

EDGAR

I will preserve myself ; and am bethought  
To take the basest and most poorest shape  
That ever penury, in contempt of man,  
Brought near to beast : my face I'll grime with filth,  
Blanket my loins, elf all my hairs in knots,  
And with presented nakedness outface  
The winds and persecutions of the sky.  
The country gives me proof and precedent  
Of Bedlam beggars, who, with roaring voices,  
Strike in their numbed and mortified bare arms  
Pins, wooden pricks, nails, sprigs of rosemary ;  
And with this horrible object, from low farms,  
Poor pelting villages, sheepcotes, and mills,  
Sometimes with lunatic bans, sometime with prayers,  
Enforce their charity. Poor Turlygod, poor Tom,  
That's something yet : Edgar I nothing am.

(II iii : 6 - 21)

FOOL Ha, ha, he wears cruel garters. Horses are tied by  
the heads, dogs and bears by th' neck, monkeys by th'  
loins, and men by th' legs. When a man's over-lusty at  
legs, then he wears wooden nether-stocks.

(II iv : 7 - 10)

FOOL Winter's not gone yet, if the wild geese fly that way.  
Fathers that wear rags  
Do make their children blind,  
But fathers that bear bags  
Shall see their children kind.  
Fortune, that arrant whore,  
Ne'er turns the key to th' poor.  
But for all this, thou shalt have as many dolours for thy  
daughters as thou canst tell in a year.

LEAR

O, how this mother swells up toward my heart !  
Hysterica passio, down, thou climbing sorrow ;  
Thy element's below. Where is this daughter ?

(II iv : 45 - 56)

FOOL We'll set thee to school to an ant, to teach thee  
there's no laboring i' th' winter. All that follow their  
noses are led by their eyes but blind men, and there's not  
a nose among twenty but can smell him that's stinking.  
Let go thy hold when a great wheel runs down a hill, lest  
it break thy neck with following. But the great one that  
goes upward, let him draw thee after. When a wise man  
gives thee better counsel, give me mine again. I would  
have none but knaves follow it since a fool gives it.

That sir which serves and seeks for gain,  
And follows but for form,  
Will pack when it begins to rain  
And leave thee in the storm.  
But I will tarry ; the fool will stay,

(II iv : 65 - 79)

LEAR

O me, my heart, my rising heart ! But down !

FOOL Cry to it, nuncle, as the cockney did to the eels when  
she put 'em i' th' paste alive. She knapped 'em o' th' cox-  
combs with a stick and cried, 'Down, wantons, down !'  
'Twas her brother that, in pure kindness to his horse,  
buttered his hay.

(II iv : 116 - 121)

REGAN

I pray you, father, being weak, seem so.  
If till the expiration of your month  
You will return and sojourn with my sister,  
Dismissing half your train, come then to me.  
I am now from home, and out of that provision  
Which shall be needful for your entertainment.

LEAR

Return to her, and fifty men dismissed ?  
No, rather I abjure all roofs, and choose  
To wage against the emnity o' th' air,  
To be a comrade with the wolf and owl,  
Necessity's sharp pinch. Return with her ?  
Why, the hot-blooded France, that dowerless took  
Our youngest born, I could as well be brought  
To knee his throne, and, squire-like, pension beg  
To keep base life afoot. Return with her ?  
Persuade me rather to be slave and sumpter  
To this detested groom.

GONERIL

At your choice, sir.

LEAR

I prithee, daughter, do not make me mad.  
I will not trouble thee, my child ; farewell.  
We'll no more meet, no more see one another.  
But yet thou art my flesh, my blood, my daughter ;  
Or rather a disease that's in my flesh,  
Which I must needs call mine. Thou art a boil,  
A plague-sore, or embossed carbuncle  
In my corrupted blood. But I'll not chide thee.  
Let shame come when it will, I do not call it.  
I do not bid the thunder-bearer shoot,  
Nor tell tales of thee to high-judging Jove.  
Mend when thou canst, be better at thy leisure ;  
I can be patient, I can stay with Regan,  
I and my hundred knights.

(II iv : 196 - 225)