

Antony and Cleopatra

Act V, sc. 2 (line 279)

CLEOPATRA

Give me my robe, put on my crown; I have
Immortal longings in me: now no more
The juice of Egypt's grape shall moist this lip:
Yare, yare, good Iras; quick. Methinks I hear
Antony call; I see him rouse himself
To praise my noble act; I hear him mock
The luck of Caesar, which the gods give men
To excuse their after wrath: husband, I come:
Now to that name my courage prove my title!
I am fire and air; my other elements
I give to baser life. So; have you done?
Come then, and take the last warmth of my lips.
Farewell, kind Charmian; Iras, long farewell.

Kisses them. IRAS falls and dies

Have I the aspic in my lips? Dost fall?
If thou and nature can so gently part,
The stroke of death is as a lover's pinch,
Which hurts, and is desired. Dost thou lie still?
If thus thou vanishest, thou tell'st the world
It is not worth leave-taking.

CHARMIAN

Dissolve, thick cloud, and rain; that I may say,
The gods themselves do weep!

CLEOPATRA

This proves me base:

If she first meet the curled Antony,

He'll make demand of her, and spend that kiss

Which is my heaven to have. Come, thou mortal wretch,

To an asp, which she applies to her breast

With thy sharp teeth this knot intricate

Of life at once untie: poor venomous fool

Be angry, and dispatch. O, couldst thou speak,

That I might hear thee call great Caesar ass

Unpoliced!