

Act I Scene IV

MERCUTIO

She is the fairies' midwife, and she comes
In shape no bigger than an agate-stone
On the forefinger of an alderman,
Drawn with a team of little atomies
Over men's noses as they lie asleep.
Her chariot is an empty hazelnut,
Her wagon-spokes made of long spinners' legs,
The cover of the wings of grasshoppers,
The traces of the moonshine's watery beams,
And in this state she gallops night by night
Through lovers' brains, and then they dream of love;
O'er lawyers' fingers, who straight dream on fees;
O'er ladies' lips, who straight on kisses dream,
Which oft the angry Mab with blisters plagues
Because their breaths with sweetmeats tainted are.
Sometime she driveth o'er a soldier's neck,
And then dreams he of cutting foreign throats,
Of breaches, ambuscadoes, and then anon
Drums in his ear, at which he starts and wakes,
And being thus frightened swears a prayer or two
And sleeps again. This is that very
Hag, when maids lie on their backs,
That presses them and learns them first to bear,
Making them women of good carriage.
This is she— *{repeat}*

*gem-stone
officer
pulled by, tiny creatures*

*canopy
harnesses, moonbeams*

*right away
right away dream of kisses
often, gives them blisters (herpes)
smell of sweet foods (bawdy)*

*crossing enemy lines, ambushes, soon
is startled*

teaches, bear children (bawdy)