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Julius Caesar
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



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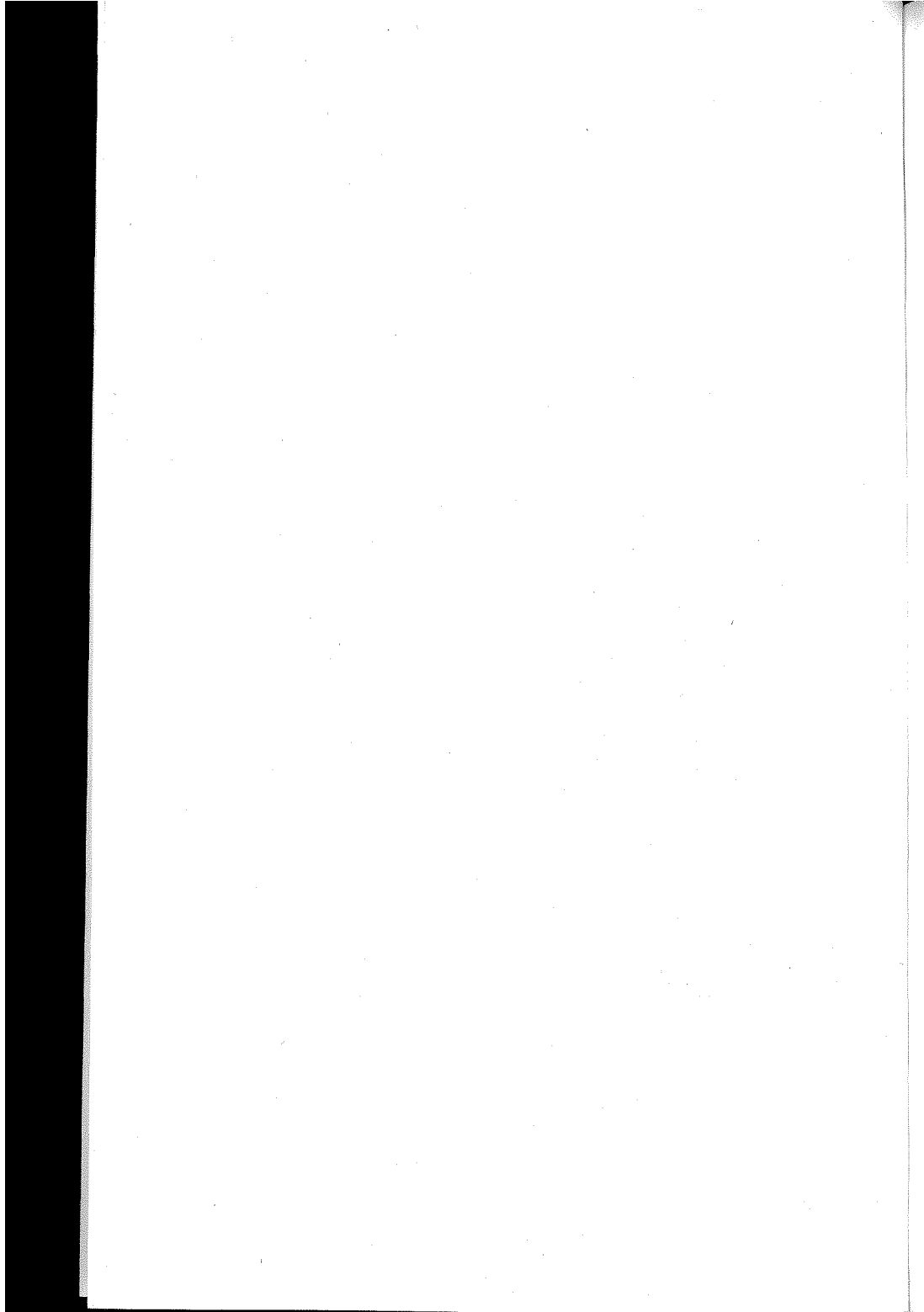
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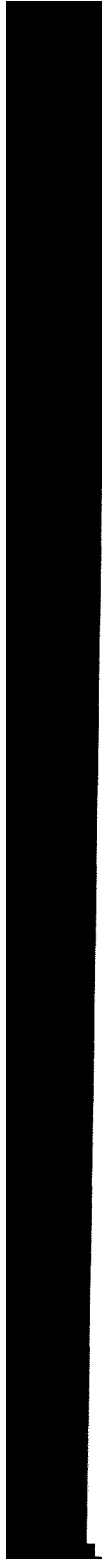
FIRST PERFORMED in the fall of 1599 at the newly built Globe Theatre in London's Southwark district on the south bank of the Thames, *Julius Caesar* marks the midpoint of William Shakespeare's (1564–1616) career as a dramatist. As his historical source on the assassination of the great Roman statesman, general and author Julius Caesar in 44 B.C., and the subsequent defeat of the conspirators on the battlefield at Philippi, Macedonia, in 42 B.C., Shakespeare relies upon Sir Thomas North's *Lives of the noble Grecians and Romanes* (1579). North's work is an English translation (based on Jacques Amyot's French version) of the Greek biographer Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*. It is interesting to note that Shakespeare follows North's phraseology far more closely than he had that of Raphael Holinshed, whose *Chronicles* (1587) had been his principal source when writing the English history plays.

Julius Caesar is in many respects an epilogue to the English histories of the 1590's and a prologue to the great tragedies of the first decade of the seventeenth century. It shares many of the themes of the earlier histories, exploring the genesis and effects of popular unrest, struggles for political power and civil war. The play is also, however, a moving and ambiguous study of personal tragedy in the figure of Marcus Brutus, and of the seemingly irreconcilable conflicts between friendship and duty, moral integrity and political strength.



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Dramatis Personae

JULIUS CAESAR.

OCTAVIUS CAESAR,
MARCUS ANTONIUS,
M. AEMIL. LEPIDUS, } triumvirs after the death of Julius Caesar.

CICERO,
PUBLIUS, } senators.

POPILIUS LENA,
MARCUS BRUTUS,
CASSIUS,
CASCA,
TREBONIUS,
LIGARIUS,
DECIUS BRUTUS,
METELLUS CIMBER,
CINNA, } conspirators against Julius Caesar.

FLAVIUS and MARULLUS, tribunes.

ARTEMIDORUS of Cnidos, a teacher of Rhetoric.

A Soothsayer.

CINNA, a poet. Another Poet.

LUCILIUS,
TITINIUS,
MESSALA,
YOUNG CATO,
VOLUMNIUS, } friends to Brutus and Cassius.

VARRO,
CLITUS,
CLAUDIUS,
STRATO,
LUCIUS,
DARDANIUS, } servants to Brutus.

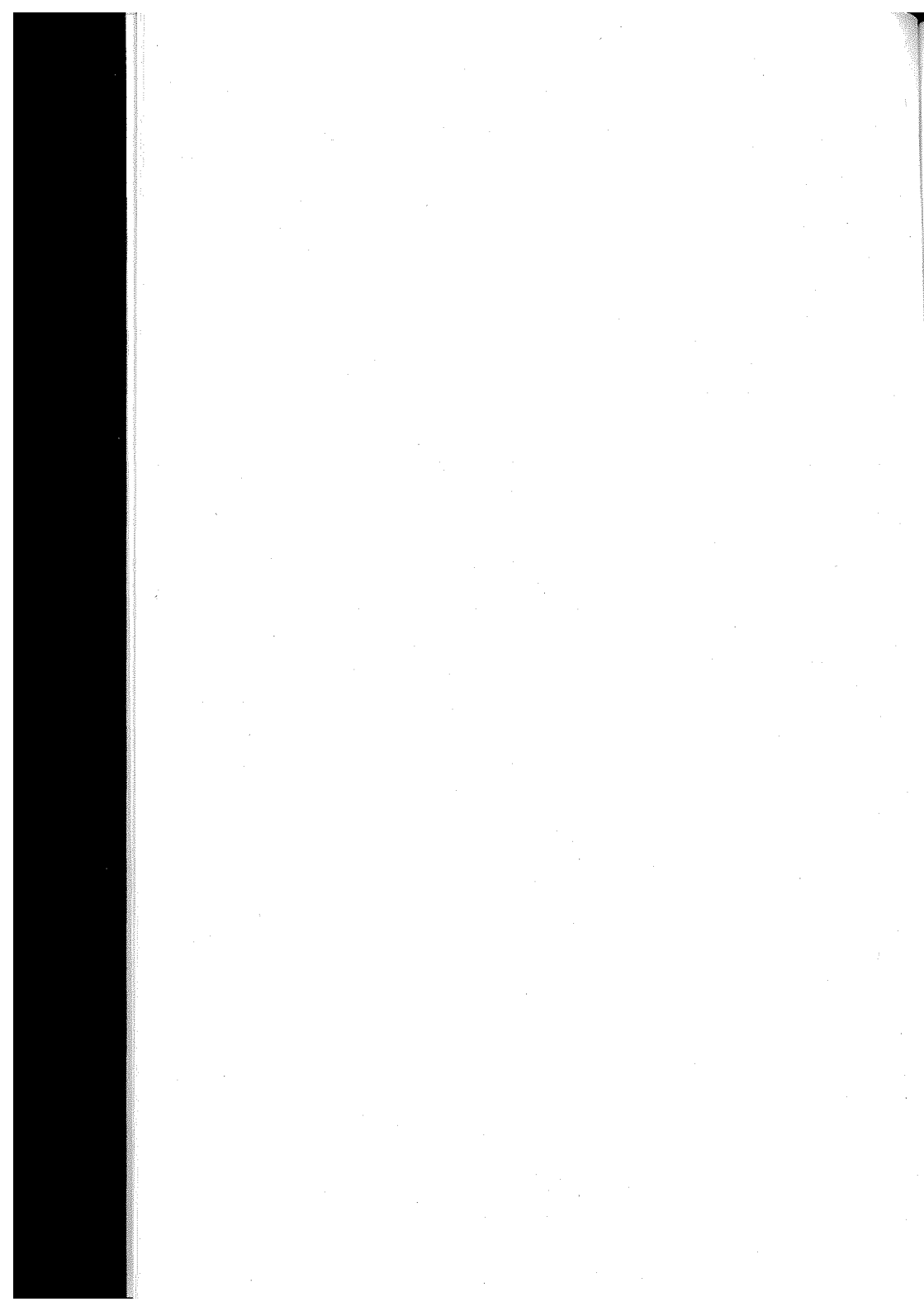
PINDARUS, servant to Cassius.

CALPURNIA, wife to Caesar.

PORTIA, wife to Brutus.

Senators, Citizens, Guards, Attendants, &c.

SCENE: *Rome; the neighbourhood of Sardis; the neighbourhood of Philippi*



Act I—Scene I—Rome
A STREET

Enter FLAVIUS, MARULLUS, and certain Commoners.

FLAV. Hence! home, you idle creatures, get you home:
Is this a holiday? what! know you not,
Being mechanical,¹ you ought not walk
Upon a labouring day without the sign
Of your profession? Speak, what trade art thou?

FIRST COM. Why, sir, a carpenter.

MAR. Where is thy leather apron and thy rule?
What dost thou with thy best apparel on?
You, sir, what trade are you?

SEC. COM. Truly, sir, in respect of² a fine workman, I am but, as you
would say, a cobbler.³

MAR. But what trade art thou? answer me directly.

SEC. COM. A trade, sir, that, I hope, I may use with a safe conscience;
which is indeed, sir, a mender of bad soles.⁴

MAR. What trade, thou knave? thou naughty knave, what trade?

SEC. COM. Nay, I beseech you, sir, be not out⁵ with me: yet, if you be
out,⁶ sir, I can mend you.

MAR. What mean'st thou by that? mend me, thou saucy fellow!

1. *mechanical*] of the class of mechanic or artisan.

2. *in respect of*] as compared with.

3. *cobbler*] The word is used quibblingly in the sense of "botcher," clumsy worker.

4. *soles*] a favorite pun on "souls."

5. *be not out*] do not lose your temper.

6. *be out*] have worn-out shoes.

- SEC. COM. Why, sir, cobble you.
- FLAV. Thou art a cobbler, art thou?
- SEC. COM. Truly, sir, all that I live by is with the awl: I meddle with no tradesman's matters, nor women's matters, but with awl. I am indeed, sir, a surgeon to old shoes; when they are in great danger, I re-cover them. As proper men as ever trod upon neats-leather⁷ have gone upon my handiwork.
- FLAV. But wherefore art not in thy shop to-day?
Why dost thou lead these men about the streets?
- SEC. COM. Truly, sir, to wear out their shoes, to get myself into more work. But indeed, sir, we make holiday, to see Caesar and to rejoice in his triumph.
- MAR. Wherefore rejoice? What conquest brings he home?
What tributaries follow him to Rome,
To grace in captive bonds his chariot-wheels?
You blocks, you stones, you worse than senseless things!
O you hard hearts, you cruel men of Rome,
Knew you not Pompey? Many a time and oft
Have you climb'd up to walls and battlements,
To towers and windows, yea, to chimney-tops,
Your infants in your arms, and there have sat
The live-long day with patient expectation
To see great Pompey pass the streets of Rome:
And when you saw his chariot but appear,
Have you not made an universal shout,
That Tiber trembled underneath her banks
To hear the replication⁸ of your sounds
Made in her concave shores?
And do you now put on your best attire?
And do you now cull out a holiday?
And do you now strew flowers in his way
That comes in triumph over Pompey's blood?⁹
Be gone!
Run to your houses, fall upon your knees,
Pray to the gods to intermit the plague
That needs must light on this ingratitude.
- FLAV. Go, go, good countrymen, and, for this fault,
Assemble all the poor men of your sort;
Draw them to Tiber banks and weep your tears

7. *neats-leather*] cowhide or calfskin.

8. *replication*] reverberation, echo.

9. *Pompey's blood*] Pompey's sons.

Into the channel, till the lowest stream
Do kiss the most exalted shores of all.¹⁰

[*Exeunt all the Commoners.*]

See, whether their basest metal be not moved;
They vanish tongue-tied in their guiltiness.
Go you down that way towards the Capitol;
This way will I: disrobe the images,
If you do find them deck'd with ceremonies.¹¹

MAR. May we do so?

You know it is the feast of Lupercal.¹²

FLAV. It is no matter; let no images

Be hung with Caesar's trophies. I'll about,
And drive away the vulgar from the streets:
So do you too, where you perceive them thick.

These growing feathers pluck'd from Caesar's wing
Will make him fly an ordinary pitch,¹³

Who else would soar above the view of men
And keep us all in servile fearfulness.

[*Exeunt.*]

Scene II—A public place

Flourish. Enter CAESAR; ANTONY, for the course;¹ CALPURNIA, PORTIA, DECIUS, CICERO, BRUTUS, CASSIUS, and CASCA; a great crowd following, among them a Soothsayer.

CAES. Calpurnia!

CASCA. Peace, ho! Caesar speaks.

[*Music ceases.*]

CAES. Calpurnia!

CAL. Here, my lord.

CAES. Stand you directly in Antonius' way,
When he doth run his course. Antonius!

ANT. Caesar, my lord?

CAES. Forget not, in your speed, Antonius,

10. *most exalted shores of all*] high-water mark.

11. *ceremonies*] festival ornaments.

12. *the feast of Lupercal*] the Lupercalia, a very ancient festival of purification annually celebrated at Rome in February.

13. *pitch*] a common term in falconry for the highest stage of the falcon's flight.

1. *for the course*] as a priest of Lupercus, equipped for running at the feast of the Lupercalia.

To touch Calpurnia; for our elders say,
The barren, touched in this holy chase,
Shake off their sterile curse.

ANT. I shall remember:
When Caesar says "do this," it is perform'd.

CAES. Set on,² and leave no ceremony out.

[*Flourish.*]

SOOTH. Caesar!

CAES. Ha! who calls?

CASCA. Bid every noise be still: peace yet again!

CAES. Who is it in the press³ that calls on me?
I hear a tongue, shriller than all the music,
Cry "Caesar." Speak; Caesar is turn'd to hear.

SOOTH. Beware the ides of March.⁴

CAES. What man is that?

BRU. A soothsayer bids you beware the ides of March.

CAES. Set him before me; let me see his face.

CAS. Fellow, come from the throng; look upon Caesar.

CAES. What say'st thou to me now? speak once again.

SOOTH. Beware the ides of March.

CAES. He is a dreamer;⁵ let us leave him: pass.

[*Sennet. Exeunt all but BRUTUS and CASSIUS.*]

CAS. Will you go see the order of the course?

BRU. Not I.

CAS. I pray you, do.

BRU. I am not gamesome:⁶ I do lack some part
Of that quick spirit⁷ that is in Antony.
Let me not hinder, Cassius, your desires;
I'll leave you.

CAS. Brutus, I do observe you now of late:
I have not from your eyes that gentleness
And show of love as I was wont to have:
You bear too stubborn and too strange a hand
Over⁸ your friend that loves you.

BRU. Cassius,

2. *Set on*] proceed.

3. *press*] crowd.

4. *the ides of March*] March 15, the midpoint of the month in the Roman calendar.

5. *dreamer*] visionary.

6. *gamesome*] sportive.

7. *quick spirit*] high spirit, liveliness.

8. *You bear . . . a hand Over*] The metaphor is from a horseman's domineering treatment of his steed.

Be not deceived: if I have veil'd my look,
 I turn the trouble of my countenance
 Merely⁹ upon myself. Vexed I am
 Of late with passions of some difference,¹⁰
 Conceptions only proper to myself,
 Which give some soil¹¹ perhaps to my behaviours;
 But let not therefore my good friends be grieved—
 Among which number, Cassius, be you one—
 Nor construe any further my neglect
 Than that poor Brutus with himself at war
 Forgets the shows of love to other men.
 Then, Brutus, I have much mistook your passion;
 By means whereof¹² this breast of mine hath buried
 Thoughts of great value, worthy cogitations.
 Tell me, good Brutus, can you see your face?
 No, Cassius; for the eye sees not itself
 But by reflection, by some other things.
 'T is just:

CAS. And it is very much lamented, Brutus,
 That you have no such mirrors as will turn
 Your hidden worthiness into your eye,
 That you might see your shadow.¹³ I have heard
 Where many of the best respect in Rome,
 Except immortal Caesar, speaking of Brutus,
 And groaning underneath this age's yoke,
 Have wish'd that noble Brutus had his eyes.
 BRU. Into what dangers would you lead me, Cassius,
 That you would have me seek into myself
 For that which is not in me?

CAS. Therefore, good Brutus, be prepared to hear:
 And since you know you cannot see yourself
 So well as by reflection, I your glass
 Will modestly discover to yourself
 That of yourself which you yet know not of.
 And be not jealous on¹⁴ me, gentle Brutus:
 Were I a common laughèr, or did use

9. *Merely*] entirely.

10. *passions of some difference*] conflicting passions or emotions.

11. *soil*] blemish.

12. *By means whereof*] in consequence of which misapprehension.

13. *shadow*] image.

14. *jealous on*] suspicious of.

To stale¹⁵ with ordinary oaths my love
 To every new protester; if you know
 That I do fawn on men and hug them hard,
 And after scandal¹⁶ them; or if you know
 That I profess myself¹⁷ in banqueting
 To all the rout, then hold me dangerous. [*Flourish and shout.*]
 BRU. What means this shouting? I do fear, the people
 Choose Caesar for their king.

CAS. Ay, do you fear it?
 Then must I think you would not have it so.

BRU. I would not, Cassius, yet I love him well.
 But wherefore do you hold me here so long?
 What is it that you would impart to me?
 If it be aught toward the general good,
 Set honour in one eye and death i' the other,
 And I will look on both indifferently:¹⁸
 For let the gods so speed¹⁹ me as I love
 The name of honour more than I fear death.

CAS. I know that virtue to be in you, Brutus,
 As well as I do know your outward favour.²⁰
 Well, honour is the subject of my story.
 I cannot tell what you and other men
 Think of this life, but, for my single self,
 I had as lief not be as live to be
 In awe of such a thing as I myself.
 I was born free as Caesar; so were you:
 We both have fed as well, and we can both
 Endure the winter's cold as well as he:
 For once, upon a raw and gusty day,
 The troubled Tiber chafing with her shores,
 Caesar said to me "Darest thou, Cassius, now
 Leap in with me into this angry flood,
 And swim to yonder point?" Upon the word,
 Accounted as I was, I plunged in
 And bade him follow: so indeed he did.
 The torrent roar'd, and we did buffet it

15. *To stale*] to vulgarize, make stale.

16. *scandal*] slander.

17. *profess myself*] make professions of friendship.

18. *indifferently*] with impartiality.

19. *speed*] favor.

20. *outward favour*] external features, countenance.

With lusty sinews, throwing it aside
 And stemming it with hearts of controversy;²¹
 But ere we could arrive the point proposed,
 Caesar cried "Help me, Cassius, or I sink!"
 I, as Aeneas our great ancestor
 Did from the flames of Troy upon his shoulder
 The old Anchises bear, so from the waves of Tiber
 Did I the tired Caesar: and this man
 Is now become a god, and Cassius is
 A wretched creature, and must bend his body
 If Caesar carelessly but nod on him.
 He had a fever when he was in Spain,
 And when the fit was on him, I did mark
 How he did shake: 't is true, this god did shake;
 His coward lips did from their colour fly,²²
 And that same eye whose bend²³ doth awe the world
 Did lose his lustre: I did hear him groan:
 Ay, and that tongue of his that bade the Romans
 Mark him and write his speeches in their books,
 Alas, it cried, "Give me some drink, Titinius,"
 As a sick girl. Ye gods! it doth amaze me
 A man of such a feeble temper²⁴ should
 So get the start of²⁵ the majestic world
 And bear the palm alone.

[*Shout. Flourish.*]

BRU. Another general shout!

I do believe that these applauses are
 For some new honours that are heap'd on Caesar.

CAS. Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world

Like a Colossus,²⁶ and we petty men
 Walk under his huge legs and peep about
 To find ourselves dishonourable graves.

Men at some time are masters of their fates:
 The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
 But in ourselves, that we are underlings.

21. *hearts of controversy*] hearts bent on contest.

22. *His coward lips . . . fly*] The figure is that of a cowardly soldier running away from his colors or flag.

23. *bend*] glance.

24. *temper*] temperament, constitution.

25. *get the start of*] outstrip.

26. *Colossus*] the bronze statue of a man, 120 feet high, whose legs were so fixed in the harbor of Rhodes that ships sailed between them.