

# *Romeo and Juliet*

Act I, sc. 4 (line 53)

## MERCUTIO

O, then, I see Queen Mab hath been with you.

She is the fairies' midwife, and she comes

In shape no bigger than an agate-stone

On the fore-finger of an alderman,

Drawn with a team of little atomies

Athwart men's noses as they lie asleep;

Her wagon-spokes made of long spiders' legs,

The cover of the wings of grasshoppers,

The traces of the smallest spider's web,

The collars of the moonshine's watery beams,

Her whip of cricket's bone, the lash of film,

Her wagoner a small grey-coated gnat,

Not so big as a round little worm

Prick'd from the lazy finger of a maid;

Her chariot is an empty hazel-nut

Made by the joiner squirrel or old grub,

Time out o' mind the fairies' coachmakers.

And in this state she gallops night by night

Through lovers' brains, and then they dream of love;

O'er courtiers' knees, that dream on court'sies straight,

O'er lawyers' fingers, who straight dream on fees,

O'er ladies' lips, who straight on kisses dream,  
Which oft the angry Mab with blisters plagues,  
Because their breaths with sweetmeats tainted are:  
Sometime she gallops o'er a courtier's nose,  
And then dreams he of smelling out a suit;  
And sometime comes she with a tithe-pig's tail  
Tickling a parson's nose as a' lies asleep,  
Then dreams, he of another benefice:  
Sometime she driveth o'er a soldier's neck,  
And then dreams he of cutting foreign throats,  
Of breaches, ambuscadoes, Spanish blades,  
Of healths five-fathom deep; and then anon  
Drums in his ear, at which he starts and wakes,  
And being thus frightened swears a prayer or two  
And sleeps again. This is that very Mab  
That plats the manes of horses in the night,  
And bakes the elflocks in foul sluttish hairs,  
Which once untangled, much misfortune bodes:  
This is the hag, when maids lie on their backs,  
That presses them and learns them first to bear,  
Making them women of good carriage:  
This is she--