

## THE RAPE OF LUCRECE (EXTRACT)

William Shakespeare

What could he see but mightily he noted?  
What did he note but strongly he desired?  
What he beheld, on that he firmly doted,  
And in his will his wilful eye he tired.  
With more than admiration he admired  
Her azure veins, her alabaster skin,  
Her coral lips, her snow-white dimpled chin.

As the grim lion fawneth o'er his prey,  
Sharp hunger by the conquest satisfied,  
So o'er this sleeping soul doth Tarquin stay,  
His rage of lust by gazing qualified;  
Slacked, not suppressed; for standing by her side,  
His eye, which late this mutiny restrains,  
Unto a greater uproar tempts his veins.

Imagine her as one in dead of night  
From forth dull sleep by dreadful fancy waking,  
That thinks she hath beheld some ghastly sprite,  
Whose grim aspect sets every joint a-shaking;  
What terror 'tis! but she, in worsè taking,  
From sleep disturbed, heedfully doth view  
The sight which makes supposed terror true.

Wrapped and confounded in a thousand fears,  
Like to a new-killed bird she trembling lies;  
She dares not look; yet, winking, there appears  
Quick-shifting antics, ugly in her eyes.  
Such shadows are the weak brain's forgeries,  
Who, angry that the eyes fly from their lights,  
In darkness daunts them with more dreadful sights.

'Lucrece,' quoth he, 'this night I must enjoy thee.

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If thou deny, then force must work my way,  
For in thy bed I purpose to destroy thee;  
That done, some worthless slave of thine I'll slay,  
To kill thine honour with thy life's decay;  
And in thy dead arms do I mean to place him,  
Swearing I slew him, seeing thee embrace him.