

CLEON

My Dionyza, shall we rest us here  
And, by relating tales of others' griefs,  
See if 'twill teach us to forget our own?

DIONYZA

That were to blow at fire in hope to quench it;  
For who digs hills because they do aspire  
Throws down one mountain to cast up a higher.  
O, my distressed lord, even such our griefs are.  
Here they are but felt, and seen with mischief's eyes,  
But like to groves, being topped, they higher rise.

CLEON O Dionyza,

Who wanteth food, and will not say he wants it,  
Or can conceal his hunger till he famish?  
Our tongues and sorrows do sound deep our woes  
Into the air, our eyes do weep till lungs  
Fetch breath that may proclaim them louder, that  
I'll then discourse our woes, felt several years,  
And, wanting breath to speak, help me with tears.

DIONYZA I'll do my best, sir.

CLEON

This Tarsus, o'er which I have the government,  
A city on whom Plenty held full hand,  
For Riches strewed herself even in her streets;  
Whose towers bore heads so high they kissed the  
clouds,  
And strangers ne'er beheld but wondered at;  
Whose men and dames so jetted and adorned,  
Their tables were stored full to glad the sight,  
And not so much to feed on as delight;  
All poverty was scorned, and pride so great,  
The name of help grew odious to repeat.

DIONYZA O, 'tis too true.

CLEON

But see what heaven can do by this our change:  
These mouths who but of late earth, sea, and air  
Were all too little to content and please,  
Although they gave their creatures in abundance,  
As houses are defiled for want of use,  
They are now starved for want of exercise.  
Those palates who not yet two savors younger  
Must have inventions to delight the taste,  
Would now be glad of bread and beg for it.  
Those mothers who, to nuzzle up their babes,  
Thought naught too curious, are ready now

To eat those little darlings whom they loved.  
So sharp are hunger's teeth that man and wife  
Draw lots who first shall die to lengthen life.  
Here stands a lord and there a lady weeping;  
Here many sink, yet those which see them fall  
Have scarce strength left to give them burial.  
Is not this true?

DIONYZA

Our cheeks and hollow eyes do witness it.

CLEON

O, let those cities that of Plenty's cup  
And her prosperities so largely taste,  
With their superfluous riots, hear these tears.  
The misery of Tarsus may be theirs.