

Antony and Cleopatra

Act IV, sc. 14 (line 55)

MARK ANTONY

Since Cleopatra died,
I have lived in such dishonour, that the gods
Detest my baseness. I, that with my sword
Quarter'd the world, and o'er green Neptune's back
With ships made cities, condemn myself to lack
The courage of a woman; less noble mind
Than she which by her death our Caesar tells
'I am conqueror of myself.' Thou art sworn, Eros,
That, when the exigent should come, which now
Is come indeed, when I should see behind me
The inevitable prosecution of
Disgrace and horror, that, on my command,
Thou then wouldst kill me: do't; the time is come:
Thou strikest not me, 'tis Caesar thou defeat'st.
Put colour in thy cheek.

EROS

*The gods withhold me!
Shall I do that which all the Parthian darts,
Though enemy, lost aim, and could not?*

MARK ANTONY

Eros,
Wouldst thou be window'd in great Rome and see
Thy master thus with pleach'd arms, bending down

His corrigible neck, his face subdued
To penetrative shame, whilst the wheel'd seat
Of fortunate Caesar, drawn before him, branded
His baseness that ensued?

EROS
I would not see't.

MARK ANTONY

Come, then; for with a wound I must be cured.
Draw that thy honest sword, which thou hast worn
Most useful for thy country.