

Hamlet William Shakespeare IV,vii,167-84

pub. 1613

There is a willow grows aslant a brook
That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream.
There with fantastic garlands did she come
Of crowsfeet, nettles, daisies, and long purples
That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,
But our cold maids do dead-men's-fingers call them.
There on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds
Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke,
When down her weedy trophies and herself
Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide,
And mermaidlike awhile they bore her up —
Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes,
As one incapable of her own distress,
Or like a creature native and indued
Unto that element. But long it could not be
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
Pulled the poor wretch from her melodious lay
To muddy death.

hoar - gray

liberal - coarse, crude

pendent - hanging over the water

coronet weeds - wild flowers woven into a crown

sliver - branch

incapable - not realizing

indued - naturally at home

lay - song