

## **Shakespeare Lives Elements playshop**

### **Lynne Murray, June 8, 2004**

Resources needed: glass bowl, river rocks, water, floating candle, matches, posters of Globe.

#### **Opening:**

1. Recall Adam's workshop with the elements from yesterday. Review the 4 elements by putting river rocks in the bowl "globe," add water, light the candle for fire and remind that air feeds the fire.

#### **Instruction:**

2. Review the physical exercise with the elements explaining how the Elizabethans believed we all we made up of the elements:

Earth = our skeleton and muscles and our physical appetite.

Water = our wide range of emotions from calm to raging

Fire = imagination and spirit

Air = harmonious thought

3. Space: Examine the Globe posters. Each part of the stage represents an element. Can you guess what part represents earth, etc.?

Share that the lower stage where the groundlings stood represents earth. Remember the groundlings, penny stinkers were eating and drinking. Prostitutes were vying for their attention. So they are all about appetites.

The stage itself is water because it contains the fluid movement of the actors who "strut and fret their hour on the stage." They enact the wide range of human emotions.

The musicians' gallery represents air, harmonious thought.

Finally, the canopy painted with the heavens represents fire. Hamlet references it as "this majestic roof fretted with golden fire." The sun, stars and constellations represent imagination. Indeed the Globe space fired

Shakespeare's imagination; remember that he wrote specifically for this space, which is revealed in his language.

4. Text: Shakespeare used the elements in his language, which helps inform character and meaning.

Divide into fours. Give each person a quote:

*O earth gape open wide and eat him quick.*

*My mercy dried their water-flowing tears.*

*You sulphurous and thought-provoking fires.*

*Here could I breathe my soul into the air.*

Walk the stage space, focusing on yourself and your line. Say it using the element.

Come to element groups. How do the words communicate the element?

Resume walking the stage, greet each other with your line.

As you walk, choose places in the audience to say your lines. Remember the groundlings and each of the three galleries.

**Closing:**

5. Come to circle. Explain how each of the elements work in me and that I'm mostly water. Then ask each person to think of which element(s) dominate in them. Choose a pose that communicates that element. Spread on the stage and pose.