

King Lear

Act V, sc. 3 (line 210)

(ALBANY)

How have [I] known the miseries of [my] father?

Albany's cue line is paraphrased for the purposes of this monologue.

EDGAR

By nursing them, my lord. List a brief tale;
And when 'tis told, O, that my heart would burst!
The bloody proclamation to escape,
That follow'd me so near,--O, our lives' sweetness!
That we the pain of death would hourly die
Rather than die at once!--taught me to shift
Into a madman's rags; to assume a semblance
That very dogs disdain'd: and in this habit
Met I my father with his bleeding rings,
Their precious stones new lost: became his guide,
Led him, begg'd for him, saved him from despair;
Never,--O fault!--reveal'd myself unto him,
Until some half-hour past, when I was arm'd:
Not sure, though hoping, of this good success,
I ask'd his blessing, and from first to last
Told him my pilgrimage: but his flaw'd heart,
Alack, too weak the conflict to support!
'Twixt two extremes of passion, joy and grief,
Burst smilingly.