



# Imagery Explorer

## #2: Short, Image-Rich Passages

### 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. Shakespeare often used imagery to conjure vivid pictures for the audience.

### 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 images from Shakespeare's plays. Find the ones that interest you and let your imagination wander as you explore them.

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!  
Here will we sit, and let the sounds of music  
Creep in our ears. Soft stillness and the night  
Become the touches of sweet harmony.

Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds,  
Towards Phoebus' lodging. Such a waggoner  
As Phaëton would whip you to the west  
And bring in cloudy night immediately.

Light thickens, and the crow  
Makes wing to th'rooky wood.  
Good things of day begin to droop and drowse,  
Whiles night's black agents to their preys do rouse.

O serpent heart hid with a flow'ring face!  
Did ever dragon keep so fair a cave?  
Beautiful tyrant, fiend angelical!  
Dove-feathered raven, wolfish-ravening lamb!

Night's swift dragons cut the clouds full fast,  
And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger,  
At whose approach ghosts, wand'ring here and there,  
Troop home to churchyards

To-morrow night, when Phoebe doth behold  
Her silver visage in the watery glass,  
Decking with liquid pearl the bladed grass,  
A time that lovers' flights doth still conceal,  
Through Athens' gates have we devised to steal.

Look how the floor of heaven  
Is thick inlaid with patens of bright gold:  
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st  
But in his motion like an angel sings,  
Still choring to the young-eyed cherubins

No night is now with hymn or carol blest:  
Therefore the moon, the governess of floods,  
Pale in her anger, washes all the air,  
That rheumatic diseases do abound:  
And thorough this distemperature we see  
The seasons alter

## Words and phrases that might be new or have an unexpected meaning

- **apace** - quickly
- **fiery-footed steeds** - horses with their feet on fire, either from running so fast or because they pull the sun across the sky
- **Phoebus' lodging** - the home (or lodging) of the ancient Greek sun god, Phoebus (also known as Helios)
- **wagoner** - the person who drives the horses pulling a wagon
- **Phaëton** - Phoebus's son, who had a disastrous experience driving the sun god's chariot in an ancient Greek myth; this story might have been an attempt to explain wildfires
- **Light thickens** - here's a phrase to imagine for yourself: what does it mean to you to have light thicken?
- **Makes wing** - flies
- **th'rooky wood** - the forest filled with rooks, which are a type of crow that nests in colonies in the tops of trees and makes a lot of noise
- **drowse** - become heavy and dull with sleepiness
- **flow'ring** - another way of writing 'flowering'. What does it mean to you for a face to flower, or come into bloom?
- **fiend** - a devil or someone capable of superhuman wickedness
- **angelical** - having the nature of an angel, or someone associated with superhuman goodness
- **wolvish-ravening** - devouring prey like a wolf would
- **yonder** - at some distance but within view, in other words, 'over there'
- **Aurora's harbinger** - Aurora is the ancient Roman goddess of the sunrise, and a harbinger is one who goes before and announces the approach. So, Aurora's harbinger is the light that appears on the horizon just before dawn
- **Phoebe** - one of the names for the classical Roman goddess of the moon
- **behold** - see
- **visage** - face
- **the watery glass** - the reflective surface of the water, like a glass or mirror
- **decking** - decorating
- **liquid pearl** - drops of dew that shine like pearls
- **flights** - escapes
- **conceal** - hide
- **devised to steal** - planned to sneak away
- **floor of heaven** - the sky
- **inlaid** - decorated with objects embedded in the surface
- **patens** - bright, round plates
- **orb** - a spherical object like a planet or star
- **thou behold'st** - you see
- **choiring** - singing together, like in a choir
- **cherubins** - angels, often depicted in Western art as chubby, naked, winged children
- **blest** - another way to spell blessed
- **governess** - a ruler, or someone female who governs
- **rheumatic** - causing sniffles or runny nose
- **thorough** - another way to spell 'through'
- **distemperature** - bad weather, unfit for human health
- **alter** - change

## Make it yours

Shakespeare wrote plays, and the whole point was to create an experience for the audience through collaboration with many other artists. So a great way to explore, understand, and appreciate Shakespeare's language is through your own creativity. Choose activities from the list below to collaborate with Shakespeare to make something new.

### Performance

**Create a short performance piece of your selected passage.** Decide how you might use your body and/or voice to convey the images, and if you'd like to have your performance supported by staging, lighting, costuming, props, etc.

**Create a dance or movement piece inspired by the image.** Think about things like staging, lighting, costuming, music, etc.

**Share your performance,** either with an audience or by asking someone to film it for you.

### Art

**Create** a drawing, painting, sculpture, still life, photograph, or film that expresses what the images mean to you. Decide how you would like to share your creation.

### Music

**Express what the passage means to you through music.** Choose a song or piece of music, build a playlist, or even compose an original piece that conveys your feelings about the images in the passage. Decide how you'd like to share what you've created.

### Creative Writing

**Write your own poem or story** inspired by the passage. Perhaps your title might be one of the images it contains.



## Reflect

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

## So, where's that from?

See the next page to learn about each passage in this resource.

<p>How sweet the moonlight sleeps...</p>	<p>In act 5, scene 5 of <i>The Merchant of Venice</i>, Lorenzo invites Jessica to listen to music while they sit outdoors.</p>
<p>Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds...</p>	<p>In act 3, scene 2 of <i>Romeo &amp; Juliet</i>, Juliet expresses impatience, waiting for the night to come.</p>
<p>Light thickens, and the crow...</p>	<p>In act 3, scene 2 of <i>Macbeth</i>, the title character reflects on the coming of the night.</p>
<p>O serpent heart hid with a flow'ring face...</p>	<p>Later in act 3, scene 2 of <i>Romeo &amp; Juliet</i>, Juliet tries to reconcile Romeo's attractive and unattractive qualities.</p>
<p>Night's swift dragons cut the clouds...</p>	<p>In act 3, scene 2 of <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>, Puck warns Oberon that dawn approaches.</p>
<p>To-morrow night, when Phoebe doth behold...</p>	<p>In act 1, scene 1 of <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>, Lysander provides a vivid description of nighttime in the woods.</p>
<p>Look how the floor of heaven...</p>	<p>In act 5, scene 5 of <i>The Merchant of Venice</i>, Lorenzo describes the music of the spheres to Jessica as they look at the stars together.</p>
<p>No night is now with hymn or carol blest...</p>	<p>In act 2, scene 1 of <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>, Titania explains the reason for the bad weather.</p>