

Chorus (1)

O for a Muse of fire, that would ascend
The brightest heaven of invention.
A kingdom for a stage, princes to act
And monarchs to behold the swelling scene!
Then should the warlike Harry, like himself,
Assume the port of Mars; and at his heels,
Leash'd in like hounds, should famine, sword and fire
Crouch for employment. But pardon, gentles all,
The players that have dared
in this unworthy venue to bring forth
So great an object: can this small stage hold
The vast fields of France? or may we cram
Within this place the very casques
That did affright the air at Agincourt?

Then let me, cipher to this great account,
On your imaginary forces work.
Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts,

For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings,
Carry them here and there; jumping o'er times,
Turning the accomplishment of many years
Into an hour-glass: so,
Admit me -- Chorus -- to this history;
Who, prologue-like, your humble patience pray,
Gently to hear, kindly to judge, our play.