

Imagery Explorer

#1: Brief images

What's imagery?

Imagery is language that appeals to our senses and inspires us to imagine something specific. Imagery can inspire us to visualize something or imagine sounds, movements, or feelings. You might recognize imagery in everyday language: when you have 'ants in your pants' or 'butterflies in your stomach' or 'a song in your heart,' you're experiencing, and perhaps even feeling, imagery.

No right answer

Because imagery inspires a response in you, there's no right way to interpret it. As you explore some of the imagery below, be curious about what you discover and about what these discoveries mean to you.



Choose an image

Here are some of our favourite brief images from Shakespeare's plays. Find the ones that interest you and let your imagination wander as you explore them.

My heart dances	If music be the food of love, play on	I can swim like a duck, I'll be sworn
Stars hide your fires	O, the thorns we stand upon	'Tis wonder that enwraps me thus
My spirits are nimble	My dancing soul doth celebrate	With a passion would I shake the world
My heart is full	My spirits, as in a dream, are all bound up	I am a feather for each wind that blows
My soul is in the sky	Here we wander in illusions	These are but wild and whirling words
I will move storms	I'll stop mine ears against the mermaid's song	Let the sounds of music creep in our ears
Look how well my garments sit upon me	Under love's heavy burden do I sink	A pack of blessings light upon thy back

Make it yours

Step 1: Choose an image that interests you.

Step 2: Express the image using your voice and/or your body.

Step 3: Find the meaning.

- Start by looking up any words you don't know.
- What does the image mean if you take it literally? What is your interpretation?
- Could the image represent something else? How does it make you feel?

Step 4: Make it yours. Choose one (or a combination) of the activities below to guide you.

MOVE

Create a dance or movement piece inspired by the image.

Create a sculpture or statue using your body to express the image.

WRITE

Write a poem or story using the image as your title or your initial inspiration.

MAKE

Take a photo, using the image as your inspiration and caption.

Make a sculpture inspired by the image.

Draw or paint something inspired by the image.

Make a still life or found object sculpture inspired by the image. Take a photo of your work.

LISTEN

Find a song that reminds you of the image. Play a recording of the song or play it yourself on an instrument.

Make a playlist of songs inspired by the image.



Reflect

- What discoveries did you make as you explored the text?
- Why did you make the creative choices you made?
- What did you learn about these images? About this language? About yourself?

If you would like to see these lines in the context of their respective plays, we recommend the search engine of the Folger Shakespeare Library's free online collection:

