Good now, sit down, and tell me, he that knows, Why this same strict and most observant watch So nightly toils the subject of the land, And why such daily cast of brazen cannon, And foreign mart for implements of war; Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore task Does not divide the Sunday from the week; What might be toward, that this sweaty haste Doth make the night joint-labourer with the day: Who is't that can inform me?

That can I; At least, the whisper goes so. Our last king, Whose image even but now appear'd to us, Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway, Thereto prick'd on by a most emulate pride, Dared to the combat; in which our valiant Hamlet-- For so this side of our known world esteem'd him-- Did slay this Fortinbras; who by a seal'd compact, Well ratified by law and heraldry, Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands Which he stood seized of, to the conqueror: Against the which, a moiety competent Was gaged by our king; which had return'd To the inheritance of Fortinbras, Had he been vanquisher; as, by the same covenant, And carriage of the article design'd, His fell to Hamlet. Now, sir, young Fortinbras, Of unimproved mettle hot and full, Hath in the skirts of Norway here and there Shark'd up a list of lawless resolutes, For food and diet, to some enterprise That hath a stomach in't; which is no other-- As it doth well appear unto our state-- But to recover of us, by strong hand And terms compulsatory, those foresaid lands So by his father lost: and this, I take it, Is the main motive of our preparations, The source of this our watch and the chief head Of this post-haste and romage in the land.

I think it be no other but e'en so: Well may it sort that this portentous figure Comes armed through our watch; so like the king That was and is the question of these wars.  
  
A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye. In the most high and palmy state of Rome, A little ere the mightiest Julius fell, The graves stood tenantless and the sheeted dead Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets: As stars with trains of fire and dews of blood, Disasters in the sun; and the moist star  
Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse: And even the like precurse of fierce events, As harbingers preceding still the fates And prologue to the omen coming on, Have heaven and earth together demonstrated Unto our climatures and countrymen.-- But soft, behold! lo, where it comes again!

I'll cross it, though it blast me. Stay, illusion! If thou hast any sound, or use of voice,  
Speak to me: If there be any good thing to be done, That may to thee do ease and grace to me, Speak to me: If thou art privy to thy country's fate, Which, happily, foreknowing may avoid, O, speak! Or if thou hast uphoarded in thy life Extorted treasure in the womb of earth, For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in death, Speak of it: stay, and speak! Stop it, Marcellus.

Shall I strike at it with my partisan?

Do, if it will not stand.  
  
'Tis here!  
  
'Tis here!  
  
'Tis gone!  
  
We do it wrong, being so majestical,  
To offer it the show of violence;  
For it is, as the air, invulnerable,  
And our vain blows malicious mockery.