These four bodily humors—blood, yellow bile, black bile, phlegm—were understood by Shakespeare, and generations before him, to define people’s physical and mental health, and to determine individual’s personality, as well.

Carried by the bloodsteam, the four humors bred the core passions of anger, grief, hope, and fear—the emotions conveyed so powerfully in Shakespeare’s comedies and tragedies.

Date: November 24, 2014 through January 2, 2015

Location: 3rd floor Gallery, Health Sciences Library

This exhibition was developed and produced by the National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health and the Folger Shakespeare Library.

4 Humours artwork by Irina Sidorova