

# *Titus Andronicus*

Act II, sc. 4 (line 11)

## MARCUS ANDRONICUS

Who is this? my niece, that flies away so fast!  
Cousin, a word; where is your husband?  
If I do dream, would all my wealth would wake me!  
If I do wake, some planet strike me down,  
That I may slumber in eternal sleep!  
Speak, gentle niece, what stern ungentle hands  
Have lopp'd and hew'd and made thy body bare  
Of her two branches, those sweet ornaments,  
Whose circling shadows kings have sought to sleep in,  
And might not gain so great a happiness  
As have thy love? Why dost not speak to me?  
Alas, a crimson river of warm blood,  
Like to a bubbling fountain stirr'd with wind,  
Doth rise and fall between thy rosed lips,  
Coming and going with thy honey breath.  
But, sure, some Tereus hath deflowered thee,  
And, lest thou shouldst detect him, cut thy tongue.  
Ah, now thou turn'st away thy face for shame!  
And, notwithstanding all this loss of blood,  
As from a conduit with three issuing spouts,  
Yet do thy cheeks look red as Titan's face

Blushing to be encountered with a cloud.  
Shall I speak for thee? shall I say 'tis so?  
O, that I knew thy heart; and knew the beast,  
That I might rail at him, to ease my mind!  
Sorrow concealed, like an oven stopp'd,  
Doth burn the heart to cinders where it is.  
Fair Philomela, she but lost her tongue,  
And in a tedious sampler sew'd her mind:  
But, lovely niece, that mean is cut from thee;  
A craftier Tereus, cousin, hast thou met,  
And he hath cut those pretty fingers off,  
That could have better sew'd than Philomel.  
O, had the monster seen those lily hands  
Tremble, like aspen-leaves, upon a lute,  
And make the silken strings delight to kiss them,  
He would not then have touch'd them for his life!  
Or, had he heard the heavenly harmony  
Which that sweet tongue hath made,  
He would have dropp'd his knife, and fell asleep  
As Cerberus at the Thracian poet's feet.  
Come, let us go, and make thy father blind;  
For such a sight will blind a father's eye:  
One hour's storm will drown the fragrant meads;  
What will whole months of tears thy father's eyes?

Do not draw back, for we will mourn with thee

O, could our mourning ease thy misery!