

Yet they, poor fools, shall in a little while
Sink down beneath her bosom and bring forth
Things to make others merry, wine and oil,
And food and flowers and beauty from their dust.

Shepherd—

This present frenzy seems more dangerous
Than all the madness he hath shown before.
Thy years are many, as yet mine are few
I know not what to do; but canst not thou
From thy long knowledge of the past draw out
Some thought to comfort him.

Woodcutter (aside)—

To comfort him,

When I myself so need a comforter?
Peace for a little time, to offer now
A word of comfort would insult his grief
And bring a cold refusal on my head.
But shortly, when he hath exhausted all
The burning thoughts that sear his aching heart
And he looks round and feels his loneliness,
We will draw near and offer food and wine.
Meanwhile I'll rack my brain to see if I
Can find some words of solace.

Orpheus—

O thou earth,

Thou that wouldst seem to teem with inmost life,
Thou art but one vast charnel house, a veil
To hide the face of death, for everywhere
Life was, death is, and death shall ever be.
The dead are everywhere, from nameless graves
In mountain and in desert, from the dust
That whirls upon the summer wind, the sea
With all her multitude of waves; they cry
From hills and plains and air and sea, a voice,
A voice that neither heard not heeded is,
Wells up to warm the living, that a space
A few short months or days and they shall fall,
And earth shall cover them, and they shall be
Lost in the realms of dark unconsciousness.
It makes me laugh derisively to think
O soul, of men's poor measured graveyards, when
The silent forest is one sepulchre,
And every inch of earth beneath my feet
Contains the dust of something that has breathed.