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## Bad Quarto

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# Bad Quarto

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*Bob De Smith – September 2020*

He's not a bad student, really—  
Smart, responsive, willing to talk,  
Though often without much forethought,  
Or even the precondition of having read the text.

But there he was, crumpling  
A photocopy of the First Quarto's  
"To be or not to be,  
I there's the point"  
Around a crinkling disposable water bottle,  
Depositing it in the wastebasket.

It was the sound of contempt,  
Though I doubt he thought it so.

He may have read the line literally  
And decided to create a metaphor—  
The stray leaf of text crumpled  
Into oblivion.

But I don't think so.  
He wouldn't be giving  
The quartos another thought,  
"I may there it goes."

So the Bad Quarto  
Gets trashed again.

"The undiscovered country"  
Of the trash bin,  
To the dumpster,  
To the infernal incinerator.

So to, I fear,  
The mind thoughtless,  
Unenriched, blithe,  
Unencumbered by the cares  
Of thought.

"And thousand more calamities besides."

Just a page, just a leaf,  
Fragile, compostable,  
Like those under my rake  
As I lament.