EDWARD MARTIN — Audition Excerpt

And what have you given me, who is right here in front of you?
A finger.
Pointing.
He did it.
He complained.
He stopped the play.
He was a Quaker.
He hated theatre.
He was a busybody. A killjoy.
A little man with a little grievance.
Perhaps.
I may have been all of these things.
You do not know.
That is the part that seems to trouble you.
You want to know what I saw.
Very well.
I saw a man become a king.
Not a king.
A man.
And then a king.
And for an hour everyone agreed he was one.
You call this pretending.
I called it dangerous.
You can make a woman into a devil, and everyone watches her become one.
You make them love people they may never have loved.
You make them wicked.
You make them innocent.
You make them say what you need them to say.
And then you call it art.
You say I hated theatre.
Perhaps I did.
But I wonder if you understand what frightened me.
It was not that you lied.
It was that you could make a lie beautiful.
It was that you could make a room full of people agree to believe the same impossible thing.
I knew something about belief.
I knew something about the danger of being told what to believe.
I had seen men bow because they were told to bow.
I had seen men swear because they were told to swear.
I had seen men call one another good and wicked because someone with a book said which was which.
So perhaps I was not frightened of your play.
Perhaps I was frightened of how easily you believed your own inventions.