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# The Heartache and Thousand Natural Shocks

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The Heartache and Thousand  
Natural Shocks · *Juan Gelman*

when hamlet took a flute and asked guildenstern to play  
and guildenstern said I cannot and hamlet  
then said wretch  
you cannot draw one note from this simple instrument  
and you would pluck one from me an endless man  
    of blind successive beasts  
that look out through my eyes  
and millions of faces like constellations in my blood  
adrift or falling like a shooting star against the darkness  
sweet dying out in my abysses  
and its holocaust rises to my spittle  
a small acrid drop being sufficient to its splendor  
and this rustling old as centuries like a yearning in my testicles  
    invading the night  
when I come into me as to a tumult of still nameless stars  
and watch them flee collide collapse undone by their fury  
and cry a tear  
at their cracklings and disasters  
think you not guildenstern believe you not  
that hamlet elsinöre denmark  
europe the globe the universe and galaxies that tremble beyond  
are but the the tear of a prince dreaming himself in his own night?

*Translated by  
Roberto Márquez*