

CLAUDIUS

Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death  
The memory be green, and that it us befitted  
To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole kingdom  
To be contracted in one brow of woe,  
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature  
That we with wisest sorrow think on him  
Together with remembrance of ourselves.  
Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,  
Th' imperial jointress to this warlike state,  
Have we (as 'twere with a defeated joy,  
With an auspicious and a dropping eye,  
With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,  
In equal scale weighing delight and dole)  
Taken to wife. Nor have we herein barred  
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone  
With this affair along. For all, our thanks.  
Now follows that you know. Young Fortinbras,  
Holding a weak supposal of our worth  
Or thinking by our late dear brother's death  
Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,  
Colleaguèd with this dream of his advantage,  
He hath not failed to pester us with message  
Importing the surrender of those lands  
Lost by his father, with all bonds of law,  
To our most valiant brother—so much for him.