

References

- Buber M (1937) *I and Thou* (trans RG Smith). Continuum.
- Downie R (2012) Paying attention: Hippocratic and Asklepian approaches. *Advances in Psychiatric Treatment* 18: 363–8.
- Drury M O C (1973) *The Danger of Words*. Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Fulford KWM (1991) The potential of medicine as a resource for philosophy. *Theoretical Medicine* 12: 81–5.
- Fulford KWM, Thornton T, Graham G (2006) *Oxford Textbook of Philosophy and Psychiatry*. Oxford University Press.
- Hughes JC (2011) *Thinking Through Dementia*. Oxford University Press.
- Walker C (1995) Karl Jaspers and Edmund Husserl IV: Phenomenology as empathic understanding. *Philosophy, Psychiatry, & Psychology* 2: 247–66.
- Wittgenstein L (1968) *Philosophical Investigations* (eds GEM Anscombe and R Rhees, trans GEM Anscombe). Blackwell.

Melancholia: from *Hamlet*, by William Shakespeare

Selected by Femi Oyebo

IN OTHER
WORDS

I have of late – but wherefore I know not – lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and, indeed, it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o’erhanging firmament, this majestic roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work

is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? man delights not me; no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.

(*Hamlet*, II. ii. 291–308)

William Shakespeare

(1564–1616) wrote the play *Hamlet* around 1600. Shown here is Hamlet’s description of anhedonia, the inability to experience joy, indeed to draw any emotion, from experiences that would normally cause delight. From *Madness at the Theatre*, by Femi Oyebo (RCPsych Publications, 2012: p. 40).

doi: 10.1192/apt.18.5.371