

OLLA

*by*

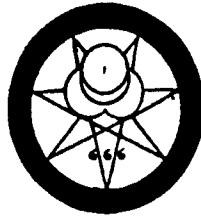
ALEISTER CROWLEY

*Mentula moechatur. Moechatur mentula? Certe.  
Hoc est quod dicunt; ipsa olera olla legit—  
Catullus.*



# OLLA

An Anthology of



SIXTY YEARS OF SONG

by

ALEISTER CROWLEY

*with a dust-jacket by*

Frieda Harris

*and a frontispiece by*

Augustus John. R.A.

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OLLA

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“ Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass ”—*Adonais*.

“ Everything that lives is holy.”—*William Blake*.

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#### APOLOGIA

Poetry is the geyser of the Unconscious. Since “ Every man and every woman is a star,” each of us is, or makes, his own poem ; expressed, or unexpressed, in song. Robert Browning understood this ; almost the whole of his work consists of the utterances of very varied individuals. But these are dramatizations of the speaker, analytically disclosed, and rationally set forth. His lyrics are, with the rarest exceptions, the uprush of his own personal genius.

When I consider my own work, it appears that I have constantly put myself into the soul of various types of men and women, identified myself with their inmost creative Word, lent them my technique, and let them exult for themselves.

Thus “ Amphora ” records the devout yet (unconsciously) passionate outbursts of a Catholic Christian woman ; “ Alice,” of a romantic boy in love, the seed of doubt and disillusion beginning to sprout ; “ Clouds without water,” of a sexual maniac who is also a man of the world, a sardonic jester, and a mystic. Such impersonations are almost as frequent as the ecstatic moods of Our Lady, of the many-minded, many throned Aphrodite, weaver of wiles.



“What a *nice* poem . . . . is ; I think it *ever so pretty* ! Why can't you *always* write like that ? ” So says nearly everybody about some poem or other of mine.

A striking instance of this mental obfuscation received some publicity in the Court of King's Bench some years ago.

In *CROWLEY v. CONSTABLE et al.*, Mr. Malcolm Hilbery K.C., found occasion to recite my popular song, which Gwendolen Otter had endeared to the cultured and magnanimous cognoscenti of our great Metropolis—the “Dilettanti,” you remember?—“The World for a Whore !” I found his rendering most acceptable, and he was rewarded with a judgeship. I murmured “Go *on* !” as usual, for Mr. Hilbery's quotations from my works were adroitly curtailed to suit his purpose; the next sentence or two was certain to give a totally different significance to the chosen passage.

But my own counsel, Mr. J. P. Eddy, emulous, jumped up and obliged with “An Hymn for the American Republic”; which breathes piety and patriotism in every punctuation mark. He did it well enough, and was allowed, shortly afterwards, to take silk.

The judge—Jeffreys, the name was, an memory betray me not—sat astounded. He positively stammered; “Is that really the same book ?” “The very next page, m'lud !” Stupor!

This book is to make clear the poetic standpoint.

I have made this collection of short poems as diverse as possible; time and space have been asked their utmost range; every corner of the earth which has contributed to my delight, and every period of my life which has modulated my music, have lent a flower to this posy.

Louis Marlow, subtlest, profoundest, and wittiest writer of the last two generations, has found the word for my work: *surprising*. This is the root of the superstitious fear which I impose on nearly every reader. The more I write, the less can I be classified, docketed, pigeon-holed; *omne ignotum pro terribili* is still the pill-box defence against science, against every shape of thought until it has been rolled in enough dirt to make it a soft, comfortable cliché.

The grotesque contradictions of these poems have been deliberately enhanced by contraposition; they tear in sunder the veil of my soul, and clothe it in disguise only the more impenetrable for that fact.

To wind up this thesis, here, it concludes, "The Garden of Janus," my poetic summary of the above truth: of me is it written: "*Vel sanctum invenit, vel sanctum fecit.*" My object is to proclaim the duty of every poet; and this is:—to reveal the Godhead in every man and woman through the expression of each one's rapture at the ecstatic moment of Union with that Godhead; thereby to show as just and perfect every soul that is.

ALEISTER CROWLEY.

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EPIGRAMS (1)  
-----

Who loves the truth had better stand,  
Rein and pommel in his hand:  
Who thinks the truth is wise to put  
Ready in stirrup riding-boot :  
Who speaks the truth is safe—if springs  
From his back a pair of wings!

(from the German)

*Washington D.C.*

OPTIMIST (2)

---

Kill off mankind,  
And give the Earth a chance!  
Nature might find  
In her inheritance  
The seedlings of a race  
Less infinitely base.

MY FIRST POEM\*

---

I am a blind man on a helmless ship,  
 Without a compass, on a stormy sea ;  
 I cannot sink, for God doth hold me up ;  
 I cannot stray (? err); 'tis God that guideth me.  
Etc.

*Cambridge, England.*

\* That is, if memory serves me truly. I am not quite sure of the exact wording of the last two lines. There were two or three verses to follow. It was published in "The Christian" an Evangelical (or Non-Conformist ?) Weekly some short time after the death of my father on March 5, 1887 c.v. Some years back I tried to trace the paper : in vain.

A yet earlier fragment : 1885, since provoked by the complaints of two boys from one Collier's rival Plymouth Brother School at Witney, who visited my father's house at The Grange, Redhill before his last illness in 1886. I thought " Now let me strike a blow for Freedom!" and sent this to the peccant usher, of whose name Tussy was a schoolboy corruption.

Tussy is an ass;

Tussy is a fool;

Tussy is the biggest ass

At Collier's Witney School.

Desunt ceterce : te Deum laudamus!  
 But it makes up the full sixty years.

THE HAPPY MAN

I can't read, and I can't write;  
I'm in bed all day, and drunk all night.

*Mexico D.F.*

THE TYLER  
TO  
ALFRIDA TILLYARD

---

Whenever I have spiritual thought  
I interlard it with obscene allusion,  
So that chaste women of the baser sort  
May be confounded in complete confusion.

I garnish my Priapic epigrams  
With virgin garlands from an angel's brow,,  
That honest men, though held in harlot hams  
May reach a hand, and pluck the Golden Bough.

These worthy boars read me with frowning brows,  
But of their Guardian Angel gain a fresh hold :  
However eager, those unworthy sows  
Meet only with the Dweller of the Threshold.  
*Cambridge.*



THE PURPLE MANDARIN

---

There is a purple mandarin  
 With mystic madness in his eyes;  
 He hath deflowered the virgin Sin,  
 And she hath made him overwise.  
 He eats, he drinks, he sleeps, he sports :  
 He never speaks his thoughts.

Well knoweth he the Way of Phang,  
 Matcheth the Yang against the Yin;  
 He marketh Tao in God and dung,  
 Seeth the secret "soul is skin."  
 With power and sight behind his will,  
 He chooseth to keep still.

For he hath dreamed : A blossom buds  
 Once in a million million years,  
 One poppy on Time's foamless floods,  
 A cup of cruelty and tears.  
 Its heart secretes a sacred gum  
 ---Man's only opium.

O mystic flower! O midnight flower  
 Chaste and corrupt as patchouli!  
 A silver saint—a porcelain tower—  
 A flame of ice—a silken sea—  
 A taint—a vice—a swoon—a shame—  
*Pure Beauty* is thy name!

I sought thee in Sahara's sand,  
Hunted through Himalayan snows;  
Gods led me friendly by the hand—  
Me blind! where every soul-wind blows.  
I was more foolish than my kin,  
The purple mandarin.

He dreamed—I followed. Then the Gods  
Who mock at Wisdom spun the wheel,  
Reversed the incalculable odds,  
And flung out laughing—flint to steel—  
The one impossible event:  
Pure Beauty came—and went.

Come back to me, my opium-flower,  
Chaste and corrupt, my saint of sin,  
My flame of ice, my porcelain tower  
—I hate the purple mandarin  
Who gurgles at me in his fall:  
“Dream's wiser, after all.”

*Yung Chang.*

ON GARRET HOSTEL BRIDGE\*.

---

Here in the evening curl white mists and wreathe in their  
 vapour  
 All the gray spires of stone, all the immobile towers;  
 Here in the twilight dim trees and sleepier rivers,  
 Here where the bridge is thrown over the amber stream.  
 Chill is the ray that steals from the moon to the stream  
 that whispers  
 Secret tales of its source, songs of its fountain-head.  
 Here do I stand in the dusk; like spectres mournfully  
 moving  
 Wisps of the cloud-wreaths form, dissipate into the  
 mist,  
 Wrap me in shrouds of gray, chill me and make me shiver,  
 Not with the Night alone, not with the sound of her  
 wing,  
 Yet with a sense of something vague and unearthly  
 stalking  
 (Step after step as I move) me, to annul me, quell  
 Hope and desire and life, bid light die under my eyelids,  
 Bid the strong heart despair, quench the desire of  
 Heaven.  
 So I shudder a little; and my heart goes out to the  
 mountain,  
 Rock upon rock for a crown, snow like an ermine robe;  
 Thunder and lightning free fashioned for speech and  
 seeing,  
 Pinnacles royal and steep, queen of the arduous breast!  
 Ye on whose icy bosom, passionate, at the sunrise,  
 Ye in whose wind-swept hollows, lulled in the moon-  
 rise clear,  
 Often and oft I struggled, a child with an angry mother,  
 Often and oft I slept, maid in a lover's arms.

Back to ye, back, wild towers, from this flat and desolate  
fenland,

Back to ye yet will I flee, swallow on wing to the south;  
Move in your purple cloud-banks and leap your far-  
swelling torrents,

Bathe in the pools below, laugh with the winds above,  
Battle and strive and climb in the teeth of the glad wild  
weather,

Flash on the slopes of ice, dance on the spires of rock,  
Run like a glad young panther over the stony highlands,

Shout with the joy of living, race to the rugged cairn,  
Feel the breath of your freedom burn in my veins, and  
Freedom!

Freedom! echoes adown cliff and precipitous ghyll.  
Down by the cold gray lake the sun descends from his  
hunting,

Shadow and silence steal over the frozen fells.

Oh, to be there, my heart! And the vesper bells awaken;  
Colleges call their children; Lakeland fades from the  
sight.

Only the sad slow Cam like a sire with age grown heavy  
Wearily moves to the sea, to quicken to life at last.

Blithelier I depart, to a sea of sunnier kindness;

Hours of waiting are past; I re-quicken to love.

*Cambridge, England.*

\* A bridge on the "Backs" at Cambridge.

THE DYNAST

---

Old King Crowley was a merry old soul, he  
 Was a merry old soul, was he;  
 He called for his pipe, he called for his pot,  
 And he called for his fiddlers three.  
 Their names are Beauty and Love and Art,  
 And one's in his head, and one's in his heart,  
 And one's in his twiddle-iddle-ee.

The Erg is a Garden of Delights  
 As he writes his rimes, and he rimes his rites,  
 And he busses his wench till dawn o' day  
 With a couple of bottles of Montrachet;  
 And he smokes his pipe, and he pens his sketches,  
 With never a thought for the luckless wretches  
 With titles and £. S. D.  
 Who groan in their gluttony and whoredom  
 For the agonies of their brainless boredom;  
 For he rides the black old bull that gored 'em;  
 And he rides with bridle free  
 Through fire and air and water and earth  
 With a shouted song of manful mirth  
 Through the desert merrilee!

Old King Crowley is happy and holy,  
 And happy and holy is he,  
 When he calls for his pipe and he calls for his pot  
 And he calls for his li'l mon-key.  
 For he's not alone on his golden throne;  
 For a golden throne has he  
 In the heart of a rum little yum-yum-yum,  
 And he's got all he wants in sheee!

*Great Eastern Erg.*

AN OATH  
-----

(An Oath written during the Dawn Meditation)

Aiwaz! Confirm my troth with Thee! my will inspire  
With secret sperm of subtle, free, creating Fire!  
Mould thou my very flesh as Thine, renew my birth  
In childhood merry as divine, enchanted Earth!  
Dissolve my rapture in Thine own, a sacred slaughter  
Whereby to capture and atone the Soul of water!  
Fill thou my mind with gleaming Thought intense and  
rare  
To One refined, outflung to Naught, the Word of Air!  
Most, bridal bound, my quintessential Form thus freeing  
From self, be found one Selfhood blent in Spirit Being.

*Marseilles.*

STYX

---

(To M. M. M.)

“The number nine is sacred, as the  
Oracles inform us, and attaineth the  
summits of philosophy.”—ZOROASTER.

---

“Novem continuas futationes.”—CATULLUS.

---

Nine times I kissed my lover in her sleep :  
 The first time, to make sure that she was there ;  
 The second, as a sleepy sort of prayer ;  
 The third, because I wished that she should weep ;  
 The fourth, to draw her kisses and to keep ;  
 The fifth, for love ; the sixth, in sweet despair ;  
 The seventh, to destroy us unaware ;  
 The eighth, to dive within the infernal deep.

The last, to kill her—and myself as well !  
 Ah ! joy of sweet annihilation,  
 The blackness that invades the burning sun,  
 My swart limbs and her limbs adorable !  
 So nine times dead before the night is done,  
 Even as Styx nine times embraces Hell.

*Copenhagen.*

THE JOLLY BARBER

To  
Ginuccio

---

I met my love in a barber-shop.  
Sing hey! Sing ho!  
He kissed me until I was ready to drop.  
Sing hey! the ship's in harbour.  
He kissed me straight, and he kissed me oblique;  
He kissed me until I got so weak  
That I couldn't stand and I couldn't speak—  
Sing ho! for the jolly barber!

He couldn't shave and he couldn't shampoo.  
Sing hey! Sing ho!  
But what he could do he could do.  
Sing hey! the ship's in harbour.  
He kissed me hot, and he kissed me strong;  
And my mother said I should never go wrong  
If I always put things where they belong.  
Sing ho! for the jolly barber!

He kissed me all day, and he kissed me all night.  
Sing hey! Sing ho!  
Oh yes! he certainly kissed me right.  
Sing hey! the ship's in harbour.  
But love isn't all the poet sings;  
He took my watch and he took my rings;  
And he left me—a lot of other things.  
Sing ho! for the jolly barber!

*Naples.*



## THE BALLOON

Written (at the age of fifteen, and still unsurpassed)  
while in bed with measles.

---

Floating in the summer air,  
What is that for men to see?  
Anywhere and everywhere,  
Now a bullet, now a tree—  
Till we all begin to swear :  
What the devil can it be ?

See its disproportioned head,  
Tiny trunk and limbs lopped bare,  
Hydrocephalus the dread  
With a surgeon chopping there ;  
Chopping legs and arms all red  
With the sticky lumps of hair.

Like a man in this complaint  
Floats this creature in the sky,  
Till the gaping rustics faint  
And the smirking milkmaids cry,  
As the cord and silk and paint,  
Wood and iron drifteth by.

Floating in the summer sky  
Like a model of the moon :—  
How supreme to be so high  
In a treacherous balloon,  
Like the Kings of Destiny,  
All the earth for their spittoon!

Toads are gnawing at my feet.  
Take them off me quick, I pray !  
Worms my juicy liver eat.  
Take the awful beasts away!  
Vipers make my bowels their meat.  
Fetch a cunning knife and slay !

Kill the tadpoles in my lung,  
And the woodlice in my spine,  
And the beast that gnaws my tongue,  
And the weasel at my chine,  
And the horde of adders young  
That around mine entrails twine!

Come, dissect me! Rip the skin!  
Tear the bleeding flesh apart!  
See ye all my hellish grin  
While the straining vitals smart.  
Never mind! Go in and win,  
Till you reach my gory heart!

While my heart's soft pulse did go,  
Devils had it in their hands.  
Doctors keep it in a row,  
Now, on varnished wooden stands :  
And I really do not know  
If it is in different hands.

*Llyn Idwal Farm.*

## PRAYER AT SUNSET

To the Hon. Ralph Shirley

God, who hast sent me forth to be the priest  
Of Thine immortal fire,  
Grant me to kindle one new torch at least  
Ere mine expire!

Christ, who hast chosen me to bear the Cross,  
To pay the infinite price,  
Let save one soul from everlasting loss  
My sacrifice!

Spirit, who has filled me with the sacred strife  
That brings the eternal peace,  
Let my breath quicken one dead soul to life  
Before it cease!

*Tali Fu.*

## PENELOPE

Ulysses 'scaped the sorceries of that queen  
That turned to swine his goodly company,  
And came with sails broad-burgeoning and clean  
Over the ripples of his native sea.  
Yet for the shores his eyes had lately seen,  
He kept a half-regretful memory;  
And thought, when all the flower-strewn ways  
were green,  
“ Better love Circe than Penelope! ”

Yes. A good woman's love will forge a chain  
To break the spirit of the bravest Greek;  
While with an harlot one may leap again  
Free as the waters of the western main,  
And turn with no heart-pang the vessel's beak  
Out to the oceans that all seamen seek.

*Hango.*

PANACEA

---

(This poem may, but need not be, translated in to all languages. It is patriotically offered as an International Anthem to Anglo-Saxondom.)

Money, money, money, money,  
Money, money, money,  
Money, money, money, money,  
Money, money, money ;  
Money, money, money, money,  
Money, money, money ;  
Money, money, money, money,  
Money, money, money ;  
Money, money, money, money,  
Money, money, money ;  
Money, money, money, money,  
Money, money, money.

## ON WAIKIKI BEACH

---

Upheaved from Chaos, through the dark sea hurled,  
 Through the cleft heart of the amazéd sea,  
 Sprang, 'mid deep thunderous throats of majesty,  
 Titanic, in the waking of the world;  
 Sprang, one vast mass of spume and molten fire,  
 Lava, tremendous waves of earth; sprang higher  
 Than the sea's crest volcano-torn, to be  
 Written in Cyclopean charactery,  
 Hawaii. Here she stands,  
 Queen of all laughter's lands  
 That dance for dawn, lie tranced in leisured noon,  
 Dreaming through day towards night,  
 Craving the perfumed light  
 Of the stars lustrous, and the gem-born moon.  
 Dewy with clustered diamond,  
 The long land swoons to sleep; the sea sleeps and yet  
 wakes beyond.

Here, in the crescent beach and bay, the sea,  
 Curven and carven in warm shapes of dream,  
 Answers the love-song of the liliated stream,  
 And moves to bridal music. Stern and free,  
 The lion-shaped headland guards the shore;  
 The ocean, the bull-throated, evermore  
 Roars; the vast wheel of heaven turns above,  
 Its rim of pain, its jewelled heart of love;  
 Sun-waved, the eagle wing  
 Of the air of feathered spring

Royally sweeps; and on the musical marge  
 Watches alone the man,  
 O silvern shape and span  
 Of moonlight, reaching over the grey large  
 Breast of the surf-bound strand,  
 Life of the earth, God's child, Man's bride, the light of  
 the sweet land!

Are emeralds ever a spark of this clear green,  
 Or sapphires hints of this diviner blue,  
 Or rubies shadows of this rosy hue,  
 Or light itself elsewhere so clear and clean ?  
 For all the sparkling dews of heaven fallen far  
 Crystalline, fixed, forgotten (as a star  
 Forgets its nebulous virginity)  
 Are set in all the sky and earth and sea.  
 Shining with solar fire,  
 The single-eyed desire  
 Of scent and sound and sight and sense perfuses  
 The still and lambent light  
 Of the essential night;  
 And all the heart of me is fain, and muses,  
 As if for ever doomed to dream  
 Or pass in peace Lethean adown the grey Lethean stream.

So deep the sense of beauty, and so keen!  
 The calm abiding holiness of love  
 Reigns; and so fallen from the heights above  
 Immeasurable, the influence unseen  
 Of music and of spiritual fire,  
 That the soul sleeps, forgotten of desire;  
 Only, remembering its God-like birth  
 Reflected in the deity of earth,  
 Becometh even as God.  
 The pensive period  
 Of night and day beats like a waving fan  
 No more, no more; the years,  
 Reft of their joys and fears,  
 Pass like pale faces, leave the life of man

Untroubled of their destinies,  
Leave him forgotten of life and time, immortal, calm, and  
wise.

Only the ceaseless surf on coral towers,  
The changeless change of the unchanging ocean,  
Laps the bright night, with unsubstantial motion  
Winnowing the starlight, plumed with feathery flowers  
Of foam and phosphor glory, the strange glow  
Of the day's amber fallen to indigo,  
Lit of its own depth in some subtle wise  
A pavement for the footsteps from the skies  
Of angels walking thus  
Not all unseen of us,  
Nor all unknown, for unintelligible,  
When with souls lifted up  
In the Cadmean cup,  
As incense lifted in the thurible,  
We know that God is even as we,  
Light from the sky, and life on earth, and love beneath  
the sea.

*Waikiki.*



KNIGHT TAKES BISHOP, CHECK!\*

---

Woman delights not me, nor (though  
 Your smiling seems to say so)  
 Man either:- (British Bishops know  
 A trick worth two of Naso).  
 From art and music, wit and wine,  
 I fail to see the fun shine.  
 It bores me stiff to have to dine.  
 I mildly snub the sunshine.

“ Old Mother Damnable,” you hope  
 Would help—you really hope so ?  
 Heaven smiles beyond a swarded slope ?  
 (You can't persuade the Pope so.)  
 Fold woolly me in pious pen,  
 And with my equals then lie,  
 Grease ladies and wax gentlemen  
 At Hurlingham and Henley.

Nay, Bishop, I have been the round,  
 A wider round than you know;  
 Below Dis' throne have broken ground,  
 And split the skies of Juno.  
 I know the secrets of the soul,  
 The prettier points of polo,  
 The earth's enticements, pole to pole,  
 From psalmody to solo.

\* There is a misprint somewhere in this poem.

KNIGHT TAKES BISHOP, CHECK!

37

I know too much to lay my spleen  
To conscience or to liver;  
I'll always be, I've always been  
A creaky, cranky flivver.  
I'm only dust in nature's 'must',  
Behemoth hers, and bustard—  
She made insatiable lust.  
I'll thank you for the mustard.

*Stockholm.*

THE ARHAN.

When the chill of earth black-breasted is uplifted at the  
 glance  
 Of the red sun million-crested, and the forest blossoms  
 dance  
 With the light that stirs and lustres of the dawn, and with  
 the bloom  
 Of the wind's cheek as it clusters from the hidden valley's  
 gloom :  
 Then I walk in woodland spaces, musing on the solemn  
 ways  
 Of the immemorial places shut behind the starry rays  
 Of the East and all its splendour, of the West and all its  
 peace ;  
 And the stubborn lights grow tender, and the hard sounds  
 hush and cease.  
 In the wheel of heaven revolving, mysteries of death and  
 birth,  
 In the womb of time dissolving, shape anew a heaven and  
 earth  
 Ever changing, ever growing, ever dwindling, ever dear,  
 Ever worth the passion glowing to distil a doubtful tear.  
 These are with me, these are of me, these approve me,  
 these obey,  
 Choose me, move me, fear me, love me, master of the  
 night and day.  
 These are real, these illusion : I am of them, false or frail,  
 True or lasting, all is fusion in the spirit's shadow-veil,  
 Till the Knowledge-Lotus flowering hides the world  
 beneath its stem ;  
 Neither I, nor God life-showering, find a counterpart in  
 them.  
 As a spirit in a vision shows a countenance of fear,  
 Laughs the looker to derision, only comes to disappear,

Gods and mortals, mind and matter, in the glowing bud  
dissever :  
Vein from vein they rend and shatter, and are nothingness  
for ever.  
In the blessed, the enlightened, perfect eyes these visions  
pass,  
Pass and cease, poor shadows frightened, leave no stain  
upon the glass.  
One last stroke, O heart-free master, one last certain  
calm of will,  
And the maker of Disaster shall be stricken and grow  
still.  
Burn thou to the core of matter, to the spirit's utmost  
flame,  
Consciousness and sense to shatter, ruin sight and form  
and name!  
Shatter, lake-reflected spectre; lake, rise up in mist to  
sun;  
Sun, dissolve in showers of nectar, and the Master's  
work is done.  
Nectar perfume gently stealing, masterful and sweet and  
strong,  
Cleanse the world with light of healing in the ancient  
House of Wrong!  
Free a million million mortals on the wheel of being  
tossed!  
Open wide the mystic portals, and be altogether lost!

*Akyab.*

## THE JUNGLE OF ELIZABETH ARDEN

“*Simplex munditiis.*” To-day  
The adage is forgotten :  
When “ beauty-culture ” comes to stay,  
It is that beauty’s rotten.

I simply loathe the stinking creams  
With which her barbers load her,  
The preparation that redeems  
Her armpits of their odour.

My motto’s *monosyllable*, not chemicals :  
I hold my head erect.  
Most earnestly I warn my pals  
Of what they must expect.

It moves me to profanity :  
I’d rather eat my hat.  
“ It was not love, but vanity,  
Set love a task like that.”

*Chicago.*

LA VERGE  
A Cameo

---

To  
Hassan ben Suleiman  
Sousse 1925.

---

Olive and cactus and palm  
And the still sea's Libyan calm :  
Night over all : the twitch  
Of an Arab's hand—is a niche  
Not made for a saint ? On my hips  
I twist to his sullen lips,  
Like a trodden snake. Does it reel,  
The slow inscrutable wheel  
Of the sky ? One violence  
Ends the dream of defence . . . .

PACIFIC SURF

---

Light shed from seaward over breakers bending  
 Kiss-wise to the emerald hollows : light divine  
 Whereof the sun is God, the sea his shrine ;  
 Light in vibrations rhythmic ; light unending ;  
 Light sideways from the girdling crags extending  
 Unto this lone and languid head of mine ;  
 Light, that fulfils creation as with wine,  
 Flows in the channels of the deep : light, rending  
 The adamantine columns of the night,  
 Is laden with the love song of the light.

Light, pearly-glimmering through dim gulf and hollow,  
 Below the foam-kissed lips of all the sea ;  
 Light shines from all the sky and up to me  
 From the amber floors of sand : light calls Apollo!  
 The shafts of fire fledged of the eagle follow  
 The crested surf, and strike the shore, and flee  
 Far from green cover, nymph-enchanted lea,  
 Fountain, and plume them white as the sea-swallow,  
 And turn and quiver in the ocean, seeming  
 The glances of a maiden kissed, or dreaming.

Light, as I swim through rollers green and gleaming,  
 Sheds its most subtle sense to penetrate  
 This heart I thought impervious to Fate.  
 Now the sweet light, the full delight, is beaming  
 Through me and burns me : all my flesh is teeming  
 With the live kisses of the sea, my mate,  
 My mistress, till the fires of life abate  
 And leave me languid, man-forgotten, deeming  
 I see in sleep, in many-coloured night,  
 More hope than in the flame-waves of the light.

PACIFIC SURF

43

Light! ever light! I swim far out and follow  
The footsteps of the wind, and light invades  
My desolate soul, and all the cypress shades  
Glow with transparent lustre, and the hollow  
I thought I had hidden in my heart must swallow  
The bitter draught of Truth; no Nereid maids  
Even in my sea are mine; the whole sea's glades  
And hills and springs are void of my Apollo—  
The Sea herself my tune and my desire!  
The Sun himself my lover and my lyre!



FIGURE GENETHLIACAL  
(To any Unborn Child)

---

On that intolerable planet  
Whose nature and whose name is Hell,  
There slants a path of polished granite  
Straight to a scaffold from a cell.

With lids cut off and fettered hands,  
Each shoots the inexorable slope  
To where the hooded hangman stands,  
His fingers ready on the rope.

Didst thou not know by what black art  
Malice fees Love for his attorney,  
Whose sly words wheedle souls to start  
That unintelligible journey ?

Whence wast thou ? Was that place unknown  
Airless and abject, an abyss  
Of agony, as this our own  
Perdition of paralysis ?

No more! Truth's withered in her well :  
The dry pump Reason mocks our thirst :  
All that we know is horror of hell—  
And are we sure we know the worst ?

With leaping lungs you got your grip  
On air :— " I will to live " your cry :  
The white bark of the phrase may strip  
To the black pith :— " I will to die. "

On this intolerable planet,  
Earth's evil that exceedeth hell,  
There slants a path of polished granite  
Straight to a scaffold from a cell.

With eyelids clipt and fettered hands,  
Thou also slidest on the slope  
To where the hooded hangman stands,  
His fingers ready on the rope ! *Rangoon.*

ON THE MINDOON CHONG  
(in a dug-out)

---

By palm and pagoda enchanted o'ershadowed, I lie in the  
light  
Of stars that are bright beyond suns that all poets have  
vaunted  
In the deep-breathing amorous bosom of forests of  
amazon might  
By palm and pagoda enchanted.

By spells that are murmured and rays of my soul strongly  
flung, never daunted ;  
By gesture of tracery traced with a wand dappled white :  
I summon the spirits of earth from the gloom they for  
ages have haunted.

O woman of deep-red skin! Carved hair like the teak!  
O delight  
Of my soul in the hollows of earth—how my spirit  
hath taunted—  
Away! I am here, I am laid to the breast of the earth in  
the dusk of the night,  
By palm and pagoda enchanted.

### THE OWL\*

The owl, by simply sitting still and blinking,  
Persuades folk that his life is passed in thinking.  
Charles Darwin dived where dilettanti waded;  
Rubbing his nose, he did not do as they did;  
(It used to drive Charles Darwin fairly frantic  
To find folk superficial and romantic!)  
*He* went to frogs and mice and such small fowl,  
And got *their* point of view about the owl.  
Moral : the quiet folk of the community  
Are, maybe, waiting for their opportunity.

*Cefalú.*

IN VERA CRUZ HARBOUR

---

I hear the waters faint and far,  
 And look to where the Polar Star,  
 Half hidden in the haze, divides  
 The double chanting of the tides;  
 But, where the harbour's gloomy mouth  
 Welcomes the stranger to the south,  
 The water shakes, and all the sea  
 Grows silver suddenly.

As one who standing on the moon  
 Sees the vast horns in silver hewn,  
 Himself in darkness, and beholds  
 How silently all space unfolds  
 Into her shapeless breast the spark  
 And sacred phantom of the dark ;  
 So in the harbour-horns I stand  
 Till I forget the land.

Who sails through all that solemn space  
 Out to the twilight's secret place,  
 The sleepy waters move below  
 His ship's imaginary flow.  
 No song, no lute, so lowly chaunts  
 In woods where still Arisbe haunts,  
 Wrapping the wanderer with her tresses  
 Into untold caresses.

For none of all the sons of men  
 That hath known Artemis, again  
 Turns to the warmer earth, or vows  
 His secrets to another spouse.  
 The moon resolves her beauty in  
 The sea's deep kisses salt and keen ;

The sea assumes the lunar light,  
And he—their eremite!

In their calm intercourse and kiss  
Even hell itself no longer is;  
For nothing in their love abides  
That passes not beneath their tides,  
And whoso bathes in light of theirs,  
And water, changes unawares  
To be no separate soul, but be  
Himself the moon and sea.

Not all the wealth that flowers shed,  
And sacred streams, on that calm head;  
Not all the earth's spell-weaving dream  
And scent of new-turned earth shall seem  
Again indeed his mother's breast  
To breathe like sleep and give him rest ;  
He lives or dies in subtler swoon  
Between the sea and moon.

So standing, gliding, undeterred  
By any her alluring word  
That calls from older forest glades,  
My soul forgets the gentle maids  
That wooed me in the scarlet bowers,  
And golden cluster-woof of flowers;  
Forgets itself, content to be  
Between the moon and sea.

No passion stirs their depth, nor moves;  
No life disturbs their sweet dead loves;  
No being holds a crown or throne;  
They are, and I in them, alone :  
Only some lute-player grown star  
Is heard like whispering flowers afar;  
And some divided, single tune  
Sobs from the sea and moon.

Amid thy mountains shall I rise,  
O moon, and float about thy skies ?  
Beneath thy waters shall I roam,  
O sea, and call thy valleys home ?  
Or on daedalian oarage fare  
Forth in the interlunar air ?  
Imageless mirror-life ! to be  
Sole between moon and sea.

PUSS-IN-BOOTS  
To Dorothy Olsen

Lazy cat, crazy cat, how do you do ?  
Furry puss, purry puss, I love you.  
High boots, sly boots! The tricks that you try on  
Furry puss, purry puss, your Big Lion!

*El Oued.*



HONG KONG HARBOUR

Over a sea like stained glass  
 At sunset like a chrysopras :—  
     Our smooth-oared vessel over-rides  
     Crimson and green and purple tides.  
 Between the rocky isles we pass,  
 And greener islets gay with grass ;  
     Between the over-arching sides  
     Our pinnacle glides.

Just by the Maenad-haunted hill  
 Songs rise into the air, and thrill,  
     Like clustered birds at evening  
     When love outlingers rain and spring.  
 Faint faces of strange dancers spill  
 Their dewy scent; and sweet and chill  
     The wind comes faintly whispering  
     On wanton wing.

Between the islands sheer and steep  
 Our craft treads noiseless o'er the deep,  
     Turned to the gold heart of the west,  
     The sun's last sigh of love expressed  
 Ere the lake glimmer, borrow sleep  
 From clouds and tinge their edges ; weep  
     That night brings love not to his breast,  
     But only rest.

We move toward the golden track  
 Shed in the water : we look back  
     Eastward, where rose is set to warn  
     Promise and prophecy of dawn  
 Reflected, lest the ocean lack  
 In any space serene or slack

HONG KONG HARBOUR

53

Some colour blushing o'er the fawn  
Dim-lighted lawn.

And under all the shadowy shapes  
Of steep and silent bays and capes  
The water takes its darkest hue;  
Catches no laughter from the blue ;  
No purple ray or gold escapes,  
But dim green shadow comes and drapes  
Its lustre : thus the night burns through  
Tall groves of yew.

Thither, ah thither! Hollow vales  
Trembling with early nightingales!  
Languish, O sea of sleep! Young moon!  
Dream on above in maiden swoon!  
None daring to invoke the gales  
To shake our sea, and swell our sails.  
Not song, but silence, were a boon—  
Save for this tune.

Round capes grown darker as night falls,  
We see at last the splendid walls  
That ridge the bay; the town lies there  
Lighted (the temple's hour for prayer)  
At grave harmonious intervals.  
The grand voice of some seaman calls,  
Just as the picture fades, aware  
How it was fair.

## ROSA DECIDUA

“ O Rose, thou art sick!  
 The invisible worm  
 That flies in the night  
 In the howling storm  
 Has found out thy bed  
 Of crimson joy,  
 And his dark secret love  
 Does thy life destroy.”

—*Blake*

ROSE of the World!  
 If so, then what a world!  
 What worm at its red heart lay curled  
 From the beginning? Plucked and torn and trampled  
 And utterly corrupt is she  
 That was the queen-flower unexampled  
 In gardens goodlier than Arcady.

O Thou! whose body was my lyre, whose soul  
 Lay on my mouth like a live coal!  
 This time thou hearest not my song; thine ears  
 Are stopped with worse than death;  
 And all this wasted breath  
 Of mine—those songs of six most memorable years  
 Of ecstasy and agony—may not attain  
 To charm thy being into love again . . . .

This is no tragedy of little tears.  
 My brain is hard and cold; there is no beat  
 Of its blood; there is no heat  
 Of sacred fire upon my lips to sing.  
 My heart is dead; I say that name thrice over;  
 Rose!—Rose!—Rose!—  
 Even as lover should call to lover;

There is no quickening,  
No flood, no fount that flows;  
No water wells from the dead spring.  
My thoughts come singly, dry, contemptuous,  
Too cold for hate : all I can say is that they come  
From some dead sphere without me;  
Singly they come, beats of a senseless drum  
Jarred by a fool, harsh, unharmonious.  
There is no sense within me or about me;  
Yet each thought is most surely known  
For a catastrophe.  
No climax of a well-wrought tragedy!  
Single and sterile.

I am here for naught.

I have no memory of the rose-red hours.  
No fragrance of those days amid the flowers  
Lingers; all's drowned in the accursèd stench  
Of this damned present. The past years abort,  
And this is found. Foul waters drench  
My earth. All's filth. With what cold eye one scans  
This body that was—so long since—two years! I wrench  
My soul to say it—all a man's  
Delight. Come, look at it! This leaden skin  
With ochre staining its amorphous grey;  
All that elastic brilliance passed away;  
Minute invading wrinkles where the flesh  
Is soaked away by the foul thing within  
Her soul; the bloom so faint and fresh  
Smudged to a smoky glow as one may see  
At sunset in the Factory lands; the lips  
Thinned and their colour sickened into slate:  
The eyes like common glass; the hair's gloss dull;  
The muscles gone, all pendulous with fat;  
The breath that was more sweet than Lebanon  
And all the flowers and honey and spice thereof,  
Ripe for my soul's kiss eagerly to cull,  
Now like a corpse three weeks drowned, swollen by sun  
And water and vermin. There she sways and stares,  
And with the jaw dropped all awry—first swears,  
Then lurches; then she slobbers unctuously :

“ I am not old : I am quite beautiful;  
 How have I lost your love ? ”  
 Pitiful! Pitiful! Most pitiful!

This is no tragedy of little tears.  
 This worm was in her blood  
 Lurking for thrice five years.  
 And now I see him—that old slime that leers  
 Where Bacchus smiles, that evil and averse  
 God that is wholly curse,  
 As he is wholly blessing to the wise.  
 This thing invertebrate, this sewer-flood,  
 Compact of treacheries, meannesses, and lies,  
 Horrible thirst, infamous beastliness,  
 Dirt and disease, so sottish wallowing,  
 Yet sensitive to pain so hideous  
 That sometimes he appears all pain, all fear,  
 All hate—so slavish yet so fierce a king,  
 A tyrant to himself, insidious  
 And cunning as some sordid sorceress;  
 Incapable of action or control,  
 Yet a black gulph to drown so strong a soul! . . .

He lay close curled within my rose's heart.  
 There is no blame; yet what avails all art ?  
 See! I reel back beneath the blow of her breath  
 As she comes smiling to me : that disgust  
 Changes her drunken lust  
 Into a shriek of hate—half conscious still  
 (Beneath the obsession of the will)  
 Of all she was—before her death, her death!  
 So hell boils over her, and she rages—  
 It seems through countless ages—  
 With all the vile abuse  
 That had degraded Glasgow's grimiest stews,  
 With all the knowledge of despair  
 Striking me cunningly, striking everywhere,  
 Mutilating the corpse of my dead love  
 With such a savagery,  
 Intensity above

All understanding, that it bleeds again—  
As a corpse should bleed at the murderer's touch!  
Then, not content, she must needs smutch  
All my past purifying pain,  
Turning all life to a thing fouler than  
Aught yet imaginable to man!

Who asks me for my tears ?  
She flings the body of our sweet dead child  
Into my face with hell's own epitaph,  
Profanes that shrine  
Of infinite love and infinite loss,  
My empty shrine, the one shrine undefiled,  
My one close-claspèd cross—  
And hers as much as mine!  
Profanes it with a hideous laugh  
And a lie flung with a curse ; and I must hear,  
And must not stamp on the snake, because, forsooth,  
This was my love, my peace, my faith, my truth,  
The rosebud of my youth!  
It was—it is not—it can never be.  
This would corrupt God's body with a breath.  
I see Him sicken and swoon ; I see Him rot  
Through, though His tabernacle be  
Eternity.  
This makes a man catch hold of death  
Greedily like a harlot in the street  
That plucks by the arm some sot.  
Death shakes me off with a hoarse curse.  
Tied to this woman, his beneficence  
Were too like heaven—and heaven's somehow to earn,  
No doubt—no way that I know! Hell's enough,  
If hell would only burn  
And silence the one devil-word of love.

Ay! death slinks off.  
I have a child that claims my life  
To keep from knowledge of her mother's fate,  
To keep from heritage thereof,  
To shield from the world's scoff,

To watch, stamp out the seeds of madness in her.  
 God! that hast held me back from hate,  
 Be merciful to me a sinner,  
 And ward me, warding her! As it is written :  
 Excepting Adonai build the house, they labour  
 In vain that build it. And again :  
 Excepting Adonai keep the city,  
 The watchman watcheth but in vain.  
 God, if there be a God, be Thou my Neighbour;  
 And if that God have pity, have Thou pity!  
 For never man was smitten as I am smitten;  
 Nor from Time's yesterday to Time's to-morrow  
 Was there a sorrow like unto this sorrow!  
 How many hours was Christ upon the Cross ?  
 How many days in hell ? But I have hung  
 From the day of infinite loss,  
 Watching her degradation into dung  
 Three years.  
 Three years!  
 And now who asks me to shed tears ?  
 Let a man pierce my side,  
 I warrant him nor blood nor water flows,  
 But such a poison as Locusta never  
 Distilled from toad, asp, viper, scorpion,  
 Nightshade, gall, orpiment, Jews' hearts,  
 Old woman's tongues, by monstrous arts ;  
 But this my poison drips, without endeavour,  
 From the mere soul of the world's rose!  
 What alchemy of hell this ronyon  
 Venus has skill of!

Wonder that I live!

This has been like a bag-pipe drone to wail  
 Its monotone through high, low, fast and slow.  
 It has been like a secret cancer,  
 Forcing all servants of the life to give  
 Their work to the usurper; all its themes assail  
 The main word Life; they build their archipelago  
 Of poison in each sea where life was holy,  
 Their questions have no answer,  
 But all's converted to the abominable

Soul-sickening thing that one is tied to. This is I  
 Just as God is His Nature, wholly  
 Involved therein, its tune, its motive, its quintessence.  
 There were no meaning in Spring's aspen spell,  
 Were man's sole treasury, the sky,  
 Made bankrupt of His presence.  
 Only, this God is a black fiend;  
 Of blood, the babe's drink, weaned  
 And fattened on—what liquor and meat? Unnameable  
 By all the giant horrors that haunt hell!

These years I have watched her fade, my masterful love  
 And all-embracing pity strove  
 Like athletes in an amorous bout to make  
 Some child to tread upon that snake.  
 But ever the worm slipped, escaped; its spires  
 Here crushed, there rose the stronger for the pressure  
 That gave it purchase; keener flamed the fires  
 In its eye triumphant. Now its soul asserts  
 Its master-pleasure;  
 The worm exerts  
 Its adult might, and in one bout  
 The spine snaps of that child of Love and Pity,  
 And mangled he falls out  
 Of the fight. Just so child Hercules  
 Strangled two serpents in his pretty  
 Red fists, achieved twelve labours, won to ease,  
 And was done down to death and madness by  
 The subtle poison that himself distilled.  
 So all the God in life is chilled  
 To a corpse. The informing one? God's a cast clout  
 Of a leper! Leave me here, corruptest of earth's whores,  
 To scrape my sores!

Cry like a dog and run about the city!  
 There is no word left, now the deed is dead!  
 No thought of her is in me; I am a stranger  
 To all that dream of danger  
 And bliss that Rose was. The green shoots  
 Of life that spring in me are fed



Not even on the mire of her decay.  
 They spring from other roots.  
 Now I am cleansed of her, I am so to say  
 A man part paralysed. One limb is dead  
 In feeling as in motion. This remains  
 To ask : Will all catch death—how soon ? This head  
 Excites its miserable brains  
 To think the word it knows by intellect  
 To be the right word—pity! Then reflect :  
 “ Pityful! pitiful! most pitiful!  
 The pity of it! Think of the love past,  
 Blossoms too beautiful!  
 Think of the hardships conquered comrade-wise!  
 Think of the babe and its most piteous end! ”—  
 All these things sound like lies.  
 I do not comprehend  
 Anything of them—“ Pity! pity! pity! ”  
 'Tis like the dripping of some stagnant rain  
 From the housetops of a ruined city  
 Upon the flagstones. Not one petal clings  
 Upon the stalk of life or memory. Stain  
 Not one pale thought with blushes; my soul's dead  
 As a corpse flung out of the tideway on  
 The stinking flats of London mud. The springs  
 Are dry beyond appeal; dull grey like lead  
 (And heavier) is my soul's carrion.  
 If she came pleading now, pure, passionate, and sane,  
 I would not take her back again.  
 I am warned—that's one word. Let my own back feel  
     the lash!  
 All power of love is burnt right through to ash.  
 Bray it in a mortar, mix with gall and ink,  
 And give it to the children for a drink!

I'll wait till she is dead, to bring those tears.  
 I doubt not in the garden of my heart  
 Whence she is torn that flowers will bloom again.  
 May those be flowers of weeping, flowers of art.  
 Flowers of great tenderness and pain.  
 Broad lilyed meers

Lying in a lonely leafless forest  
Silent and motionless beneath the moon.  
I feel my weakness, O thou soul that soarest  
Into a heaven beyond imagining  
On the unfaltering wing  
Of the magic swan! I know this tune  
Should swell to a strong note, a triumph note  
Blared through a trumpet's throat  
To tell the world I am no coward, or else  
Sob in sweet minor, soft as Asmodel's  
Chant to the nightingale. I am so wrecked, so rent,  
That one seems brag, the other sentiment.

I cannot leave the present; I will not pose.  
There lies the rotten rose  
And stinks. That is the truth; the rest is gloss.  
My loss was total loss.  
So close that rose lay to my heart, its fall  
Was the catastrophe of all.  
Now call me callous! Pass me, prigs, and sneer  
At the base soul that could not bear its cross!  
I say that infinite loss is infinite loss,  
That tears are trivial, tears are happiness,  
That this blind ache is God's last punishment  
For love; that all things in that one thing shent  
Are damned, that had I loved her less  
I could have prated in some honeyed strain,  
Taking a subtle pleasure in my pain.  
It is my bulk, the mass of my intent,  
That makes the ruin abject. I had sung  
Some partial earthquake; here the universe  
Crashes with one great curse,  
Whelming the singer and the song. My tongue  
Is palsied; only this chaotic clash  
Of curses echoes the dire crash.

And after all the roar, there steals a strain  
At last of tuneless, infinite pain;  
And all my being is one throb  
Of anguish, and one inarticulate sob

Catches my throat. All these vain voices die,  
And all these thunders venomously hurled  
Stop. My head strikes the floor; one cry, the old cry,  
Strikes at the sky its exquisite agony :  
Rose! Rose o'th' World.'

*Coulsdon Park.*

## THE SPRING OF DIRCE—3 . 3.

To

“ The Divine Oscar ”

“ The purple pageant of my incommunicable woes ”  
Was painted by the hand of gin-and-water on my nose.  
The mellow gold that filters through my rich autumnal  
style

Is minted in me by a superfluity of bile.  
The feet of Christ I worship at appear so thin and pale  
Because of all the skilly that I ate in Reading Gaol.

*Paris.*

KALI

---

There is an idol in my house  
 By whom the sandal always steams.  
 Alone, I make a black carouse  
 With her to dominate my dreams.  
 With skulls and knives she keeps control  
 (O Mother Kali!) of my soul.

She is crowned with emeralds like leaves,  
 And rubies flame from either eye;  
 A rose upon her bosom heaves,  
 Turquoise and lapislazuli.  
 She hath a kirtle like a maid :—  
 Amethyst, amber, pearl, and jade!

Her face is fashioned like a moon;  
 Her breasts are tongues of pointed jet;  
 Her belly of opal fairly hewn;  
 And round about her neck is set  
 The holy rosary, skull by skull,  
 Polished and grim and beautiful!

This jewelled shape of gold and bronze  
 Is seated on my bosom's throne;  
 She takes my muséd orisons  
 To her, to her, to her alone.  
 Oh Kali, Kali, Kali, quell  
 This hooded hate, O Queen of Hell!

Her ruby-studded brow is calm;  
 Her eyes shine like some sleepy flood;  
 Her breast is oliban and balm;  
 Her tongue lolls out, a-dripping blood;  
 She swings my body to and fro;  
 She breaks me on the wheel of woe!

To her eternal rapture seems  
Mere nature; underneath the crown  
Of dusky emeralds there streams  
A river of bliss to sluice me down  
With blood and tears, to drown my thought,  
To bring my being into naught.

The cruel teeth, the steady sneer,  
The marvellous lust of her, I bring  
Unto my body bright and clear  
(Dropped poison in a water spring!)  
To fill me with the utmost sense  
Of some divine experience.

For who but she, the adulterous queen,  
Made earth and heaven with all its stars,  
The storm, the hunger epicene,  
The raging at invisible bars,  
The hideous cruelty of the whole?—  
These are of Kali, O my soul!

The sterile force of bronze and gold  
Bends to my passion, as it grips  
With feverish claws the metal cold,  
And burns upon the brazen lips  
That, parted like a poppy bud,  
Have gemméd curves like moons of blood.

The mazes of her many arms  
Delude the eye; they seem to shift  
As if they spelled mysterious charms  
Whereby some tall grey ship should drift  
Out to a windless, tideless sea  
Motionless from eternity.

This then I seek, O woman-form!  
O god embowelled in curves of bronze!  
The shuddering of a sudden storm  
To mix me with thy minions  
The lost, who wait through endless night,  
And wait in vain, to see the light.

For I am utterly consumed  
 In thee, in thee am broken up.  
 The life upon my lips that bloomed  
 Is crushed into a deadly cup,  
 Whose devilish spirit squats and gloats  
 Upon the thirst that rots our throats.

Gape wide, O hideous mouth, and suck  
 This heart's blood, drain it down, expunge  
 This sweltering life of mire and muck!  
 Squeeze out my passions as a sponge,  
 Till naught is left of terrene wine  
 But somewhat deathless and divine!

Not by a faint and fairy tale  
 We shadow forth the immortal way.  
 No symbols exquisitely pale  
 Avail to lure the secrets grey  
 Of his endeavour who proceeds  
 By doing to abolish deeds.

Not by the pipings of a bird  
 In skies of blue on fields of gold,  
 But by a fierce and loathly word  
 The abomination must be told.  
 The holy work must twist its spell  
 From hemp of madness, grown in hell.

Only by energy and strife  
 May man attain the eternal rest,  
 Dissolve the desperate lust of life  
 By infinite agony and zest.  
 Thus, O my Kali, I divine  
 The golden secret of thy shrine!

Death from the universal force  
 Means to the forceless universe  
 Birth. I accept the furious course,  
 Invoke the all-embracing curse.  
 Blessing and peace beyond may lie  
 When I annihilate the "I."

Therefore, O holy mother, gnash  
Thy teeth upon my willing flesh!  
Thy chain of skulls wild music clash!  
Thy bosom bruise mine own afresh!  
Sri Maharani! draw my breath  
Into the hollow lungs of death!

There is no light, nor any motion.  
There is no mass, nor any sound.  
Still, in the lampless heart of ocean,  
Fasten me down and hold me drowned  
Within thy womb, within thy thought,  
Where there is naught—where there is naught!  
*Kalighut.*



A SLICE OF MORTADELLO  
 ( From the play so named.)

ALESSANDRO. Wen!  
 Blotch! Bubo! Spider! Leech! Crab-apple! Wart!  
Poor-john!  
 Carbuncle!

MONICA. Chasten speech!  
 (To MORTADELLO) What grief's his grievance on?

ALESSANDRO. Oh! I've no special grudge against the  
filthy fellow,  
 But if I were a judge, I'd shorten Mortadello!

MONICA. Oh! he's the best of men!

ALESSANDRO. To the manners of a flunkey  
 He adds the brains of a hen, and the morals of a monkey.  
 A pig is hardly as clean as he is, when he's sober—  
 Which never falls between November and October.  
 For vermin he's a rat, for greed a shark, for grace  
 A duck, and lame at that, a mule for pride of race.  
 The peacock's vanity, the jackdaw's perky pertness,  
 The magpie's honesty, the tortoise's alertness;  
 An elephant for hide, a spaniel for servility,  
 A cockatoo for pride, a sheep for imbecility,  
 For chastity a goat, for reticence a starling,  
 And, as for stink, a stoat—and there you are, my  
darling!  
*Café Riche, Paris.*

ALMIRA  
To Bertha Almira Bruce

---

Strong poison of thy mouth, my love, faint amber of thy  
breath,  
A fierce red wine that sucks me down a drunkard into  
death.  
Snake of my soul, thou leapest up to feed upon my brain  
That thrills and sobs wild music to the murder-lust  
refrain!  
Come, there's a tent pitched on the sand; the camel-  
bells ring clear;  
The stars are violent like young suns—I will to have  
thee here.  
Why linger in the moody north? There's welcome in  
the south.  
Strong poison of thy mouth, my love, strong poison of  
thy mouth.

*Detroit, 1918.*

## EL FATIHAH\*

(from the Arabic)

Praise be to Allah Lord of Heaven's array  
Whose Faith shall save us on the Judgment Day!  
We praise Thee gracious, Thee compassionate.  
O keep us in the Way serene and strait!

O keep us in the Way of those who bless  
Thy favour filling out their feebleness!  
And keep us ever from the fatal way  
Of those unhappy ones who go astray!

La Allah illa Allah; Mohammed  
Rasul Allah!

\*Change "Allah, Lord" to "Mary Queen" and "Faith" to "grace";  
then it sounds perfectly good to Merioleters.

REASONER AND RIMER

---

Who scientifically observes  
 The solar plexus of the slug,  
 Or Astacus, his gastric nerves,  
 The flat flagella of the bug,  
 Comes, so they say, at last to doubt  
 If man has soul, or is but messes.  
 The latter thesis, reasoned out;  
 The former, mere romantic guesses!

A friend thus put it once to Kant :  
 If I (the atheist) should rise  
 Again, I have (you're bound to grant)  
 A pleasure heightened by surprise.  
 If not, no odds. But : Israfel  
 Wakes *you* ? mere satisfaction's ointment.  
 If not, you've wasted earth as well.  
 Here, sorrow; and, there, disappointment.

Kant did not answer, they report.  
 Demosthenes denounce a dolly ?  
 One is not bound to make retort  
 On fools according to their folly.  
 If they are right, and filth is truth,  
 When I am dead, I shall not know it.  
 But while I live I keep my youth  
 By being—in their teeth—a poet.

## REASONER AND RIMER

P.S. 1943 e.v.  
I have not died and gone to heaven;  
I'm going strong at sixty-seven.

P.P.S.  
Don't brag about your lease of luck,  
Unless you want to come unstuck!  
*Hohenlauben Thuringia.*

## THE EYES OF PHARAOH

---

Dead Pharaoh's eyes from out the tomb  
Burned like twin planets ruby-red.  
Enswathed, enthroned, the halls of gloom  
Echo the agony of the dead.

Silent and stark the Pharaoh sate :  
No breath went whispering, hushed or scared.  
Only that red incarnate hate  
Through pylon after pylon flared.

As in the blood of murdered things  
The affrighted augur shaking skries  
Earthquake and ruinous fate of kings,  
Famine and desperate destinies,

So in the eyes of Pharaoh shone  
The hate and loathing that compel  
In death each damnéd minion  
Of Set, the accurséd lord of Hell.

Yea! in those globes of fire there sate  
Some cruel knowledge closely curled  
Like serpents in those halls of hate,  
Palaces of the Underworld.

But in the hell-glow of those eyes,  
The ashen skull of Pharaoh shone  
White as the moonrays that surprise  
The invoking Druse on Lebanon.

Moreover pylon shouldered round  
To pylon an unearthly tune,  
Like phantom priests that strike and sound  
Sinister sistrons at the moon.

And death's insufferable perfume  
Beat the black air with golden fans  
As Turkis rip a Nubian's womb  
With damascené yataghans.

Also the taste of dust long dead  
Of ancient queens corrupt and fair  
Struck through the temple, subtly sped  
By demons dominant of the air.

Last, on the flesh there came a touch  
Like sucking mouths and stroking hands  
That laid their foul alluring smutch  
Even to the blood's mad sarabands.

So did the neophyte that would gaze  
Into dead Pharaoh's awful eyes  
Start from incalculable amaze  
To clutch the initiate's place and prize.

He bore the blistering thought aloft :  
It blazed in battle on his plume :  
With sage and warrior enfeoffed,  
He rushed alone through tower and tomb

The myriad men, the cohorts armed,  
Are shred like husks : the ensanguine brand  
Leaps like a flame, a flame encharmed  
To fire the pyramid heaven-spanned,

Wherein dead Pharaoh sits and stares,  
Swathed in the wrappings of the tomb,  
With eyes whose horror flits and flares  
Like corpse-lights glimmering in the gloom.

THE EYES OF PHARAOH

75

Till all's a blaze, one roar of flame,  
Death universal, locked and linked.  
Aha ! one names the awful Name—  
The twin red planets are extinct.

*El Kahira.*



THE BEAUTY AND THE BHIKKHU\*  
 A tale of the Tenth Impurity.  
 (From the Pali)

---

Listen! The venerable monk pursued  
 His path with downcast eyes; his thought revolved  
 Ever in closer coils serenely screwed  
 About the Tenth Impurity. Dissolved  
 All vision of his being but of one  
 Thing only, his sun-whitened skeleton.

A dainty lady sick of simple life,  
 Chained to the cold couch of some vapid man,  
 Put on her jewels, off the word of wife,  
 Resolved to play the painted courtesan,  
 So ran along the village path. Her laughter  
 Wooed all the world to follow tumbling after.

Then when she met the venerable monk  
 Her shamelessness desired a leprous wreath  
 Of poisonous flowers, seducing him. He shrunk  
 Back from her smile, seeing her close white teeth.  
 Bones! he exclaimed. And, meditating that,  
 From a mere Bhikkhu grew an Arahāt.

\* One method of Buddhist meditation is to contemplate one's post-mortem appearance according to the manner of death: e.g. as drowned, burned, gnawed by wild beasts. The tenth and last of these is the skeleton. Bhikkhu—beggar, a member of the Buddhist "Order." "Arahāt": a 'perfected' man. Sloka—stanza.

Her husband found her gone, in fury followed  
Lashing the pale path with his purple feet,  
Heedless of stones and serpents. Hail! he holloaed  
To the new Rahan whom he bowed to greet,  
Kissing the earth : O holy master, say  
If a fair female hath passed by this way !

The Bhikkhu blessed the irritated man.  
Then the slow sloka serpentine began :  
“ Friend! neither man nor woman owns  
This being's high perception, owed  
Only to Truth; nor beams nor stones  
Support the Arahat's abode.

Who grasps one truth, beholds one light,  
Becomes that truth, that light; discedes  
From dark and deliquescent night,  
From futile thoughts and fatuous deeds.  
Your girl, your gems, your mournful tones  
Irk not Perfection with their goad.  
One thing I know—a set of bones  
Is travelling on upon this road! ”

*Kandy, Ceylon.*

THE KING-GHOST\*

---

The King-Ghost is abroad. His spectre legions  
 Sweep from their icy lakes and bleak ravines  
 Unto these weary and untrodden regions  
 Where man lies penned among his Might-have beens.  
 Keep us in safety, Lord,  
 What time the King-Ghost is abroad!

The King-Ghost from his grey malefic slumbers  
 Awakes the malice of his bloodless brain.  
 He marshals the innumerable numbers  
 Of shrieking shapes on the sepulchral plain.  
 Keep us, for Jesu's sake,  
 What time the King-Ghost is awake!

The King-Ghost wears a crown of hopes forgotten;  
 Dead loves are woven in his ghastly robe;  
 Bewildered wills and faiths grown old and rotten  
 And deeds undared his sceptre, sword, and globe.  
 Keep us, O Mary maid,  
 What time the King-Ghost goes arrayed!

The Hell-Wind whistles through his plumeless pinons;  
 Clanks all that melancholy host of bones;  
 Fate's principalities and Death's dominions  
 Echo the drear discord, the tuneless tones.  
 Keep us, dear God, from ill,  
 What time the Hell-Wind whistles shrill.

\* Composed, mostly on horseback, on the journey from Teng Yueh to Meng-Tse.

The King-Ghost hath no music but their rattling;  
No scent but death's grown faint and fugitive;  
No light but this their leprous pallor battling  
Weakly with night. Lord, shall these dry bones live ?  
O keep us in the hour  
Wherein the King-Ghost hath his power!

The King-Ghost girds me with his gibbering creatures,  
My dreams of old that never saw the sun.  
He shows me, in a mocking glass, their features,  
The twin fiends " Might-have-been " and " Should-  
have-done."  
Keep us, by Jesu's ruth,  
What time the King-Ghost grins the truth!

The King-Ghost boasts eternal usurpature;  
For in this pool of tears his fingers fret  
I had imagined, by enduring nature,  
The twin gods " Thus-will-I " and " May-be-yet."  
God, keep us most from ill,  
What time the King-Ghost grips the will!

Silver and rose and gold what flame resurges ?  
What living light pours forth in emerald waves ?  
What inmost Music drowns the clamorous dirges ?  
—Shrieking they fly, the King-Ghost and his slaves.  
Lord, let Thy Ghost indwell,  
And keep us from the power of Hell!  
Amen.

BERI-BERI\*

---

Blow the tom-tom, bang the flute!  
 Let us all be merry!  
 I'm a party with acute  
 Chronic beri-beri.

Monday I'm a skinny critter  
 Quite Félicien-Rops-y.  
 Blow the cymbal, bang the zither!  
 Tuesday I have dropsy.

Blow the tom-tom, bang the flute!  
 Let us all be merry!  
 I'm a party with acute  
 Chronic beri-beri.

Wednesday cardiac symptoms come;  
 Thursday diabetic.  
 Blow the fiddle, strum the drum!  
 Friday I'm paretic.

Blow the tom-tom, bang the flute!  
 Let us all be merry!  
 I'm a party with acute  
 Chronic beri-beri.

From "Musa Medici" Several MSS missing, especially one of the best,  
 of which remains only the Chorus: "

" Don't mix up Cancer of the Rec-tum-tum  
 With car-ci-noma of the i-le-um !"

BERI-BERI

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If on Saturday my foes  
Join in legions serried,  
Then, on Sunday, I suppose,  
I'll be beri-buried!

Blow the tom-tom, bang the flute!  
Let us all be merry!  
I'm a party with acute  
Chronic beri-beri.

*The Inland Sea.*

## THE SEVENFOLD SACRAMENT

In eddies of obsidian  
At my feet the river ran  
Between me and the poppy-prankt  
Isle, with tangled roots embanked,  
Where seven sister poplars stood  
Like the seven Spirits of God.

Soft as silence in mine ear,  
The drone and rustle of the weir  
Told in bass the treble tale  
Of the embowered nightingale.  
Higher, on the patient river,  
Velvet lights without a quiver  
Echoed through their hushed rimes  
The garden's glow beneath the limes.  
Then the sombre village, crowned  
By the castellated ground  
Where, in cerements of sable,  
One square tower and one great gable  
Stood, the melancholy wraith  
Of a false and fallen faith.  
Over all, supine, enthralling,  
The young moon, her faint edge falling  
To the dead verge of her setting,  
Saintly swam, her silver fretting  
All the leaves with light. Afar  
Toward the Zenith stood a star,  
As of all worthiness and fitness  
The luminous eternal witness.

So silent was the night, that I  
Stirred the grasses reverently  
And hid myself. The garden's glow

Darkened, and all the gold below  
Went out, and left the gold above  
To its sacrament of love,  
Save where, to sentinel my station,  
Gold lilies bowed in adoration.  
Had I not feared to move, I might  
Have hid my shame from such a night !  
Man is not worthy to intrude  
His soullessness on solitude;  
Yet God hath made it to befriend  
Pilgrims, that His peace may pend,  
A dove upon the dire and dark  
Waters that assail the ark,  
And lure their less love to His own.  
Life is a song, a speech, a groan,  
As may be; none of these have part  
In the silence of His heart.

Lapsed in that unweaned air,  
I awaited, unaware,  
What might fall. The silence wrapped  
Veil on veil about me, trapped  
By the siren Night, whose words  
Were the river and the birds.  
So close it swaddled me, and bound  
My being in the pure profound  
Of its own stealthy intimacy,  
Had Artemis come panting by,  
Silver-shod with bow and quiver  
Hunting along the reedy river,  
And called me to the chase, I should  
Have neither heard nor understood.  
Or had Zeus his dangerous daughter,  
Aphrodite, from the water  
Risen all shining, her soft arms  
Open, all her spells and charms  
Melted to one lure divine  
Of her red mouth pressed to mine,  
I had neither heard nor seen



Nor felt the Idalian.

Between

My soul and all its knowledge of  
 The universe of light and love,  
 Thought, being, nature, time and space,  
 The Mother's heart, the Father's face,  
 All that was agony or bliss,  
 Stretched an infinite abyss.  
 All that behind me! but my soul,  
 With no star left to point the pole,  
 Witless and banned of grace or goal,  
 Beggared of all its wealth, bereft  
 Of all its images, unweft  
 Its magic web, its tools all broken,  
 Its Name forgot, its Word unspoken  
 Widowed of its undying Lord,  
 Its bowl of silver broke, its cord  
 Of gold unloosed, its shining ladders  
 Thrown down, its ears more deaf than adders,  
 Its windows blind, its music stopped,  
 From its place in Heaven dropped,  
 From its starry throne was hurled  
 Beyond the pillars of the world—  
 Borne from the byss of light  
 To the Dark Night!

The moon had sunk behind the tower  
 When, for a moment, by the power  
 Of nature, as even the eagle's eye  
 Turns wearied from the sun, did I  
 Fall from the conning-crag, that springs  
 Above the Universe of Things,  
 Into the dark impertinence  
 Of the mirrored lies of sense;  
 Yet, when I sought the stars to espy  
 And see the runes of destiny,  
 Mine eyes their wonted office failed,  
 So diligently God had veiled  
 Me from myself! I could not hear

The drone and rustle of the weir.  
No help in that world or in this!  
I was alone in the abyss.

No Whence! no Whither! and no Why!  
Not even Who evokes reply.  
No vision and no voice repay  
My will to watch, my will to pray.  
Vain is the consecrated vesture;  
Vain the high and holy gesture;  
Vain the proven and perfect spell  
Enchanting heaven, enchaining hell.  
Unyoked the horses from the car  
Wherein I waged celestial war :  
Mine angel sheathes again his sword  
At the interdiction of the Lord.  
Even hell is shut, lest spite and strife  
Should show my soul a way to life.

Hope dies; faith flickers and is gone :  
Love weeps, then turns its soul to stone.  
All nearest, highest, holiest things  
Drop off; the soul must lose her wings,  
And, crippled, find, with no one clue  
The infinite maze to travel through,  
The goal unguessed, the path untrod,  
And stand unhelmed, unarmed, unshod,  
Naked before the Unknown God.  
Oh! stertorous, oh! strangling strife  
That cleaves to love, that clings to life!

The Will is broken, falls afar  
Extinct as an accurséd star.  
The self, one moment held behind,  
Whirls like a dead leaf in the wind  
Down the Abyss. The soul is drawn  
To that Dark Night that is the dawn  
Through halls of patience, palaces  
Of ever deeper silences,  
Aeons and aeons and aeons

Of lampless empyreans  
Darker and deeper and holier, caves  
Of night unstirred by wind, great graves  
Of all that is or could ever be  
In Time or Eternity.

Drawn, drawn, inevitably spanned,  
Tirelessly drawn by some strange hand,  
Drawn inward in some sense unkenned  
Beyond all to an appointed end,  
No end foreseen or hoped, drawn still  
Beyond word or will  
Into Itself, drawn subtly, deep  
Through the dreamless deaths whose shadow is sleep,  
Drawn, as dawn shows, to the inmost divine,  
To the temple, the nave, the choir, the shrine,  
To the altar where in the most holy cup  
The wine of its blood may be offered up.

Nor is it given to any son of man  
To hymn that Sacrament, the One in Seven,  
Where God and priest and worshipper,  
Deacon, asperger, thurifer, chorister,  
Are one as they were one ere time began,  
Are one on earth as they are one in heaven;  
Where the soul is given a new name,  
Confirming with an oath the same,  
And with celestial wine and bread  
Is most delicately fed,  
Yet suffereth in itself the curse  
Of the infinite universe,  
Having made its own confession  
Of the mystery of transgression;  
Where it is wedded solemnly  
With the ring of space and eternity,  
And where the oil, the Holiest Breath,  
With Its first whisper dedicateth  
Its new life to a further death.

I was cold as earth : the night  
Had given way. One star hung bright  
Over the church, now gray;  
I rose up to greet the ray  
That thrilled through elm and chestnut, lit  
The grass, made diamonds of it,  
And bade the weir's long smile of spray  
Leap with laughter for the day.  
The birds woke over all the weald;  
The sullen peasants slouched afield;  
The lilies swayed before the breeze  
That murmured matins in the trees;  
The trout leapt in the shingly shallows.  
Soared skyward the great sun, that hallows  
The pagan shrines of labour and light  
As the moon consecrates the night.  
Labour is corn and love is wine,  
And both are blesséd in the shrine;  
Nor is he for priest designed  
Who partakes only in one kind.

Thus musing joyous, twice across  
Under the weir I swam, to toss  
The spray back; then the meadows claim  
The foot's fleet ecstasy aflame.  
And having uttered my thanksgiving  
Thus for the sacrament of living,  
I lit my pipe, and made my way  
To breakfast, and the labour of the day.

*Montigny-sur-Loing.*

FORTY YEARS ON  
To  
Angela Constadine

---

The Jobbers are fatter and older;  
The lounges are notably shabbier;  
The weather, if anything, colder,  
The residents duller and flabbier;  
The music more raucous and louder,  
The eating appallingly heartier,  
The waiters pathetically prouder,  
The tarts quite a little bit tartier;  
The road-hog more pushingly present,  
The bill less addicted to fact :  
Yes, Brighton is rather less pleasant—  
Thank goodness, the Sea is intact.

*The Birdcage, Brighton, May '37.*

## DIONYSUS

I bring ye wine from above,  
From the vats of the storied sun;  
For every one of ye love,  
And life for every one.  
Ye shall dance on hill and level;  
Ye shall sing in hollow and height  
In the festal mystical revel,  
The rapturous Bacchanal rite!  
The rocks and trees are yours,  
And the waters under the hill,  
By the might of that which endures,  
The holy heaven of will!  
I kindle a flame like a torrent  
To rush from star to star;  
Your hair as a comet's horrent,  
Ye shall see things as they are!  
I lift the mask of matter;  
I open the heart of man;  
For I am of force to shatter  
The cast that hideth—Pan!  
Your loves shall lap up slaughter,  
And dabbled with roses of blood  
Each desperate darling daughter  
Shall swim in the fervid flood.  
I bring ye laughter and tears,  
The kisses that foam and bleed,  
The joys of a million years,  
The flowers that bear no seed.  
My life is bitter and sterile,  
Its flame is a wandering star.  
Ye shall pass in pleasure and peril  
Across the mystical bar  
That is set for wrath and weeping

## DIONYSUS

Against the children of earth;  
But ye in singing and sleeping  
Shall pass in measure and mirth!  
I lift my wand and wave you  
Through hill to hill of delight :  
My rosy rivers lave you  
In innermost lustral light.  
I lead you, lord of the maze,  
In the darkness free of the sun;  
In spite of the spite that is day's  
We are wed, we are wild, we are one  
*Shigar Baltistan.*

IN MY HAREM  
to  
L. H. and N. S.

A room I dare scarce wag a limb in!  
Damn these respectable women!  
Give me the ocean to swim in!

Pah! how they try to amuse me,  
Conscientiously bite me and bruise me :—  
Nobody guesses what woos me.

Passion—their lamps only splutter!  
Mustard is better than butter;  
Give me a girl from the gutter!

Hope has completed its ebbing.  
You spiders with obvious webbing!  
Love “by the book”—of Krafft-Ebing!

I love them? God rack 'em and rot 'em!  
When I drew them, the pencil would spot 'em,  
Expose the respectable bottom!

Nubians love on the level,  
Black as the heart of the Devil,  
Savage and sumptuous revel!

Purple as a plum, the intruder!  
Lewd as a monkey and lewder!  
Stark as the desert that spewed her!

Have you no beauty to storm us,  
Monsters wry-moulded, enormous,  
Pesth, Paphos, Paris, Panormus?



Rotten with drink and diseases,  
Crazy with drugs—ah, my thesis  
Proves but too clearly what pleases.

I, being God in simplicity,  
Lust after all eccentricity,  
Wallow in death and lubricity.

You, you keep bowling full-pitches!  
Damn all these amateur bitches!  
Give me my old riding-breeches!

*Fontainebleau.*

## SARCOMA OF THE TIBIA

to

Dr. James Fordyce, 1916.

Whether we freeze in arctic snows,  
Or swelter on the sands of Libya,  
We all are liable, God knows,  
To get sarcoma of the tibia.

From the far rock-bound coast of Maine  
To the seclusion of Point Loma,  
Uncounted citizens complain  
Their tibias have got sarcoma.

Prognosis—easy; death's the tip.  
Treatment—still simpler, one may well swear.  
We lop the leg off at the hip,  
And—wait for the sarcoma elsewhere!

To cheer the patient : “ the Earth spins  
Through seasons warm and seasons chilly.  
Sooner or later, for your sins,  
You die of something just as silly.”

*New York.*

SUNSET OF ROMANCE  
to  
Dridi Salah ben Mohammed

Oh to be twenty again!  
To suffer the shame and the pain  
Of raging surrender  
To supple and tender  
Embraces that stagger the brain!

Oh to be twenty again!  
To be able to dream that the strain  
Of sobs and caresses  
Is solace and stresses,  
Not merely—dead leaves in the rain!

Oh to be twenty again!  
I have all things whereof I am fain,  
But—can I believe that  
This love will inweave that  
Old web of desire not in vain?

In the moment when self should be slain,  
Thoughts jar—the old cynic is sane!  
My rapture is mirthless;  
My wisdom is worthless—  
Oh to be twenty again!

*Tunis.*

THE JEALOUS\* PATRIOT  
*(non angeli, sed Angli!)*

England, my birthright! Savagely I scourge  
 Smug piety and surly discontent,  
 The stubborn stupor of the Government,  
 The palsy of the people. The slow surge  
 Of cave-bound seas! With bloodied whips I urge  
 The hounds of satire and invective, vent  
 Indignant shrewish spleen. All song is spent  
 Thriftless, a dull unprofitable dirge.

“Jealous,” Time’s slur on “zealous.” Dourly fond,  
 In the dumb core of my strong soul respond  
 Silences sacred beyond speech or token,  
 Sacred to Love : mine England, thou art mine,  
 I thine, the secret of the midmost shrine,  
 The God unguessed-at, and the Word unspoken.  
*Richmond, Surrey.*  
 May 10, '42.

\* “Jealous” : see Skeat, Etymological Dictionary.

WHITE HOPE  
to  
The Spirit of Democracy

I'm the ponce of a punk  
With syphilis rotten;  
My parents were drunk  
When I was begotten.  
From him I got gout,  
From her I got phthisis;  
From both, never doubt,  
The gamut of vices.  
I was born in a slum;  
I was bred in a brothel;  
For milk I had rum;  
For meat I had offal.

The pious, the wise,  
Who are living in clover,  
Show the whites of their eyes :—  
They expect to discover  
(Accounting the taint  
Of my being as zero)  
The soul of a saint  
In the frame of a hero.

*London.*

### THE TENT

Only the stars endome the lonely camp,  
Only the desert leagues encompass it;  
Waterless wastes, a wilderness of wit,  
Embattled Cold, Imagination's Cramp.  
Now were the Desolation fain to stamp  
The congealed Spirit of Man into the pit,  
Save that, unquenchable because unlit,  
The Love of God burns steady, like a Lamp.

It burns! beyond the sands, beyond the stars.  
It burns! beyond the bands, beyond the bars.  
And so the Expanse of Mystery, veil by veil,  
Burns inward, plume on plume still folding over  
The dissolved heart of the amazed lover—  
The angel wings upon the Holy Grail!  
*W'ain t' Aissha.*

VERSES FOR AN ANTICHRISTMAS CARD.  
 To Frieda Harris

“No, George Bubb Doddington Lord Melcombe, no!”

*Browning.*

John Hampden was a country squire,  
 A rurdy and a stuggèd nature :  
 He did not pull a secret wire  
 Against the royal usurpature.

By time-servers, who talked of tact,  
 He was not mentally befogged;  
 In history he had found one fact:  
 “If you’re not doggèd, you’ll be dogg’d.”

The effort not to give offence  
 To the naice mains of Chipping Campden  
 Leads not to earthly eminence—  
 Or to the heaven of John Hampden!  
*Chipping Campden.*

HAPPY DUST.  
For Margot.

Snow that fallest from heaven, bear me aloft on thy wings  
To the domes of the star-girdled Seven, the abode of  
ineffable things,  
Quintessence of joy and of strength, that, abolishing  
future and past,  
Mak'st the Present an infinite length, my soul all-One  
with the Vast,  
The Lone, the Unnameable God, that is ice of His  
measureless cold,  
Without being or form or abode, without motion or  
matter, the fold  
Where the shepherded Universe sleeps, with nor sense  
nor delusion nor dream,  
No spirit that wantons or weeps, no thought in its silence  
supreme.  
I sit, and am utterly still; in mine eyes is my fathomless  
lust  
Ablaze to annihilate Will, to crumble my being to dust,  
To calcine the dust to an ash, to burn up the ash to an air,  
To abolish the air with the flash of the final, the fulminant  
flare.  
All this I have done, and dissolved the primordial germ  
of my thought;  
I have rolled myself up, and revolved the wheel of my  
being to Naught.  
Is there even the memory left? That I was, that I am?  
It is lost.  
As I utter the Word, I am cleft by the last swift spear of  
the frost.  
Snow! I am nothing at last; I sit, and am utterly still;  
They are perished, the phantoms, and past; they were  
born of my weariness-will



When I craved, craved being and form, when the con-  
 sciousness-cloud was a mist  
 Precursor of stupor and storm, when I and my shadow  
 had kissed,  
 And brought into life all the shapes that confused the  
 clear space with their marks,  
 Vain spectres whose vapour escapes, a whirlwind of  
 ruinous sparks,  
 No substance have any of these; I have dreamed them in  
 sickness of lust,  
 Delirium born of disease—ah, whence was the master,  
 the " must "

Imposed on the All?—is it true, is it true, then, that  
 something in me  
 Is subject to fate? Are there two, are there two, after all,  
 that can be?

I have brought all that is to an end; for myself am suffic-  
 ient and sole.

Do I trick myself now? Shall I rend once again this  
 homologous Whole?

I have stripped every garment from space; I have  
 strangled the secret of Time,  
 All being is fled from my face, with Motion's inhibited  
 rime.

Still and stiller I sit, till even Infinity fades;

'Tis an idol—'tis weakness of wit that breeds, in inanity,  
 shades!

Yet the fullness of Naught I become, the deepest and  
 steadiest Naught,  
 Contains in its nature the sum of the functions of being  
 and thought.

Still as I sit, and destroy all possible trace of the past,  
 All germ of the future, nor joy nor knowledge alive at the  
 last,

It is vain, for the Silence is dowered with a nature, the  
 seed of a name:

Necessity, fearfully flowered with the blossom of possible  
 Aim.

I am Necessity? Scry Necessity mother of Fate!  
 And Fate determines me " I "; and I have the Will to

create.

Vast is the sphere, but it turns on itself like the pettiest  
star.

And I am the looby that learns that all things equally are.  
Inscrutable Nothing, the Gods, the cosmos of Fire and  
of Mist.

Suns, atoms, the clouds and the clods ineluctably dare  
to exist—

I have made the Voyage of Thought, the Voyage of Vision,  
I swam

To the heart of the Ocean of Naught from the source of  
the Spring of I am :

I know myself wholly the brother alike of the All and the  
One;

I know that all things are each other, that their sum and  
their substance is None;

But the knowledge itself can excel, its fulness hath broken  
its bond;

All's Truth, and all's falsehood as well, and—what of the  
region beyond ?

So, still though I sit, as for ever, I stab to the heart of my  
spine;

I destroy the last seed of endeavour to seal up my soul  
in the shrine

Of Silence, Eternity, Peace; I abandon the Here and the  
Now;

I cease from the effort to cease, I absolve the dead I from  
its Vow,

I am wholly content to be dust, whether that be a mote  
or a star,

To live and to love and to lust, acknowledge what seem  
for what are,

Not to care what I am, if I be, whence I came, whither go,  
how I thrive,

If my spirit be bound or be free, save as Nature contrive.  
What I am, that I am, 'tis enough. I am part of a glorious  
game.

Am I cast for madness or love ? I am cast to esteem them  
the same.

Am I only a dream in the sleep of some butterfly ?

Phantom of fright  
Conceived, who knows how, or how deep, in the measure-  
less womb of the night ?  
I imagine impossible thought, metaphysical voids that  
beget  
Ideas intangible wrought to things less conceivable yet.  
It may be. Little I reckon—but, assume the existence of  
earth,  
Am I born to be hanged by the neck, a curse from the  
hour of my birth ?  
Am I born to abolish man's guilt ? His horrible heritage,  
awe ?  
Or a seed in his wantonness spilt by a jester ? I care not  
a straw,  
For I understand Do what thou wilt; and that is the whole  
of the Law.

## LOGOS

Out of the night forth flamed a star—mine own!  
Now seventy light-years nearer as I urge  
Constant mine heart through the abyss unknown,  
Its glory my sole guide while spaces surge  
About me. Seventy light-years! As I near  
That gate of light that men call death, its cold  
Pale gleam begins to pulse, a throbbing sphere,  
Systole and diastole of eager gold,  
New life immortal, warmth of passion bleed  
Till night's black velvet burn to crimson. Hark !  
It is Thy voice, Thy word, the secret seed  
Of rapture that admonishes the dark.  
Swift ! By necessity most righteous drawn,  
Hermes, authentic augur of the dawn !  
*Netherwood, The Ridge, Hastings.*  
1946.

## THE BABOON

I wish I had a curly tail  
To swing myself from bough to bough  
With sleek companions fair and frail  
To share my daily chow.

Had I four hands instead of two,  
What fun inventing an excuse  
Just twice as ample as I do  
For letting them hang loose !

I would I had an orange fur,  
And two big bare blue moons behind,  
Both cosier and comelier  
Than mine unhappy kind !

What boon has man to brag about  
Of evolution— bay the moon !  
No boon so blessed—never doubt !—  
As being a ba-boon.

*Tolga.*

### THE CAMEL

The camel has been badly treated  
By certain literary snobs.  
I know four camels that competed  
Successfully for cushy jobs.  
The first incessantly excreted  
A breath so absolutely fetid  
It massacred the Boche in mobs.  
The second signally defeated  
The Huns by hurling at them heated  
Fragments of porcelain poker-knobs.  
The third so cunningly secreted  
Such pathos in the songs he bleated  
That storming parties shook with sobs.  
The fourth relentlessly repeated  
My rimes until he had unseated  
The reason of the dirty swabs.  
Apply a fresh coat of enamel  
To the escutcheon of the camel !

*Rawal Pindi..*

“CANOE SONG”\*

---

“We have heard in Barietha that there are thirteen sections seen, and they all proceed from those thirteen fountains of excellent oil of the parts of the most holy beard of the Ancient of the Ancient Ones.”

*Idra Rabba Qadisha xi. 237.*

“The nose of the most holy Ancient One of Days is life in every part : it is that Nose that is above all Noses, the Nose which is not a Nose.”

*Ib. x. 201.*

“Yod of the Most Holy Ancient One, of Arikh Anpin, of Macroprosopus the Vast Countenance, *non homo, sed vero mentula magna minax* . . . . yod detegitur.”

*Siphra Dzenioutha II 37.*

Macroprosopus has got a long beard,  
O with what excellent oil it is smeared !  
I've got a beard just as greasy as He—  
Macroprosopus has nothing on me.  
Nothing on me ! Nothing on me !  
Macroprosopus has nothing on me.

Macroprosopus has got a long nose.  
How it exults in the Mystical Rose !  
My little nose can smell a.b.c.d.  
Macroprosopus has nothing on me—  
Nothing on me ! Nothing on me !  
Macroprosopus has nothing on me.

\* This is sung to the tune of “I am so glad that Our Father in Heaven.”

CANOE SONG

107

Macroprosopus has got a long yodh.  
God help Tebunah when He turns it on !  
I've got a yodh with a kick like a gee :  
Macroposopus has nothing on me—  
Nothing on me ! Nothing on me !  
Macroprosopus has nothing on me.

*Oesopus Island, Hudson River, N.Y.*



EPITHALAMIUM INSTEAD OF A PRESENT

---

Dear Pamela Joan, I am not  
 The unspeakable cad you suppose;  
 But my memory isn't so hot  
 Since the un-lucky day when I got  
 A bump (I was put on the spot)  
 On the tip of my elegant nose  
 From a man I considered a blot  
 On the earth; but I gave him a lot  
 Of what he admitted was what;  
 And they left him, a carcass, to rot  
 Where the angry old Red River flows.  
 So that explains why I forgot  
 To salute you in suitable prose  
 With a sunburst of brilliants—oh not  
 Alone, but suspended from rows  
 Of pearls, a ten-thousand ton yacht,  
 And the horns of a moose that I shot  
 In the savage Canadian snows,  
 And (*quelle autre paire de bottes !*)  
 A basket of pears bergamot,  
 Stuffed dates (from the edge of a chott)  
 Paw-paw, mangosteen and a pot  
 Of the very best 'Atr of Rose—  
 This is getting too damned polyglot;  
 But I always was fond of exot-  
 ic kickshaws, as every one knows.  
 Now I'm getting tied up in a knot  
 With my rimes—I'm a silly old sot—  
 So this is the moment to close  
 With all the best blessings that ever  
 were known—  
 Here is my heart to you, Pamela Joan!  
*Maidenhead.*

AT TOUGGOURT

---

If I could pinch a diamond  
Of perfect water, big enough,  
I would immediately abscond  
With the proceeds; I'd swill and stuff  
Here in the Desert far beyond  
Civilization's blatant bluff;  
And listen all day to the gruff  
Old bull-frogs flopping in the pond.

THE RETURN OF MESSALINA

---

From the marsh of the Maremma the malaria is drawn  
By the gray and chilly breezes of the autumn and the  
dawn.

In the silence as we shiver who is yonder that we see  
With her hair fallen loose about her, with the stole about  
her knee ?

All her flesh is loose and fallen, and her eyes are wet and  
wild,

And she staggers as she wallows like a woman big with  
child.

How she gasps and stares about her! How she shivers!  
Are the hosts

Of her lovers there to haunt her, life's lupanar thick with  
ghosts ?

How her teeth are clenched with horror! How her lips  
are curled and wried,

As she staggers to the palace, weary and unsatisfied!

Surely I have done the utmost! (all the daemon in her  
wails)

Is it spirit that disdains me ? Is it only flesh that fails ?

Did Danae win to slumber at the thrust of grievous gold ?

Did the Bull bring Pasiphae to the palace of the cold ?

Could the sea avail to Sappho drifting dead upon the  
foam ?

What shall save me, Messalina, save the majesty of Rome?

Shall I wreck my life with roses, hurt my flesh with flames  
and rods ?

All is vain! for I have conquered both the mortals and  
the Gods.

In the garden of Priapus, in the land of lost desire,  
I have made myself a monster, and my soul a snake of fire.

Ho! it stings me! Ho! it poisons! all the flesh is branded  
 through.  
 Branded with the steel of Vulcan, with the lava's deadly  
 dew.  
 All the kisses of the satyr, all the punishments of Pan,  
 All Eros hath given of arrows to the eyes of maid and man,  
 At their lips and lives I suffered—I have borne me as a  
 queen :  
 Hear the roar of after aeons that acclaim me Messaline!  
 Woe is me! the waves of ages—icier, icier as they roll—  
 May not cover up my stature, may not quench this  
 devil-soul.

Here's the palace. I must enter sly and secret as a thief.  
 I would rather blazon, blazon, this my night beyond belief!  
 I, a worn Suburrian Venus reeking with a fouler foam,  
 Sucked within me in the darkness the virility of Rome.  
 Now's the light, the light accurséd : I must get me to  
 the feast,  
 Stupefy this Panic spirit, throw a posset to the beast.  
 —Hail, ye Gods ! ye Gods infernal ! here salutes ye  
 Hercules !  
 I am come to bring my spirit free of ye and forth of these.  
 I am Orpheus ! I will charm ye, bring Eurydice to light—  
 Ah, my lords ! Alas the omen ! Who shall turn me all  
 to right ?  
 Who of all our proud Olympus shall avail me or befriend ?  
 Ah, my lords ! but I am weary.  
 See ye any one the end ?

Nay! we saw her grope and stumble for the secret  
 sidelong door,  
 Lift the latch with trembling fingers, pass within and be  
 no more.  
 There we stood and worshipped sadly (for the cry had  
 touched us home),  
 Worshipped till the gray was azure as the sun rekindled  
 Rome.

### L' ETINCELLE

Hommes de coeur, jamais battus,  
 Hommes d'honneur, relevons-nous!  
 Trahis, meutris, foulés par terre,  
 Bah! la première plaie de la guerre!  
 Tenons! c'est l'aube de la gloire!  
 Brille, soleil de la victoire!  
 Tous, en avant! Bannière, avance!  
 Haut, ferme, fort! Vive la France!

Traîtres, à mort! Couards, à mort!  
 Au vent l'essor du tricolore!  
 Marchons (chargeons, brisons, moulons)  
 A la revanche, au châtement!  
 Balayons, au néant sans fin,  
 Les barbares, les assassins!  
 Tous, en avant! Bannière, avance!  
 Haut, ferme, fort! Vive la France!

Libres, égaux, frères français,  
 Français vainqueurs à tout jamais!  
 Les fourbes lâches écrasons!  
 Exterminons le vil tyran!  
 Hommes de coeur, hommes de gloire,  
 Hommes d'honneur, à la victoire!  
 Tous, en avant! Bannière, avance!  
 Haut, ferme, fort! Vive la France!  
*Querouaille, Bretagne.*

THE SECRET

To  
Rudolf Steiner

Beneath the vine-tree and the fig  
Where mortal cares may not intrude,  
Although their brains are bright and big,  
On melon and on sucking-pig  
Banquet the Great White Brotherhood.

Pupils of stamina and speed,  
Fast as they learn, would learn still faster.  
So (with meek diffidence indeed!)  
The three Apprentices agreed  
To ask His secret of the Master.

With the aplomb and savoir faire  
Peculiar to Eastern races,  
He took the Secret than and there,  
(*What*, is not lawful to declare)  
And thrust it rudely in their faces.

"A filthy insult!" screamed the first;  
The second smiled: "Ingenious blind!"  
The youngest neither blessed nor cursed,  
Contented to believe the worst—  
That He had spoken all His mind.

The second earned the name of prig;  
The first, the epithet of prude;  
The third, as merry as a grig,  
On melon and on sucking-pig  
Feasts with the Great White Brotherhood.  
*Hermitage, Moscow.*

## SONG OF THE REGULAR FELLOW

## The Bon Vivant

In order not to give offence, I'll  
 Pretend to swallow Jonah's whale  
 With my intelligence prehensile,  
 Exactly like a monkey's tail.

To-day, regardless of expense, I'll  
 Go hunting for the Holy Grail,  
 With my intelligence prehensile,  
 Exactly like a monkey's tail.

With unremitting diligence, I'll  
 Go salmon-trawling in a pail,  
 With my intelligence prehensile,  
 Exactly like a monkey's tail.

## The Sportsman.

By hollow and on eminence, I'll  
 Pursue the fox by hill and dale  
 With my intelligence prehensile,  
 Exactly like a monkey's tail.

From England's spiritually dense isle  
 For cleaner climates let me sail,  
 With my intelligence prehensile,  
 Exactly like a monkey's tail.

In all Australia's immense isle  
 I find no noble peak to scale  
 With my intelligence prehensile,  
 Exactly like a monkey's tail.

SONG OF THE REGULAR FELLOW 115

It makes so little difference, I'll  
Buy neckties at a Bargain Sale  
With my intelligence prehensile,  
Exactly like a monkey's tail.

The Philosopher.

With amber, musk and frankincense, I'll  
Call up the demons of the gale  
With my intelligence prehensile,  
Exactly like a monkey's tail.

Like every man of common sense, I'll  
Consume my share of cakes and ale  
With my intelligence prehensile,  
Exactly like a monkey's tail.

If I should suffer flatulence, I'll  
Exhale, inhale, exhale, inhale  
With my intelligence prehensile,  
Exactly like a monkey's tail.

I'm stiff with non-belligerence; I'll  
Go ride my mother on a rail  
With my intelligence prehensile,  
Exactly like a monkey's tail.

I'll booze, and bash the cops, and thence I'll  
To cooler, magistrate, and jail  
With my intelligence prehensile  
Exactly like a monkey's tail.

*All over the place in a canoe.*



## LA GITANA

Your hair was full of roses in the dewfall as we danced,  
 The sorceress enchanting and the paladin entranced,  
 In the starlight as we wove us in a web of silk and steel  
 Immemorial as the marble in the halls of Boabdil,  
 In the pleasance of the roses with the fountains and the  
 yews

Where the snowy Sierra soothed us with the breezes and  
 the dews!

In the starlight as we trembled from a laugh to a caress,  
 And the God came warm upon us in our pagan allegresse.  
 Was the Baile de la Bona too seductive? Did you feel  
 Through the silence and the softness all the tension of the  
 steel?

For your hair was full of roses, and my flesh was full of  
 thorns,

And the midnight came upon us worth a million crazy  
 morns.

Ah! my Gipsy, my Gitana, my Saliya! were you fain  
 For the dance to turn to earnest? —O the sunny land of  
 Spain!

My Gitana, my Saliya! more delicious than a dove!  
 With your hair aflame with roses and your lips alight with  
 love!

Shall I see you, shall I kiss you once again? I wander far  
 From the sunny land of summer to the icy Polar Star.  
 I shall find you, I shall have you! I am coming back again  
 From the filth and fog to seek you in the sunny land of  
 Spain.

I shall find you, my Gitana, my Saliya! as of old  
 With you hair aflame with roses and your body gay with  
 gold.

I shall find you, I shall have you, in the summer and the  
south

With our passion in your body and our love upon your  
mouth—

With our wonder and our worship be the world aflame  
anew!

My Gitana, my Saliya! I am coming back to you !  
*On the way to Granada.*

## THE BEAN PEDLAR

I do not envy any man;  
But if I did, 'twere him whose will is  
To take an old petroleum can  
And a supply of beans and chillies,  
And set a trelliswork of palm  
Beside the public way, and squat there  
All day in charitable calm  
For passers by to sniff the pot there  
Bubbling and steaming, as they stop,  
Salaam, and pass the time o' day,  
And gorge a plateful while they chop  
Small talk, and go their lazy way,  
A *sou* the poorer. Happy man!  
He guesses not what harsh and knavish  
Woes went to make that old tin can  
Among those mercenary slavish  
Mongrels across the Atlantic waves  
Before it reached his green oasis  
Where Frenchmen are the only slaves,  
Thanks to the Bureaucratic basis!  
Allah! Give me an old tin can  
And a supply of beans and chillis,  
And I shall be a happy man  
Whose way is even as his will is.  
*Palm Groves below Nefta.*

## THANATOS BASILEOS

The Serpent dips his head beneath the sea  
His mother, source of all his energy  
Eternal, thence to draw the strength he needs  
On earth to do indomitable deeds  
Once more; and they, who saw but understood  
Naught of his nature of beatitude  
Were awed: they murmured with abated breath;  
Alas the Master; so he sinks in death.  
But whoso knows the mystery of man  
Sees life and death as curves of one same plan.

*Netherwood, The Ridge, Hastings.*  
1946.

THE GARDEN OF JANUS

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The cloud my bed is tinged with blood and foam.  
 The vault yet blazes with the sun  
 Writhing above the West, brave hippodrome  
 Whose gladiators shock and shun  
 As the blue night devours them, crested comb  
 Of sleep's dead sea  
 That eats the shores of life, rings round eternity!

So, he is gone whose giant sword shed flame  
 Into my bowels; my blood's bewitched;  
 My brain's afloat with ecstasy of shame.  
 That tearing pain is gone, enriched  
 By his life-spasm ; but he being gone, the same  
 Myself is gone,  
 Sucked by the dragon down below death's horizon.

I woke from this. I lay upon the lawn;  
 They had thrown roses on the moss  
 With all their thorns; we came there at the dawn,  
 My lord and I; God sailed across  
 The sky in's galleon of amber, drawn  
 By singing winds,  
 While we wove garlands of the flowers of our minds.

All day my lover deigned to murder me,  
 Linking his kisses in a chain  
 About my neck; demon-embroidery!  
 Bruises like far-off mountains stain  
 The valley of my body of ivory!  
 Then last came sleep.  
 I wake, and he is gone; what should I do but weep ?

Nay, for I wept enough—more sacred tears!—  
When first he pinned me, gripped  
My flesh, and as a stallion that rears,  
Sprang, hero-thewed and satyr-lipped;  
Crushed, as a grape between his teeth, my fears;  
Sucked out my life  
And stamped me with the shame, the monstrous word of  
wife.

I will not weep; nay, I will follow him.  
Perchance he is not far,  
Bathing his limbs in some delicious dim  
Depth, where the evening star  
May kiss his mouth, or by the black sky's rim  
He makes his prayer  
To the great serpent that is coiled in rapture there.

I rose to seek him. First my footsteps faint  
Pressed the starred moss; but soon  
I wandered, like some sweet sequestered saint,  
Into the wood, my mind. The moon  
Was staggered by the trees; with fierce constraint  
Hardly one ray  
Pierced to the rugged earth about their roots that lay.

I wandered, crying on my Lord. I wandered,  
Eagerly seeking everywhere.  
The stores of life that on my lips he squandered  
Grew into shrill cries of despair,  
Until the dryads frightened and dumfounded  
Fled into space—  
Like to a demon-king's was grown my maiden face!

At last I came unto the well, my soul.  
In that still glass, I saw no sign  
Of him, and yet—what visions there uproll  
To cloud that mirror-soul of mine?  
Above my head there screams a flying scroll  
Whose word burnt through  
My being as when stars drop in black disastrous dew.

For in that scroll was written how the globe  
 Of space became; of how the light  
 Broke in that space and wrapped it in a robe  
 Of glory; of how One most white  
 Withdrew that Whole, and hid it in the lobe  
 Of his right Ear,  
 So that the Universe one dewdrop did appear.

Yea! and the end revealed a word, a spell,  
 An incantation, a device  
 Whereby the Eye of the Most Terrible  
 Wakes from Its wilderness of ice  
 To flame, whereby the very core of hell  
 Bursts from its rind,  
 Sweeping the world away into the blank of mind.

So then I saw my fault; I plunged within  
 The well, and brake the images  
 That I had made, as I must make—Men spin  
 The webs that snare them—while the knees  
 Bend to the tyrant God, or unto Sin  
 The lecher sunder!  
 Ah! came that undulant light from over or from under ?

It matters not. Come, change! Come, woe! Come,  
 mask!  
 Drive Light, Life, Love into the deep!  
 In vain we labour at the loathsome task,  
 Not knowing if we wake or sleep;  
 But in the end we lift the pluméd casque  
 Of the dead warrior;  
 Find no chaste corpse therein, but a soft-smiling whore.

Then I returned into myself, and took  
 All in my arms, God's universe :  
 Crushed its black juice out, while His anger shook  
 His dumbness pregnant with a curse.  
 I made me ink, and in a little book  
 I wrote one word  
 That God himself, the adder of Thought, had never heard.

It detonated. Nature, God, mankind  
Like sulphur, nitre, charcoal, once  
Blended, in one annihilation blind  
Were rent into a myriad of suns.  
Yea! all the mighty fabric of a Mind  
Stood in the abyss,  
Belching a Law for That more awful than for This.

Vain was the toil. So then I left the wood  
And came unto the still black sea,  
That oily monster of beatitude!  
(Hath Thee for Me, and Me for Thee!)  
There as I stood, a mask of solitude  
Hiding a face  
Wried as a satyr's, rolled that ocean into space.

Then did I build an altar on the shore  
Of oyster-shells, and ringed it round  
With star-fish. Thither a green flame I bore  
Of phosphor foam, and strewed the ground  
With dew-drops, children of my wand, whose core  
Was trembling steel  
Electric that made spin the universal Wheel.

With that a goat came running from the cave  
That lurked below the tall white cliff.  
Thy name! cried I. The answer that he gave  
Was but one tempest-whisper—"If!"  
Ah, then! his tongue to his black palate clave;  
For on Soul's curtain  
Is written this one certainty that naught is certain!

So then I caught that goat up in a kiss,  
And cried Io Pan! Io Pan! Io Pan!  
Then all this body's wealth of ambergris  
(Narcissus-scented flesh of man!)  
I burnt before him in the sacrifice;  
For he was sure—  
Being the Doubt of Things, the one thing to endure!



Wherefore, when madness took him at the end,  
He, doubt-goat, slew the goat of doubt;  
And that which inward did for ever tend  
Came at the last to have come out;  
And I who had the World and God to friend  
Found all three foes!  
Drowned in that sea of changes, vacancies, and woes!

Yet all that Sea was swallowed up therein;  
So they were not, and it was not.  
As who should sweat his soul out through the skin  
And find (sad fool!) he had begot  
All that without him that he had left in,  
And in himself  
All he had taken out thereof, a mocking elf !

But now that all was gone, great Pan appeared.  
Him then I strove to woo, to win,  
Kissing his curled lips, playing with his beard,  
Setting his brain a-shake, a -spin,  
By that strong wand, and muttering of the weird  
That only I  
Knew of all souls alive or dead beneath the sky.

So still I conquered, and the vision passed.  
Yet still was beaten, for I knew  
Myself was He, Himself, the first and last;  
And as an unicorn drinks dew  
From under oak-leaves, so my strength was cast  
Into the mire;  
For all I did was dream, and all I dreamt desire.

More; in this journey I had clean forgotten  
The quest, my lover. But the tomb  
Of all these thoughts, the rancid and the rotten,  
Proved in the end to be my womb  
Wherein my Lord and lover had begotten  
A little child  
To drive me, laughing lion, into the wanton wild!

This child hath not one hair upon his head,  
But he hath wings instead of ears.  
No eyes hath he, but all his light is shed  
Within him on the ordered spheres  
Of nature that he hideth; and instead  
Of mouth he hath  
One minute point of jet; silence, the lightning path!

Also his nostrils are shut up; for he  
Hath not the need of any breath;  
Nor can the curtain of eternity  
Cover that head with life or death.  
So all his body, a slim almond tree,  
Knoweth nor bough  
Nor branch nor twig, nor bud, from never until now.

This thought I bred within my bowels, I am.  
I am in him, as he in me;  
And like a satyr ravishing a lamb  
So either seems, or as the sea  
Swallows the whale that swallows it, the ram  
Beats its own head  
Upon the city walls, that fall as it falls dead.

Come, let me back unto the liliated lawn!  
Pile me the roses and the thorns  
Upon this bed from which he hath withdrawn!  
He may return. A million morns  
May follow that first dire daemonic dawn  
When he did split  
My spirit with his lightnings and enveloped it!

So I am stretched out naked to the knife,  
My whole soul twitching with the stress  
Of the expected yet surprising strife,  
A martyrdom of blessedness.  
Though Death came, I could kiss him into life;  
Though Life came, I  
Could kiss him into death, and yet nor live nor die!

Yet I that am the babe, the sire, the dam,  
Am also none of these at all;  
For now that cosmic chaos of I AM  
Bursts like a bubble. Mystical  
The night comes down, a soaring wedge of flame  
Woven therein  
To be a sign to them who yet have never been.

The universe I measured with my rod.  
The blacks were balanced with the whites;  
Satan dropped down even as up soared God;  
Whores prayed and danced with anchorites.  
So in my book the even matched the odd;  
No word I wrote  
Therein, but sealed it with the signet of the goat.

This also I seal up. Read thou herein  
Whose eyes are b'ind! Thou may'st behold  
Within the wheel (that always seems to spin  
All ways) a point of static gold.  
Then may'st thou out therewith, and fit it in  
That extreme sphere  
Whose boundless farness makes it infinitely near.  
Soria—*Da'leh-ad-din*,  
(A mountain near Bou-Saada).

## COLOPHON

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### HYMN TO PAN

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Thrill with lissome lust of the light,  
 O man! My man!  
 Come careering out of the night  
 Of Pan! Io Pan!  
 Io Pan! Io Pan! Come over the sea  
 From Sicily and from Arcady!  
 Roaming as Bacchus, with fauns and pards  
 And nymphs and satyrs for thy guards,  
 On a milk-white ass, come over the sea  
 To me, to me,  
 Come with Apollo in bridal dress  
 (Shepherdess and pythoness)  
 Come with Artemis, silken shod,  
 And wash thy white thigh, beautiful God,  
 In the moon of the woods, on the marble mount,  
 The dimpled dawn of the amber fount!  
 Dip the purple of passionate prayer  
 In the crimson shrine, the scarlet snare,  
 The soul that startles in eyes of blue  
 To watch thy wantonness weeping through  
 The tangled grove, the gnarléd bole  
 Of the living tree that is spirit and soul  
 And body and brain—come over the sea,  
 (Io Pan! Io Pan!)  
 Devil or god, to me, to me,  
 My man! my man!  
 Come with trumpets sounding shrill  
 Over the hill!  
 Come with drums low muttering  
 From the spring!  
 Come with flute and come with pipe!

## HYMN TO PAN

Am I not ripe ?  
 I, who wait and writhe and wrestle  
 With air that hath no boughs to restle  
 My body, weary of empty clasp,  
 Strong as a lion and sharp as an asp—  
 Come, O Come!  
 I am numb  
 With the lonely lust of devildom.  
 Thrust the sword through the galling fetter,  
 All-devourer, all-begetter;  
 Give me the sign of the Open Eye,  
 And the token erect of thorny thigh,  
 And the word of madness and mystery,  
 O Pan! Io Pan!  
 Io Pan! Io Pan Pan! Pan Pan! Pan,  
 I am a man :  
 Do as thou wilt, as a great god can,  
 O Pan! Io Pan!  
 Io Pan! Io Pan Pan! I am awake  
 In the grip of the snake.  
 The eagle slashes with beak and claw;  
 The gods withdraw :  
 The great beasts come, Io Pan! I am borne  
 To death on the horn  
 Of the Unicorn.  
 I am Pan! Io Pan! Io Pan Pan! Pan!  
 I am thy mate, I am thy man,  
 Goat of thy flock, I am gold, I am god,  
 Flesh to thy bone, flower to thy rod.  
 With hoofs of steel I race on the rocks  
 Through solstice stubborn to equinox.  
 And I rave; and I rape and I rip and I rend  
 Everlasting, world without end,  
 Mannikin, maiden, maenad, man,  
 In the might of Pan.  
 Io Pan! Io Pan Pan! Pan! Io Pan!

*Moscow.*