I was everything. 'Tis a lie – I am not ague-proof.

(IVvi : 96 – 104)

GLOUCESTER

O, let me kiss that hand.

LEAR Let me wipe it first ; it smells of mortality.

GLOUCESTER

O ruined piece of nature ; this great world

Shall so wear out to naught. Dost thou know me ?

LEAR I remember thine eyes well enough. Dost thou squiny at me ? No, do thy worst, blind Cupid ; I'll not love. Read thou this challenge ; mark but the penning of it.

GLOUCESTER

Were all thy letters suns, I could not see.

EDGAR [*aside*]

I would not take this from report – it is,
And my heart breaks at it.

LEAR Read.

GLOUCESTER

What, with the case of eyes ?

LEAR O, ho, are you there with me ? No eyes in your head, nor no money in your purse ? Your eyes are in a heavy case, your purse in a light ; yet you see how this world goes.

GLOUCESTER

I see it feelingly.

(IVvi : 131 – 147)

LEAR Thou hast seen a farmer's dog bark at a beggar ?

GLOUCESTER Ay, sir.

LEAR And the creature run from the cur. There thou mightst behold the great image of authority – a dog's obeyed in office.

Thou rascal beadle, hold thy bloody hand !

Why dost thou lash that whore ? Strip thy own back.

Thou hotly lusts to use her in that kind

For which thou whip'st her. The usurer hangs the cozener.

Through tattered clothes small vices do appear ;

Robes and furred gowns hide all. Plate sin with gold,

And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks ;

Arm it in rags, a pygmy's straw does pierce it.

None does offend, none – I say none ! I'll able 'em.

Take that of me, my friend, who have the power

To seal th' accuser's lips. Get thee glass eyes

And, like a scurvy politician, seem

To see the things thou dost not.

(IVvi : 152 – 169)