

EDMUND

Thou, Nature, art my goddess. To thy law  
My services are bound. Wherefore should I  
Stand in the plague of custom, and permit  
The curiosity of nations to deprive me  
For that I am some twelve or fourteen moonshines 5  
Lag of a brother? why "bastard"? Wherefore "base,"  
When my dimensions are as well compact,  
My mind as generous and my shape as true  
As honest madam's issue? Why brand they us  
With "base," with "baseness," "bastardy," "base," 10  
"base,"  
Who, in the lusty stealth of nature, take  
More composition and fierce quality  
Than doth within a dull, stale, tired bed  
Go to th' creating a whole tribe of fops 15  
Got 'tween asleep and wake? Well then,  
Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land.  
Our father's love is to the bastard Edmund  
As to th' legitimate. Fine word, "legitimate."  
Well, my legitimate, if this letter speed 20  
And my invention thrive, Edmund the base  
Shall top th' legitimate. I grow, I prosper.  
Now, gods, stand up for bastards!