

K. *Rich.* What comfort, man? How is't with aged *Gaunt*?<sup>a</sup>

*Gaunt.* Ill in myself, but seeing thee too, ill.

Thy death-bed is no lesser than the land,  
Wherein thou liest in reputation sick;  
And thou, too careless patient as thou art,  
Giv'st thy anointed body to the cure  
Of those physicians that first wounded thee:  
A thousand flatterers sit within thy crown,  
Whose compass is no bigger than thy head,  
And yet engaged in so small a verge,  
Thy waste is no whit lesser than thy land.  
O, had thy grandfire with a prophet's eye  
Seen how his son's son should destroy his sons,  
From forth thy reach he would have lay'd thy shame,  
Deposing thee before thou wert possess'd,  
Who art possess'd now to depose thyself.  
Why, cousin, wert thou regent of the world,  
It were a shame to let this land by lease:  
But for thy world enjoying but this land,  
Is it not more than shame to shame it so?  
Landlord of *England* art thou, and not king:

<sup>a</sup> ----- with aged *Gaunt*?

*Gaunt.* O, how that name befits my composition!

Old *Gaunt*, indeed, and gaunt in being old:

Within me grief hath kept a tedious fast;

And who abstains from meat, that is not gaunt?

For sleeping *England* long time have I watch'd;

Watching breeds leanness, leanness is all gaunt:

The pleasure that some fathers feed upon,

Is my strict fast, I mean my children's looks,

And, therein fasting, hast thou made me gaunt;

Gaunt am I for the grave, gaunt as a grave,

Whose hollow womb inherits nought but bones.

K. *Rich.* Can sick men play so nicely with their names?

*Gaunt.* No, misery makes sport to mock itself:

Since thou dost seek to kill my name in me,

I mock my name, great king, to flatter thee.

K. *Rich.* Should dying men flatter those that live?

*Gaunt.* No, no, men living flatter those that die.

K. *Rich.* Thou, now a dying, say'st thou flatter'st me.

*Gaunt.* O, no, thou dy'st, though I the sicker be.

K. *Rich.* I am in health, I breathe, I see thee ill.

*Gaunt.* Now he that made me, knows I see thee ill:  
Ill in myself-----

Thy