

# *Coriolanus*

Act V, sc. 3 (line 94)

## VOLUMNIA

Should we be silent and not speak, our raiment  
And state of bodies would bewray what life  
We have led since thy exile. Think with thyself  
How more unfortunate than all living women  
Are we come hither: since that thy sight, which should  
Make our eyes flow with joy, hearts dance with comforts,  
Constrains them weep and shake with fear and sorrow;  
Making the mother, wife and child to see  
The son, the husband and the father tearing  
His country's bowels out. And to poor we  
Thine enmity's most capital: thou barr'st us  
Our prayers to the gods, which is a comfort  
That all but we enjoy; for how can we,  
Alas, how can we for our country pray.  
Whereto we are bound, together with thy victory,  
Whereto we are bound? alack, or we must lose  
The country, our dear nurse, or else thy person,  
Our comfort in the country. We must find  
An evident calamity, though we had  
Our wish, which side should win: for either thou  
Must, as a foreign recreant, be led

With manacles thorough our streets, or else  
triumphantly tread on thy country's ruin,  
And bear the palm for having bravely shed  
Thy wife and children's blood. For myself, son,  
I purpose not to wait on fortune till  
These wars determine: if I cannot persuade thee  
Rather to show a noble grace to both parts  
Than seek the end of one, thou shalt no sooner  
March to assault thy country than to tread--  
Trust to't, thou shalt not--on thy mother's womb,  
That brought thee to this world.