**WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE’S *HAMLET***

**CLOSE READING 1: “THIS TOO TOO SOLID FLESH”**

This is Hamlet’s first soliloquy. In a soliloquy, the character is alone on stage and speaks directly to the audience. Soliloquies reveal the character’s innermost thoughts.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

... Come away.

*Exeunt all but HAMLET*

**HAMLET**

O, that this too too solid flesh would melt

Thaw and resolve itself into a dew!

Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd

His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! God!

How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable,

Seem to me all the uses of this world!

Fie on't! ah fie! 'tis an unweeded garden,

That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature

Possess it merely. That it should come to this!

But two months dead: nay, not so much, not two:

So excellent a king; that was, to this,

Hyperion to a satyr; so loving to my mother

That he might not beteem the winds of heaven

Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!

Must I remember? why, she would hang on him,

As if increase of appetite had grown

By what it fed on: and yet, within a month--

Let me not think on't--Frailty, thy name is woman!--

A little month, or ere those shoes were old

With which she follow'd my poor father's body,

Like Niobe, all tears:--why she, even she--

O, God! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,

Would have mourn'd longer--married with my uncle,

My father's brother, but no more like my father

Than I to Hercules: within a month:

Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears

Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,

She married. O, most wicked speed, to post

With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!

It is not nor it cannot come to good:

But break, my heart; for I must hold my tongue.

*Enter HORATIO, MARCELLUS, and BERNARDO*

**HORATIO**

Hail to your lordship!

**Discussion questions**

* What issues concern Hamlet in this soliloquy?
* What images are particularly striking and why?