Hamlet: Close Reading
Act: I Scene: iv Line #: 77-86

Merrick Saunders

Thursday, February 28, 13
Horatio

What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,
Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff
That beetles o'er his base into the sea,

-this is Horatio projecting his worry for Hamlet
first line: he is saying that he will drown him
2nd line: push/send off a cliff
3rd: being slammed into the sea
Horatio is imagining the worst possible scenario for Hamlet if he were to go
And there assume some other horrible form, 
Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason 
And draw you into madness? Think of it.

this is Horatio desperately trying to get Hamlet to not go with the ghost 
He is saying that the ghost will make hamlet go mad and the ghost will take over his mind 
I feel that this part is foreshadowing what is to come 
since the ghost in a way does “take over” hamlets mind and tells him to kill the new king 
later on in the play Hamlet himself starts to question his actions and wonders if the ghost was just the devil trying to trick him
Horatio

The very place puts toys of desperation, 
Without more motive, into every brain 
That looks so many fathoms to the sea 
And hears it roar beneath.

This whole section is basically saying that even the strongest of people can look over a cliff into the sea and they will be filled with despair.

This can go the same with the ghost he is about to see. Hamlet may be a strong mind but even looking/talking with this entity he himself can lose it at any moment. This is also foreshadowing after seeing the ghost there is a question of Hamlet's mental state and how well he really is...