

Clouds without Water

EDITED FROM A PRIVATE M.S.

BY THE

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(ALEISTER CROWLEY)

FOR CIRCULATION AMONG MINISTERS OF RELIGION.

Clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

Jude 12,13.

PREFACE

BY THE REVD. C. VEREY

“Receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet.”

So wrote the great apostle nearly two thousand years ago; and surely in these latter days, when Satan seems visibly loosed upon earth, the words have a special and dreadful significance even for us who—thanks be to God for His unspeakable mercy!—are washed in the blood of the Lamb and freed from the chains of death—and of hell.

Surely this terrible history is a true Sign of the Times. We walk in the last days, and all the abominations spoken of by the apostle are freely practised in our midst. Nay! they are even the boast and the defence of that spectre of evil, Socialism.

The awful drama which the unhappy wretch who penned these horrible utterances has to unfold is alas! too common. Its study may be useful to us as showing the logical outcome of Atheism and Free Love.

For the former, death; for the latter, the death-in-life of a frightful, loathsome, shameful disease.

“Receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet.”

It may seem almost incredible to many of us, perhaps safely established in our comfortable cures, among a simple and Godfearing people, that any man should have been found to pen the disgusting blasphemies, the revolting obscenities, which defile these pages.

Nor can it be denied that a certain power of expression, even at times a certain felicity of phrasing—always, indeed, a profound dramatic feeling—is to be found in these poems. Alas! that we should be compelled to write the words! That an art essentially spiritual, an art dignified by the great names of Gascoigne Mackie, Christina Rossetti, Alfred Tennyson, George Herbert, should here be prostituted to such “ignoble use.” Truly the corruption of the best is the lowest—*corruptio optimi pessima*. Nor can one gleam of Hope, even in the infinite mercy of our loving Father, tinge with gold the leprous gloom of our outlook.

These clouds without water have no silver lining.

The unhappy man need not have feared that the poor servants of God would claim him as repentant, though surely we would all have shed the last drop of our blood to bring him to the grace of God. Alas! it was not to be.

The devilish precautions of this human fiend excluded all such possibilities. He died as he had lived, no doubt. Alas! no doubt.

Where is now that spotted soul? There is but one appalling answer to the question. In the “place prepared for the devil and his angels”; for “he that believeth not is condemned *already*.”

Not even in that modern evasion, the plea of insanity, can we find any hope. Nothing is clearer than that these wretched victims of Satan were in full possession of their faculties to the last moment.

Surely the maniacal violence of their unhallowed lust and hate is no ground for pity but for reprobation. When our blessed Lord was on earth He made no excuses for those who were possessed of devils. He took this simply as a fact—and He healed them.

It is only the shocking atheism and materialism of modern science that, in an insane endeavour to whittle away the miracles of our blessed Saviour, has sought to include “possession” in the category of disease.

Our Lord had no doubts as to the reality of demoniacal possession; why should we, His humble servants, truckle to the Christless cant of an atheistical profession?

The facts of this shocking case are familiar enough in the drawing-rooms of the West End.

Both the characters in the story were persons of considerable education and position.

On this account, and because a statement of the truth (however guarded) would have compromised persons of high rank, and was in any case too disgusting to publish in the press, the tragedy has not—one is glad to say in these days of yellow prurience—become matter for public comment.

But the wife of the man, driven to drink and prostitution by the inhuman cruelty of his mistress—this modern worse than Lucrezia Borgia or Mdme de Brinvilliers—and the fiancé of the girl betrayed and ruined by her machinations, still haunt the purlieus of the Strand, the one an unfortunate of the lowest order, the other a loafer and parasite upon the ghouls that traffic in human flesh and shame.

Thus we see evil reproducing itself, spreading like an incurable cancer throughout society from one germ of infidelity and unhallowed lust.

I may perhaps be blamed for publishing, even in this limited measure, such filthy and blasphemous orgies of human speech (save the mark) but I am firmly resolved (and I believe that I have the blessing of God on my work) to awake my fellow-workers in the great vineyard to the facts of modern existence.

Unblushing, the old Serpent rears its crest to the sky; unashamed, the Beast and the Scarlet Woman chant the blasphemous litanies of their fornication.

Surely the cup of their abominations is nigh full!

Surely we who await the Advent of our blessed Lord are emboldened to trust that this frenzy of wickedness is a sure sign of the last days; that He will shortly come—whose fan is in His hand, wherewith He shall thoroughly purge His floor—and take us His saints—however failing and humble we may be—to be with Him in His glory for ever and ever, while those who have rejected Him burn in eternal torment, with wailing and gnashing of teeth, in that Lake of Fire and Brimstone from which—thank God! He in His infinite mercy hath delivered us.

But until that happy day we are bound to work on silently and strenuously in His service. May the perusal of these atrocious words enlighten us as to the very present influence of Satan in this world—naked and unashamed.

May it show us the full horror of the Enemy with whom we are bound to fight; may it reveal his dispositions, so that under our great Captain we may again and again win the Victory.

It is my prayerful hope that He who turn evil to good may indeed use to His glory even this terrible and wicked book.

It has cost me much to read it; to meditate on it has been a terrible shame and trial; to issue it, much against my own poor human judgment, in obedience to His will, has been a still harder task; were it permitted me to ask a recompense, I would ask none but that of His divine blessing upon my fellow-labourers in His great field.

C. V.

The Manuscript

We dedicate this record of our

loves

to

the memory of

MARGUERITE PORRETE

I

Dieu libre et libertin, sacrifice et hommage;
 De ma virginité recevez les louanges!
 Votre empire triomphe sur mon pucelage,
 Paradis de la boue, empire de la fange!
 Dieu libre et libertin, sacrifice et hommage.

II

Chez vous les crimes infâmes ne sont que des blagues;
 Chez vous, mon Dieu, les dieux ne sont que des idées.
 Frappez votre esclave! Ah! le sang qui coule en vagues
 La comblera de joie, éventrée et pamée.
 Chez vous les crimes infâmes ne sont que des blagues.

III

Satyre se moquant des femmes légitimes,
 La mort est une blague, et l'amour trop comique.
 Vous êtes un dieu! pour vous les seules choses intimes,
 Dieu qui m'a baisé tant! sont les choses cosmiques.
 Satyre se moquant des femmes légitimes!

IV

Dieu qui m'a baisé tant! Baisez-moi donc encore!
 Vous m'avez rendu ma chère virginité.
 C'est pourquoi follement sous vous, ah! je me tords
 Eros inconnu, masque illisible et doré!
 Dieu qui m'a baisé tant! Baisez-moi donc encore!

V

Vous qui vous dressez sur l'abîme de l'enfer,
 Vous dont les plumes gravissent le haut des cieux,
 A moi la bouche d'or, à moi le v. de fer!
 A l'âme, au corps! je suis la déesse des dieux—
 Et je me dresse sur l'abîme de l'enfer.

A

**Queen of the
Quality being the
Quatorzains of a
Quietist**

A TERZAIN

King of myself, I labour to espouse
An equal soul. Alas ! how frail I find
The golden light within the gilded house.
Helpless and passionate, and weak of mind!
Lechers and lepers!—as all ivy cling,
Emasculate the healthy bole they haunt.
Eternity is pregnant; I shall sing
Now—by my power—a spirit grave and gaunt
Brilliant and selfish, hard and hot, to flaunt
Reared like a flame across the lampless west,
Until by love or laughter we enchaunt,
Compel ye to Kithairon's thorny crest—
Evoe! Iacche! consummatum est.

I

The Augur

I

Look! Look! upon the tripod through the smoke
Of slain things kindled, and fine frankincense.
Look—deep beyond the phantoms these evoke
Are sightless halls where spirit stifles sense.
There do I open the old book of Fate
Wherein They pictured my delight and me
Flushed with the dawn of rapture laureate
And leaping with the laughter of ecstasy.
Mine eyes grow aged with that hieroglyph
Of doom that I have sought: the fatal end.
That which is written is written, even if
Great Zeus himself—great Zeus!—were to befriend.
Even in the spring of the first floral kiss:
“No happy end the gods have given for this.”

II

Save death alone! I see no happy end,
No happy end for this divine beginning.
Child! let us front a fate too ill to mend,
Take joy in suffering for the sake of sinning.
Ay! from your lips I pluck the purple seed
Of that pomegranate sleek Persephone
Tasted in hell; the irrevocable deed
I do, and it is done. Naught else could be
For us, the chosen of so severe a god
To act so high a tragedy, the elect
To suffer so, and so rejoice, the rod
And scourge of our own shame, the gilt and decked
Oxen that go to our own sacrifice
At our own consecrated shrine of vice.

III

Over the desert ocean of distress
We reach pale eager hands that quiver and bleed
With life of these our hearts that surge and stress
In agony of the meditated deed.
For in the little coppice by the gate
Wherein I drew you shy and sly, and kissed
Your lips, your hushed “I love you” smooth and
straight
Sweeping to wrap us in the glittering mist
Of hell that holds us—even there I heard
The lacerating laugh of fate ring out,
The dog-faced god pronounce the mantic word,
And saw the avengers gather round about
Our love. The Moirae neither break nor bend;
The Erinyes hunt us to—no happy end.

IV

Our love is like a glittering sabre bloodied
 With lives of men; upsoared the sudden sun;
 The choral heaven woke; the aethyr flooded
 All space with joy that you and I were one.
 But in the dark and splendid dens of death
 Arose an echo of that jewelled song:
 There swept a savour of polluted breath
 From the lost souls, the unsubstantial throng
 That tasted once a shadow of our glory
 And turn them in the evil house to adore
 The godhead of our sin, the tragic story
 We have set ourselves to write, the sombre score
 Our daggers carve with poesy sublime
 Upon the roof tree of despair and crime!

V

As we read Love and Death in either's eyes,
 We see the cool mild splendour of the dawn
 Damned by some tragic throw of murderous dice
 To slash like lightning over lea and lawn
 Jagged and horrible across the curtain
 Of heaven, writing ruin, ruin—we see
 Our certain joy marred with a doubly certain
 Soul-shattering anguish.—Bah! To you and me
 Such loathing, such despair are little things.
 We are afloat on the flood-tide of lust—
 A lust more spiritual than life, that stings
 Till death and hell dissolve I' the aftergust.
 So? But the Gods avert their faces, bend
 Their holy brows, and see—no happy end.

VI

Thus shall men write upon our cenotaphs:
 "Traitor and lecher ! murderous and whore!"
 The rat-faced god that lurks in heaven laughs;
 There is rejoicing on the immortal shore.
 The angels deem us hurled from the above,
 Burnt out of bliss, blasted from sense and thought,
 Barred from the beauties of celestial love
 And branded with the annihilating Naught.
 O! pallid triumph ! empty victory!
 When we sit smiling on the infernal thrones
 Starred with our utmost gems of infamy,
 Buildd with tears, and cushioned with the groans
 Of these the victims of our joys immense—
 Child! I aspire to that bad eminence!

VII

Hell hath no queen! But, o thou red mouth curving
 In kisses that bring blood, shall I be alone?
 What of the accomplice of these deeds unswerving?
 Will not your dead hot kisses match mine own?
 As here your ardours brand me bone and marrow
 Biting like fire and poison in my veins,
 Shall you not there still ply your nameless harrow.
 Mingle a cup from those our common pains
 To intoxicate us with an extreme pleasure
 Keener than life's, more dolorous than death's
 Till these infernal blisses pass the measure
 Of heaven's imagined by the tremulous breaths
 Or silly saints and silly sinners, swaying
 From scraps of blasphemy to scraps of praying?

VIII

You love me? trite and idle word to darken
 (With all its glow) the splendour of our sun!
 No soul of heaven or hell may hearken
 The unbearable device that we have done.
 Nor may Justine nor Borgia understand
 Nor Messalina nor Maria guess
 The infernal chorus swelling darkly grand
 That echoed us our everlasting 'Yes.'
 Nor shall the Gods perceive to damn or praise
 The deed that shakes their essence into dust,
 Disrupts their dreams, divides their dreary days.
 Supreme, abominable, rides our lust
 Armed in the panoply of brazen youth
 And strength, since, if we are Hell's, Hell's worm is Truth.

IX

We are still young enough to take delight
 In wickedness for wickedness' sole sake.
 Eve did not fall because she knew aright
 The fruit an apple, but the snake a snake.
 Nor shall we sink among the foolish throng
 That seek an end, but rise among the few
 Who do the strong thing because they are strong
 And care not why they do, so that they do.
 Therefore we wear our dread iniquity
 Even as an aureole therefore we attain
 Measureless heights of nameless ecstasy,
 Measureless depths of unimagined pain
 Mingled in one initiating kiss
 That those dissolve in the athanor of this.

X

We tread on earth in our divine disdain
 And crush its blood out into purple wine,
 Staining our feet with hot and amorous stain,
 The foam involving all the sensual shrine
 Of love whose godhead dwells upon your mouth
 Wherein the kisses clustering overflow
 With brimming ardour of the new sin's growth
 Till round us all the poisonous blossoms blow,
 And all the cruel things and hideous forms
 Of night awake and revel in our revel,
 While in us rage the devastating storms
 Whose dam is Luxury and their sire the devil...
 It is well seen, however things intend,
 The Gods have given for this—no happy end.

XI

Crown me with poppy and hibiscus! crown
 These brows with nightshade, monkshood and vervain!
 Let us anoint us with the unguents brown
 That waft our wizard bodies to the plain
 Where in the circle of unholy stones
 The unconsecrated Sabbath is at height;
 Where the grim goat rattling his skulls and bones
 Makes music that dissolves the dusk of night
 Into a ruddy fervour from the abyss
 Such as I see (when cunning can surprise
 Our Argus foe and give us leave to kiss)
 Within your deep, your damned, your darling eyes.
 Ay! to the Sabbath where the crowned worm
 Exults, with twisted yard and slime-cold sperm.

XII

There gods descend; there devils rise. We dance,
 Dance to the madness of the waning moon,
 Write centuries of murder in a glance,
 Chiliads of rape in one unearthly tune.
 There is the sacrament of sin unveiled
 And there the abortion of Demeter eaten,
 The potion of black Dione distilled,
 The measure of Pan by whirling women beaten.
 These are but symbols, and our souls the truth;
 These sacraments, and we the gods of them;
 The sabbath incense curls to us to soothe
 Our spleen, engarlands us, a diadem
 For that unutterable deed that hurled
 Us, flaming thunderbolts! against the world.

XIII

There needs not ask the obscure oracle
 Whereto these dire imaginations tend.
 We read this sigil in the dust of Hell:
 "The Gods have given for this no happy end.
 What end should we desire, who grasp the gain
 We have despoiled from everlasting time,
 Who gather sunshine from the iciest rain
 And turn the dullest prose to rhythm and rime?
 Think you we cannot warm our hands and laugh
 Even at the fire that scatheth adamant?
 Think you we shall not knead the utmost chaff
 Into a bread worth Heaven's high sacrament
 And from the bitter dregs of Hell's own wine
 Distil a liquor utterly divine?"

XIV

Behold! I have said. The destiny obscure
 Of this our deed obscure we shall not skry.
 We know "no happy end!"—but we endure,
 Abiding as the Pole Star in the sky.
 You mix your life in mine—then soul in soul
 We shoot forth, meteors, travelling on and on
 Far beyond Space to some dark-glimmering goal
 Where never sun or star hath risen or shone;
 Where we shall be the evil light beyond time,
 Beyond space, beyond thought, supreme in deathless
 pang;
 Nor shall a sound invade that hall of crime,
 Only the champing of the insatiate fang
 Of the undying worm our love, fast wed
 Unto—no happy end. Behold! I have said.

II

The Alchemist

I

Love is sore wounded by the dragon shame,
O maiden o' mine! its life in jets of blood
Languidly ebbs. I see the gathering flame
Aspire—expire. I see the evil flood
Of time roll even and steady over it,
Bearing our God to the accurst ravines;
Bearing our God to the abysmal pit
Whence never a God may rise. The wolfish queens
Of earth have set their faces stern and sour
Against us; we are bidden to cease—to cease!
Ha! how eternity laughs down their hour,
Dragoons their malice with its dominant peace.
We are forbidden to love—as one who tries
At noontide to forbid the sun to rise.

II

There is an alchemy to heal the hurt
Done to our love by shame the dragon of ill
With his allies the fear, that wars begirt
With clouds, and that sad sceptic in the will
That sneaks within our citadel, that steals
The keys and opens stealthily the gates
When we are sleeping, when the dawn conceals
Its earliest glimmer and our blood abates
Awhile its tide! O mystic maiden o' mine,
Did I not warn you of the insulting foes?
Blind worms that writhe for envy, pious swine
That gnash their teeth to espy the gold and rose
Out flaming like the dawn when kiss for kiss
Passed and for ever sealed our bale and bliss.

III

Behold! the elixir for the weeping wound!
Is it that wine that Avallaunius poured
From the Red Cup when fair Titania swooned
Before the wrath of her insulted lord?
Is it the purple essence that distilled
From Jesu's side beneath the invoking spear?
Or that pale vase that Proserpina filled
From wells of her sad garden, cold and clear
And something overbitter and oversweet?
Or in the rout of Dionysus did
Some Bassarid prophesy in her holy heat
On such a draught as I for you have hid
In this the Graal of mine enchanted shrine
To pour for you, o mystic maiden o' mine?

IV

Lola. The name is like the amorous call
 Of some bright-bosomed bird in bowers of blue.
 Tis like the great moon-crested waterfall
 With hammering heart. 'Tis like the rain of dew
 That quires to the angel stars. 'Tis like a bell
 Rung by an holy anchoret to summon
 Out of the labyrinths of heaven and hell
 Some grave, majestic, and deep-breasted woman
 To bring her naked body shining, shining
 With flowers of heaven or flames of Phlegethon
 Into his hermit cell, her love entwining
 Into his life with spells that murmur on
 Black words! For one thing be you sure the same
 My wine is as the music of your name!

V

Maiden. Believe me, mystic maiden o' mine,
 That title shall assure the throne of heaven
 To you—the more so that your love divine
 That maidenhood to me hath freely given?
 Nor have I touched the ark with hands unholy,
 Nor with unsaintly kisses soiled the shrine:
 Nepenthe, amaranth, vervain, myrrh and moly
 Are deathless blooms about our chaste design.
 Not you resisting, but myself refraining,
 Gives us the eternal spring, the elixir rare,
 That mage and sage have sought, and uncomplaining
 Never attained. We found it early where
 The Gods find children. Maiden o' mine, be sure
 My wine shall be as pure as you are pure!

VI

Sweet. O my sweet, if all the heavenly portion
 Of nectar were in one blue ocean poured
 Their fine quintessence were a vile abortion
 Bitter and flat, foul, stagnant and abhorred
 Should one compare it with the tiniest tithe
 Of one soft glance your eyes on me might shed,
 One gesture of your body limber and lithe,
 One smile—the sudden white, the abiding red!
 Then—should one slander you in idiot verse
 By speaking of the subtle seven-fold sweetness
 Your lips can answer me, all fate to amerce
 In one mad kiss in all its mad completeness?
 O Gods and Muses! give me grace for this
 To match my wine for sweet with Lola's kiss.

VII

Mine. 'Tis impossible, but so it is,
 My mouth is Lola's and my Lola's mine
 When in the trance, the death we call a kiss,
 Earth is done down, and the immanent divine
 Exists! Impossible! no mortal yet
 Suffered such bliss from the all-envious gods;
 Whence we may guess we are immortal, set
 From the beginning over the periods
 Of ages, set on thrones of jasper and pearl,
 Wreathed with the lilies of Eternity,
 While on our brow the starry clusters curl
 Like flashes from the sunkissed jewelry,
 Dew on the flowers our garlands. Ay! you are mine,
 And mine as you are shall I pour the wine.

VIII

Now I have told you all the ingredients
 That go to make the elixir for our shame.
 Already make the fumes their spired ascents;
 The bubbles burst in tiny jets of flame.
 And you and I are half-intoxicated
 (I hid the heart of madness in my verse)
 Therewith, like Maenads ready to be mated
 Before the Lord of bassara and thyrses.
 Yea! we are lifted up! Crested Kithairon
 Shakes his black mane of pines, and roars for prey.
 Heave all his bristling flanks of barbèd iron!
 Flesh they red hunger on the bleeding day,
 O fangèd night! till from they mother maw
 We wrench the lion child of wonder and awe!

IX

This wine is sovereign against all complaints.
 This is the wine the great king-angels use
 To inspire the souls of sinners and of saints
 Unto the deeds that win the world or lose.
 One drop of this raised Attis from the dead;
 One drop of this, and slain Osiris stirs;
 One drop of this; before young Horus fled
 Thine hosts, Typhon!—this wine is mine and hers
 Ye Gods that gave it! not in trickling gouts,
 But from the very fountain whence 'tis drawn
 Gushing in crystal jets and ruby spouts
 From the authentic throne and shrine of dawn.
 Drink it? Ay, so! and bathe therein—and swim
 Out to the wide world's everlasting rim!

X

To drink one drop thereof is to be drunk.
 The firm feet stagger, and the world spins round;
 The fair speech stammers—nature's God hath sunk
 Into some trivial place of the profound.
 But he who is drunk thereon is wholly sane,
 Being wholly mad; he moves with space-wide wings
 Sees not a world—engulphed in the inane!
 Nor needs a voice for speech, because he sings.
 What then of them who are most drunk together
 As you and I are, mystic maiden o' mine,
 Beyond Dionysus and his tedious tether,
 Beyond Kithairon and his topmost pine?
 Why, even now I am drunk who scribble amiss
 These lines, not thinking—save of your last kiss!

XI

So Lola! Lola! Lola! Lola! peals,
 And Lola! Lola! Lola! Lola! echoes back,
 Till Lola! Lola! Lola! Lola! reels
 The world in a dance of woven white and black
 Shimmering with clear gold greys as hell resounds
 With Lola! Lola! Lola! and heaven responds
 With Lola! Lola! Lola! Lola!—swords
 All light to clustered dazzling diamonds,
 And Lola! Lola! Lola! Lola! rings
 Ever and again on these inchaunted ears,
 And Lola! Lola! Lola! Lola! swings
 My soul across to those inchaunted spheres
 Where Lola is God and priest and wafer and wine—
 O Lola! Lola! mystic maiden o' mine!

XII

I think the hurt is healed, for (by the law
 That forms our being) you must suffer as I,
 Hunger as I, rejoice as I, withdraw
 Into the same far transcendental sky
 Of this initiated rapture. Hurt
 Of shame for me is past, beholding Gods
 Only a little part of me, and dirt
 Such as men fling and women paste, no odds.
 Moreover, by the subtle and austere
 Vintage we drain, albeit we drain the lees,
 There is no headache for the morning drear,
 No fluctuant in our tideless ecstasies—
 Whereby, o maiden o' mine, the runic rime
 Tells me we have ree'd the riddle of old Time.

XIII

Never, o never shall I call you bride!
 Never, o never shall I draw you down
 Unto my kisses by the dim bedside
 Bathing my body in the choral crown,
 Your comet hair! Nor smooth our shimmering skins
 Each to the other and mount the sacred stair
 Even from the lesser to the greater sins
 Up to the throne where sits the royal and rare
 Vision of Pan. O never shall I raise
 This oriflamme, and lead the hope forlorn
 Up to the ruining bloody breach, to daze
 Death's self with pangs too blissful to be borne.
 No! dear my maid. A maiden as you be
 You may be all your lily life, for me.

XIV

Alas! the appointed term is sternly set
 Inviolable to this our colloquy.
 For though you be afar, my Lola, yet
 You have been with me, whispering to me.
 I bow my head to write, and on the nape
 O' th' neck I feel your lips. I raise my head
 To dream—your mouth achieves its luscious rape—
 I fall back—you are on me—I am dead.
 Could it be better? For I surely know
 That you will follow me adown the deep
 When I lay pen and paper by, and go
 Into the ardent avenues of sleep:—
 There also will we drink the appeasing wine,
 Lola, my Lola, mystic maiden o' mine!

III

The Hermit

I

Lonely, o life, art thou when circumstance
Occult or open keeps us twain apart!
Lamenting through the dreary day there dance
Anaemic thoughts; the bruised and bloodless heart
Beats as if tired of life, as I am tired
Who all these days have never seen your face,
Nor touched the body that my soul desired,
Nor have inhaled the perfume of the place
That you make sweet—black dogs of doubt and fear
Howl at my heels while care plies whip and spur,
Driving me down to the dull damned dead sphere
Where is no sight or sound or scent of Her
Our Lady Dian, but where hag and witch
Hecat bestrides her broom—the bestial bitch!

II

Like to a country in the interdict
Whose folk lack all the grace of eucharist,
My heart is; all the pangs its foes inflict
Are naught to this unutterable mist
Of absence. Where's the daily sacrament,
The glad devouring of your body and blood,
Sweet soul of Christ, my Lola? I am rent
Even as the demons from the face of God
When they would peer into beatitude.
I am barred from the incalculable bliss,
The unutterable chrism, the soul's food,
Of you, your gaze, your word, your touch, your kiss
O Gods, Fates, Fiends—whoever plays the Pope!
Lift up your curse—leave me not without hope!

III

My soul is like the savage upland plains
Of utmost wretchedness in Tartary.
No strength of sun, no fertilizing rains!
Only a bitter wind, intense and dry,
Cuts over them. Hardly the memory stands
Of one who travels there; his pain forgets
The golden bliss of all those other lands
Where he was happy. So the blizzard frets
Its sterile death across my soul, and chills
All hope of life even from the rare sad seeds
It blows from sunnier vales and happier hills,
Though at the best they be but worthless weeds.
I stand—I scan the infinite horizon
Of hopeless hope—yet I must travel on.

IV

When for an hour we met (to call it meeting
 Barred by the bleak ice of society
 From even the lover's glance, the lover's greeting.
 The intonation that means ecstasy!)
 One ray of saddest gladness lit the dusk:
 This—that I saw you pale and suffering,
 A goddess armed with myrrh instead of musk,
 With lips too cold to pray, too dry to sing.
 For by that sigh I knew the adorable
 Truth, that you wept in secret over me.
 Your silence was the dumb despair of hell;
 Who read it right read love. Strange cruelty,
 That who would die for you, sweet murderess,
 Should find his comfort in your bitterness!

V

For there you sat, you smiled, you chatted on,
 Myself alone perceiving the keen cold
 Sword at your heart, the speechless malison
 That trembled on your tongue, the while it trolled
 Its senseless clamour of necessary wit,
 And woke the senseless necessary laughter,
 The senseless necessary reply to it,
 The long sad silly commonplace thereafter.
 Suppose we had risen, as quick as thought, and stood
 And caught and kissed—what could the storm have done
 Worse than this sickening fog of solitude?
 Who can do worse than take away the sun?
 They better had take care, I think. One day
 We shall go mad, and take ourselves away.

VI

Yet we may hope; for this, and not from fear,
 We kept our counsel; we may hope anon
 To turn the corner of the evil year
 And find a brave new springtide coming on.
 Meanwhile by stealth I may invoke your shade
 And clasp you to me, though it be a dream
 Or little more, a vision from the Maid
 That rules by Phlegethon's sepulchral stream.
 Nay! it is more: by magic art compel
 (My soul!) my maiden's body to appear
 Visible, tangible, enjoyable
 Even to the senses of the amorous seer,
 Whose demon ministers through the gulphs and glooms
 Convey his mistress on their meteor plumes.

VII

More, I will visit you, forlorn who lie
 Crying for lack of me; your very flesh
 Shall tingle with the touch of me as I
 Wrap you about with the ensorcelled mesh
 Of my fine body of fire: oh! you shall feel
 My kisses on your mouth like living coals,
 And piercing like an arrow of barbed steel
 The arcane caress that shall unite our souls.
 Till, when I see you next, I shall have doubt
 Whether your pallor be from love distressed
 Or from the exhaustion of the age-long bout
 Of love you had of me upon your breast
 Held hard all night, with mouths that never ceased
 To engorge love's single sacramental feast.

VIII

One writes, and all is easy. Drop the pen,
 And Paradise is blotted out! The earth,
 Fair as it seemed, becomes a hideous den,
 And all life's promises of little worth.
 Like to a mother whose one child is dead,
 I wander, aching for the sight, the sound.
 The touch—familiar, now inhibited.
 The child is under ground—is under ground—
 The child is under ground—who comforts her?
 The bastard fool her priest? The useless clod
 Her husband? The accursed murderer
 Her God?—if so be that she hath a God.
 Foul curses from my life's envenomed flood
 Break in a vomit of black foam and blood.

IX

As one entranced by dint of cannabis,
 Whose sense of time is changed past recognition,
 Whether he suffer woe or taste of bliss,
 He loses both his reason and volition.
 He says one word—what countless ages pass!
 He walks across the room—a voyage as far
 As the astronomer's who turns his glass
 On faintest star-webs past the farthest star
 And travels thither in the spirit. So
 It seems impossible to me that ever
 The sands of our ill luck should run so low
 That splendidly success should match endeavour;
 Yet it must be, and very soon must be:
 For I believe in you, and you in me.

X

To-morrow is the day when Christ our Lord
 Rose from the dead; therefore, the shops are shut.
 Men may get drunk, or syphilized, or bored,
 Robbed, murdered, or regenerated,—but,
 But they must not get letters, be amused,
 Or do a thing they want to do till Monday;
 Whence comes the universally-diffused
 And steady popularity of Sunday.
 And yet I grumble! any other day
 I might receive a message from my Lola:
 “The siege is raised. Meet me as usual!” Nay!
 For me the sofa and Verlaine or Zola,
 Till Christ’s affair is over, and the town
 Runs a young resurrection of its own.

XI

Were you a shop-girl and myself a clerk,
 Things might be better—we could surely meet
 With due umbrellas in the dripping Park
 And decorously spoon upon a seat.
 This is the penalty one pays for rank
 And fortune! Ah, my Lola, I am dying
 And mad—or would God play me such a prank
 As to dictate such verse while you are crying?
 Let me too weep, weep on! weep out my soul,
 Weep till the world of sense was wept away
 And, dead, I reached you at the glimmering goal
 Whither you had outrun me! Weep, I say,
 Weep! It is better. Thus one earns a chrism—
 Who ever gained one by cheap cynicism?

XII

Wherefore I duly invoke the God
 Of Tears that he may mingle yours and mine,
 Water therewith Life’s unresponsive sod,
 And raise therefrom some sickly growth of vine
 Whose grape shall yield a bitter draught of woe
 Fit for the assuaging of a deadlier thirst
 Than Attis knew or Abelard: even so
 I suffer; than some lovely nun accurst
 Who beats her breast upon the convent bars,
 Even so you suffer: let its draught restore
 All lovers (that invoke the sad cold stars)
 Unto good luck: then you and I once more
 (Though still we were forbidden word and kiss)
 Might find a certain happiness in this.

XIII

For truth it is, my maiden, we have had
 Already more than our fair share of pleasure.
 The good god Dionysus ivy-clad
 Hath poured us out a draught of brimming measure.
 Let us then rather give the lustiest praise
 Our throats can sound than pray for further favour;
 Even though our sorrow, eating up our days,
 Devour us also. Gods enjoy the savour
 Of Man’s thanksgivings; from their holy place
 Beholding mortals, they are wroth to see
 Tears; they rejoice to see a proud glad face
 Master of itself and of eternity.
 Let us, reflecting on how dear we love,
 Shew laughter and courage to the gods above!

XIV

Now then the fickle song hath changed and shifted
 Round from the dirge to the primordial paean.
 Lola! my Lola! let our voices lifted
 Proclaim to all the Masters of the Aeon:
 We love each other! let them meditate
 Awhile on that glad cry, and you will see
 How they consult, and smile, and hint to fate
 That none can mar so holy a destiny.
 We love each other! loud and glad; let heaven
 And all the gods be deafened! Sing, O sing!
 We love each other! through the storm-cloud riven
 Let the wild anthem of our triumph ring!
 Hark! the glad chorus as we drag the stars
 In chains behind our mad colossal cars!

IV

The Thuamaturge

I

Then the Lord answered me out of the wind
Out of the whirlwind did He answer me;
Gird up thy loins now like a man, and find
If thou canst answer like a man to Me!
Who art thou darkening counsel by thy word,
And in thine ignorance accusing Them
Who, ere thy prayer was formulated, heard
And crowned it with its passion's diadem?
Who is the Son of Man, that We should mind him?
Or visit the vain virgin of his pleasance?
Yet ever as we went We stood behind him
And compassed her with Our continual presence?
From the black whirlwind the most high God sayeth:
Why did ye doubt, o ye of little faith ?

II

I answer Thee out of the utmost dust.
I am a worm, I abase myself, I cry
Against myself that I am found unjust
More than all they that dwell beneath the sky.
I do repent, I do lament, o Thou
Who hast watched over us and cared for us,
Beating I' the dust this consecrated brow,
And answer Thee in broken murmur thus,
That I am altogether base and vile,
That Thou art altogether good and great,
That Thou hast given the guerdon grace for guile
Even while I lifted up myself to Fate
And cursed Thee. And from me who scorned to pray
Thou hast rolled the sad sepulchral stone away.

III

On this wise; that by uttermost good Fortune
I met you walking out in London city,
Even when from Heaven I did not dare importune
Hardly to pass your house! The Gods took pity
They whirled us in a chariot of fire
About the highest heavens for many an age!
So Regent's Park may seem to hot desire;
So the archangel gets a cabman's wage;
So all the aeons that pass still leave one time
To take one's lunch at the appointed hour—
This is the difference between prose and rime
And this the great gulf fixed for leaf and flower.
The British public grunts and growls and grovels,
Swilling its hogwash of neurotic novels.

IV

We knew enough to wake to choral rapture
 All answering Nature: I will swear the sun
 Came out; you saw the moulting trees recapture
 Their plumage, and the green destroy the dun.
 Nothing could jar; the British workman took
 A kindly interest in our kind caresses;
 The loafing nursemaid and the musing cook
 Agreed with us entirely. Love impresses
 Its seal upon the world; is skilled to wake
 The sympathy of everything that lives.
 Kindliness, flows, not venom, from the snake;
 The trodden worm dies duly—but forgives
 The cabman asked four shillings for the job,
 And almost boggled at my glad ten bob!

V

Oh! it was rapture and madness once again
 To turn our tears to kisses brimming over
 The mouths that never were too wide and fain
 For lover to hold intercourse with lover.
 Ah! we were owls of dusk to doubt the light,
 Bats to mistrust the Wolf's tail's holy warning:
 "Sorrow endureth maybe for a night,
 But joy must surely cometh in the morning."
 Joy, ay! what joy poured straight from the high treasure,
 The inexhaustible treasure of delight
 The gods have poured us, pouring overmeasure
 Because we love with all our life and might.
 Believe me, it is better than all prayers
 To show the gods our love surpasses theirs!

VI

Nay, even thus you could not credit Fate,
 Even in my arms close cuddled as you lay
 With hard-shut eyes and lips inebriate
 With their own kisses all this happy day.
 Nay, but blaspheming you put hope aside,
 Bade me forget you, swore yourself a liar,
 Smiled through the words because you knew you lied
 Knew that—what waters can put out our fire?
 So we amused ourselves with cunning brisk
 Careful arrangements to forget each other.
 You cut that love-curl from your neck at risk
 Of comment—at the slightest—from your mother.
 You gave it me—God forget me, dear girl,
 When I forget to treasure up that curl!

VII

Your loveliness should help me to forget you;
 Your murmurous "I love you" like soft bees
 Humming should help; although my kisses fret you,
 They are intended but to give you ease,
 And help you to forget me; then, the fixed
 Ardent intentness of my cat-green eyes
 Flecked with red fire is like a potion mixed
 Straight out of Lethe, or divination lies.
 If there be truth in augury, your lips
 Fastened to mine should be a certain spell
 To put your memory of me in eclipse:—
 In short, if all be true that sages tell,
 Two days of absence with roast beef and beer
 Will cure me of you perfectly, my dear!

VIII

Why did you play with such ungracious folly?
 Because our passion is too bitter-sweet?
 Because the acute and maddening melancholy
 Is stronger than the rapture when we meet?
 Because you weep beyond your own control
 Like to one wounded bleeding inwardly?
 Because you are not the mistress of your soul
 Mighty enough to master fate and me?
 It cuts me to the heart to see the brine
 Not falling from your bad bewitching eyes,
 To feel you are weeping in the central shrine
 Whose woes the peristyle may not surprise.
 I want to treat you as a lover rather;
 You make me lecture to you like a father!

IX

Write in you heart, dear maid, that Hitherto
 The Lord hath helped us. Give him duly praise
 (As I have given Him for making you).
 Pray not, ask not for wealth and length of days
 Or even for wisdom, lest one day you find
 That you are saddled with some thousand grooms
 (You bear the case of Solomon in mind!)
 All in frock-coats and helmeted (with plumes)
 —A scarcely pleasant prospect! Just give thanks
 O Lord, for what we have received, Amen!
 And then if Jordan overflows his banks,
 Our vines increase, and one seed turns to ten,
 Keep on thanksgiving! Even if things go wrong,
 Howls are less pleasant to the ear than song.

X

Keep on thanksgiving! We are tenfold blest
 Beyond others, simply having found each other.
 Were we to part for ever, breast from breast,
 Now, even now, there would not be another
 In all the earth that should not envy aright
 With plenty cause our short-lived happiness.
 No life can hold one half-an-hour's delight
 Such as we had—this morning! Why then, bless,
 Bless all that lives and moves and hath its being!
 Bless all the Gods, without omitting one!
 Bless all the company of heaven, agreeing
 To veil their fires to our stupendous sun!
 Bless all the lesser glories that excite
 In the great gladness of our mother light!

XI

How purely unexpected was the chance!
 When things looked blackest, on a sudden, the sun!
 Chance is another word for ignorance;
 We do not know how all these things are done.
 But what has happened once may happen again,
 And "Hitherto the Lord hath helped us." dear!
 "History repeats itself"—which makes it plain
 That "Evermore the Lord will help us." Fear
 And sorrow are folly; you must sleep o' nights
 (Try reading me!) and I can promise you
 You will awake to more divine delights
 Than ever in the world you guessed or knew.
 Stick to it! One fine day you'll find on waking
 Me in your arms, and—oh! your body aching!

XII

This is an effort of prophetic skill
 Not passing range of human calculation.
 A woman gets exactly what she will
 If she keeps willing it sans divagation.
 To have me secretly and altogether
 Yours is your will—unless your kisses lied.
 Sooner or later we shall slip the tether
 And all the world before us deep and wide
 Gape like the abyss, through which we fall to find
 Strange equilibrium without support,
 Strange rapture without sense, and void of mind
 Strange ecstasies that mock the name of thought.
 Sooner or later, Lola! Circumstance
 Bows before those who never miss a chance.

XIII

This is enough to make a donkey laugh!
 I talk like a Dutch uncle; and you listen
 Like a man reading his own epitaph.
 But, really! Truly! How our glad eyes glisten!
 How our hearts rump! Whatever we may say,
 Have never a doubt, Lord, that it's all thanksgiving!
 If Thou dost thus for people every day,
 How very easy Thou must make a living!
 We would be like Thee! if we had the power
 We would fill all folk with supernal blisses,
 Breed life's sweet briar to the full June flower
 And on their praises feed our proper kisses.
 For as you said "However kind the gods are,
 We could be kinder yet I think the odds are."

XIV

Let me take leave of you as heretofore
 With solemn kiss and sacred reverence!
 I love you better and I love you more
 Daily, and whether you are hither or hence.
 I adore you as I adore the holy ones
 That do abide exalted in their shrine
 Starry beyond mere splendour of stars and suns,
 Drunken beyond mere Dionysian wine.
 Thus do I hold you; thus I pray you hold
 Me as a secret and a blessed chrisim
 That you have gained to adorn your house of gold
 By some strange silent sacred exorcism.
 You have said 'I love you'—sacraments are true—
 I exchange the salutation. I love you.

V.

The Black Mass

I

Lord! on love's altar lies the sacrament.
O willing victim, eager to be slain,
Lusting to feel the knife, the life-veil rent,
Assumption energized by death! O fain
To feel the murderous ardour of the priest
Clutch at his throat, theurgic frenzy fly
About the initiates of the Paschal feast
And know it centred in the dim dead I
Loosed by the pang—even thus you know it is,
Even thus, when I invoke your harsh caress,
Put up my mouth to your immortal kiss,
Confess you for my lady and murderess—
In mine own life-blood I exult to float
Even as your white fangs fasten in my throat.

II

You stand away—to let your long lash curl
About this aching body, fiery rings
Of torture, o my hot enamoured girl
Whose passion rides me like a steed and stings.
Like to a wounded snake infuriated
With pain, you drive your reeking kisses home
Into my flesh, their poisonous frenzy mated
With this delirious anguish, bitter foam
Of storm on some innavigable sea.
Whip, whip me till I burn! Whip on! Whip on!
Is it not madness that you wake in me?
Is not this curse the devil's orison?
Ah, devil! devil! when you grip me and glare
Into mine eyes, and answer all the prayer!

III

A virgin with the lusts of Messaline,
A goat-soul in the body of a saint,
You writhe on me with cruel and epicene
Phrenzy and agony of acute restraint.
You ache—you burn—you dizzy me with blows—
You call me coward and eunuch, who say No.
Volcanic child! upon your masking snows
I will not raise my rod, that forth may flow
Torrents of blazing lava, that shall hiss
And roar, and ruin all the glad green world.
I like the attack of your seducing kiss
The lashes of your love about me curled,
Better than slack delight and murmuring sigh—
Flowers by the road to sad satiety.

IV

Spit in my face! I love you. Clench your fists
 And beat me! Still, I love you. Let your eyes
 Like fiery opals or mad amethysts
 Curse me! I love you. Let your anger rise
 And with your teeth tear bleeding bits of flesh
 Out of my body—kill me if you can!
 I love you. I will have you fair and fresh,
 A maenad maiden maddening for a man.
 Ay! you shall weary in the erotic craving!
 I'll have you panting—aching to the marrow—
 Exhausted, but a maiden (Lesbia raving:
 “Catullus brings a song and not a sparrow”)
 Famished with love, fed full with love, your soul
 Still on the threshold of the unenvied goal.

V

The goal of love is gotten not of these
 White-blooded fools that haste and marry and tire.
 They grasp and break their bubble ecstasies;
 We know desire the secret of desire.
 We have the wisdom of the saints of old
 Who know that what divinely is begun
 Glows from dawn's grey to noon's deliberate gold
 Darkens to crimson—and day's race is run.
 For us the glamour of the dawn suborning,
 We escape the enervating heat of noon:
 We hear Astarte for Adonis mourning,
 And close our lover's calendar at June.
 Ah, Lola! but we suffer. Hell's own worm
 Aches less than this, and hath an earlier term.

VI

You grind your tiny shoes into my face;
 You roll upon the furs before the fire,
 Smiting and cursing in the devil's race
 Whose goal and prize is Unassuaged Desire.
 You rub your naked body against mine:
 You madden me by blows and bites and kisses;
 You make me drunken with your stormy wine;
 We swoon, we roll into unguessed abysses
 Of torture and of bliss; we wake and yearn,
 Doing violence on ourselves—anon we are slain,
 Slain and reborn again to ache and burn:
 Aeon on aeon thunders through our brain.
 —At last you see, my maiden? Kiss me! Kiss!
 There is no end—happy or not—to this!

VII

There is a respite—we must part anon.
 Short are the hours of sweetness: it is well.
 Could such a bout of murder carry on
 We should drink poison and awake in hell;
 Or being but mortal, or nearly mortal, yield
 Exhausted spirit to the clamant flesh;
 The book of common love should be unsealed,
 And we be caught within the common mesh
 That catches common folk. O God! bite hard!
 Smite down rebellious flesh with hideous pain!
 Bite hard! Smite hard! By bruises scarred and marred
 Love this exultant face! Again! Again!
 O Lola! Lola! Lola! Kiss me, Kiss!
 Nay—nay! Kiss not! I cannot bear the bliss.

VIII

You are a devil gloating on the pain
 You suffer and I suffer; you laugh shrill
 Over the pangs of those pale fools, the twain
 Whom we deceive, whom we shall surely kill
 Whispering a word of this. Ah! joy it is
 That false to faith is all the honied pressing;
 A traitor triumphs in each stolen kiss,
 Caligula and Cressida caressing.
 You love yourself for stealing me away
 From the proud lovely wife; you love me more
 That in my arms a prostitute you lay,
 And to your troth-plight lover played the whore
 When mouth to mouth we clung, and breath for breath
 Exchanged the royal accolade of death.

IX

I love you for your cruelty to them;
 I love you for your cruelty to me;
 I see their blood glittering a diadem
 Upon your dazzling brows; my blood I see
 Sucked deep into your body, curling round
 Like fire in every artery and vein
 Massed in your heart, colossal and profound.
 I am mad for you to brand me with the stain
 Of your own vice. Our souls, a murdering crew
 Of itching Mullahs, wallow, dervish-drunk.
 Love surges at the pang! Our poisonous dew
 Of sweat and kisses blinds us. A mad monk
 Kissing fanatically the cross that had
 Devoured his vitals is not half as mad!

X

Ay! rub yourself, you big lascivious cat,
 On the electric soft, the wanton fur!
 Call upon Hera! You've a furious gnat
 Worth any gadfly ever sent from her!
 Call upon Aphrodite! she will send
 No sparrows from her prudish Paphian home!
 Call upon Artemis! She will not bend
 To lift you from your seas of bitter foam!
 Nay! wrap yourself and rub yourself in silk!
 Drink of my blood, engorge my fruitless sperm!
 For you were suckled on the poisonous milk
 That betrays virgins to the deathless worm.
 Are we not glad thereof? Kiss, Lola, kiss,
 Comrade of mine in the uttermost abyss!

XI

Follow Iacchus from the Indian vales!
 Set him with song upon the milk-white ass!
 Follow Iacchus while the sunset pales!
 Revel it on the flower-enamelled grass
 While the moon lasts; then plunge in trackless woods!
 Slay beasts unheard-of and blaspheming kings!
 Mingle in madness with strange sisterhoods!
 Dare black Aornos with Daedalian wings!
 All words! words! There's a hunger to express
 The infinite pangs, the infinite mighty blisses
 Stored in the house of rapture and distress
 Whose key is one of our blood-tainted kisses
 Whose fume arises from the accursed sod
 Where we lie burning and blaspheming God.

XII

So in this agony of enforced silence
 The sober song breaks to a phrenzied scream;
 The shattering brain admits the mad god's violence,
 And wild things course as in an evil dream:
 Devils and dancers, druid rites and dread,
 Horrible symbols scarred across the sky,
 Invisible terrors of the quick and dead,
 Impossible phantoms in mad revelry
 Conjoined in spinthriae of bestial form,
 Human-faced toads, and serpent-headed women,
 All lashed and slashed by the all-wandering storm
 Caricature of all things holy and human—
 —Such are the discords that absolve the strain
 As this wild threnody dissolves the brain.

XIII

Forgive me, o my holy and happy maid,
 Lola, sweet Lola, for the imagination
 Of all things monstrous that your soul dismayed
 Reads on the palimpsest of my elation.
 Simple and sweet and chaste our love is ever,
 And these its wild and mystic characters
 That rage and storm in impotent endeavour
 To unveil our glory to our worshippers.
 Lola, dear Lola, mystic maiden o' mine,
 Let us not mingle with the ribald rout
 That throng our temple. Close, Palladian shrine,
 With our reverberate glory rayed about!
 Abide within—with me! Let silence sever
 This velvet 'now' from that unclothed 'for ever'!

XIV

Though I adorn my thought with angel tresses
 Or pluck its pallium from the demon-kings,
 My spirit rests at ease in your caresses,
 And cares not for the song, so that it sings.
 Life is but one caress, one song of gladness,
 One infinite pulse of love in tune with you;
 One infinite pulse, upsoaring into madness,
 Down sinking to content. O far and few
 The stars that follow our lofty pilgrimage
 Into the abyss of silence and delight
 Beyond the glamour of the world, the age,
 The illusions of the light and of the night.
 Wherefore accept these meteor flames that dance
 Pale coruscations to our brilliance!

VI

The Adept

I

Even as the holy Ra that travelleth
 Within his bark upon the firmament,
 Looking with fire-keen eyes on life and death
 In simple state and cardinal content:
Even as the holy hawk that towers sublime
 Into the great abyss, with icy gaze
 Fronting the calm immensities of time
 And making space to shudder; so I praise
With infinite contempt the joyous world
 That I have figured in this brain of mine.
 The sails of this life's argosy are furled;
 The anchor drops in those abodes divine.
Master of self and God, freewill and Fate,
 I am alone—at last—to meditate.

II

Wrapped in the wool of wizardry I sit;
 Mantled in mystery; the little things
 That I have made through weariness of wit,
 Stars, cells, and whorls, all wonder in their wings!
These Gods and men, these laws, these hieroglyphs
 And sigils of my fancy seem to spire
 In worship up mine everlasting cliffs
 I built between my will and my desire.
They reach me not; I made a monstrous crowd,
 Innumerable monuments of thought,
 But none is equal; this high head is bowed
 In vain to the wise God it would have wrought,
Had not—Who sitteth on the Holy Throne
 Thereby must make himself to be alone.

III

See! to be God is to be lost to God.
 That which I cling to is my proper essence;
 Nor is there aught at any period
 That may endure the horror of my presence.
I conjure up dim gods; how frail and thin!
 How fast they slip from this appalling level!
 This is the wage of the fellatrix Sin
 Drunk on the icy death-sperm of the Devil.
I were a maniac did I contemplate
 The outward glory and the inward terror,
 Sick with the hideous light myself create
 From the dark certainty of gloom and error.
For I am that I am—behold! this 'I'
 Hath nothing constant it may measure by.

IV

Should I take pleasure in the fond perfume
 That curls about my altars? in the throats
 That chant my glory in the decent gloom
 Of lofty ministers? Shall the blood of goats
 And bulls and men send up a fragrant steam
 To me, who am? Shall shriek of pythoiness
 Or wail of augur move this dreadful dream
 To some less melancholy consciousness?
 I have created men, who made them gods
 Of their own excrements, and worshipped them.
 I cannot match these calculating clods
 Who twist themselves a faecal diadem
 From all the thorny thoughts that plague them most;
 Break wind, and call upon the Holy Ghost.

V

Yet I abide; for who is Pan is all.
 He hath no refuge in deceitful death.
 What soul is immanent may never fall;
 What soul is Breath can never fail of breath.
 The pity and the terror and the yearning
 Of this my silence and my solitude
 Are broken by the blazing and the burning
 Of this dread majesty, this million-hued
 Brilliance that coruscates its jetted fire
 Into the infinite aether; this austere
 And noble countenance set fast in dire
 And royal wrath, this awful face of fear
 Before whose glance the ashen world grows grey,
 Crashes, and chaos crumbles all away.

VI

As when the living eyes of man behold
 The embalmed seductions of a queen of Khem
 Wrapped with much spice and linen and red gold
 And guardian gods on every side of them;
 Yet inasmuch as life is life, they shrink,
 Shivel and waste to ashes as men gaze:
 So doth the world grow giddy at the brink
 Of these unfathomable eyes, that blaze
 Swifter and deadlier than storms or snakes.
 Then—o what wonder, as I strain afar
 The basilisk flame!—what breathless wonder wakes
 That I behold unsinged a silver star
 O joy! O terror! O!—O can it be
 There is a thing that is, apart from me?

VII

I travelled, so the star. We neared; we saw
 Each other, knew each other; in your face
 Mine equal self with majesty and awe
 Abode; and thus we stayed for a great space.
 What was the manner of our countenance?
 I saw you seated, as a great lost God
 With blasphemy exulting in your glance
 And horror at your lips; my soul was shod
 With glory, and your body bathed in glory,
 So that from out the uttermost abyss
 The very darkness churned itself to hoary
 And phosphor foam of agony and bliss.
 The authentic seal of our majestic might
 Stamped on the light in light the light of light.

VIII

So presently, most solemnly and slowly,
 Our fingers touched and caught; our lips reached forth
 And with conscious purpose smote their holy
 Lives into one, and loosed their common wrath.
 Unto the ends of our dead universe
 Their frenzy rolled; henceforth no prince or power
 Should lift the sterile strength of that one curse
 Even to bring one thought to birth one hour.
 For now we knew; "it is a lonely thing
 To sit supreme upon the single throne;"
 But being come thus far, goes glittering:
 "It is a lovely thing to be alone!"
 Silence! Beware to speak the fatal word
 That might inweave our two-ply with a third!

IX

Wherefore again in sexless sanctity
 The mighty lingam rears its stilled sublime;
 The mighty yoni spreads its chastity
 Against the assaulting gods of space and time.
 Rather be Phoedra than Semiramis!
 I will deny you, though you doom to dare
 To abdicate, and risk the spirit kiss
 In the embraces of the wanton air.
 Why should we cast our crowns to gods unborn?
 Why yield our bleeding garlands till the hour
 When to ourselves we seem a shame and scorn
 And seek some craft to span a statelier power?
 Not for a while evoke that sombre spell!
 The present still exceeds the possible.

X

That is his truth that seems to sink supine
 Into your bosom's bliss, the scented snare,
 Killed by your kisses shuddering in his spine
 And blinded in the bowers of your hair!
 This is his truth, who seems to writhe and sob
 Beneath the earthquake pangs of your caress,
 Whose heart burns out in one volcanic throb,
 Whose life is eaten up of nothingness
 This is his truth, and yours, that seem to be
 Mere beautiful bodies gripped in epicene
 And sterile passion, all unchastity
 In being chaste, all chaste in our obscene
 And sexless mouthings, that repugnant roll
 Their bestial billows on the snow-pure soul.

XI

This is our truth, that only Nothing is,
 And Nothing is an universe of Bliss;
 That loves denote supernal ecstasies,
 And saintship lurks in the colossal kiss.
 Loves are the letters of the holy word
 That contradicts the curse "Let Being be!"
 Since all things, even one thing, are absurd;
 And no thing is the utmost ecstasy.
 Kisses induct the soft and solemn tune
 That Israfil shall blow on Doomsday—
 Your silky eyes are blue as that pale moon
 (For ere it dies it sickens into grey)
 That witches see, whose eager violence
 Aborts the gods of cosmic permanence.

XII

The uninstructed and blaspheming man
 Looks on the world and sees it void and base.
 Let him endure its horror as he can!
 There is no help for his unhappy case.
 The love-taught magus, the hermaphrodite,
 Knows how to woo the Mother, and awake her;
 Beholding, in the very self-same sight,
 The self-illuminated image of the Maker.
 I love, and you are wise; our spirits dance
 A merry measure to the music moving
 In waves through that mirific brilliance.
 Will you first tire of wit, or I of loving?
 Tire? O thou sea of love, thy ripples run
 Into themselves, to my serener sun!

XIII

For you I built this faery dome of words
 And crowned it with the cross of my desire.
 I circled it with songs of blessed birds
 And cradled all in the celestial fire.
 The stars enfold it; the eternal sun
 And moon give light; nor clouds nor rain intrude;
 Only the dews of Dionysus run
 In this intoxicating solitude.
 I have begemmed its marble flame of spires
 With jewels from the bliss of God, and set
 Chryselephantine columns curled like fires
 Below each misty opal minaret.
 Is there no window to the east? Behold
 The eyes of Love, your love, the essential gold!

XIV

For me therein shall you erect a statue
 Even as you know me with the mystic eyes
 Hungrily, hungrily a-gazing at you,
 Afeast upon our strange sad ecstasies.
 Make me the aching mouth parched-up with blisses
 The lips curled back, the breath desiring you,
 The whole face fragrant with your full free kisses,
 The soul thereof exhaling scented dew
 Born in the utmost world where we in truth
 Abide like Bacchus with a Bassarid
 Drunk with our art, love, beauty, force and youth;
 But place that head upon a pyramid
 Of snaky lightnings, lest—but that shall be
 Always a secret between you and me.

XV

Or, an you will, evoke me as the Sphinx
 With lion's claws, bull's breast, and eagle's wings!
 You are my riddle, and the answer sinks
 Below the deep essential base of things,
 Rises above the utmost brim of thought
 And bubbles over as impatient song.
 Yet "We are one" is all, and all is naught;
 And this one "one", and "all", and "naught"
 The whole content of our imagining, [shall throng
 The great arcanum in the adytum hid
 From men, and though we carve or kiss or sing,
 The Sphinx is dumb, and blind the Pyramid.
 —Now our affairs are ordered perfectly.
 Give me your mouth, your mouth, and let us die!

VII

The Vampire

I

Let me away! Then is it not enough
That you have won me to your wickedness?
That we have touched the strange and sexless love
Whose heart is death? That you and I express
The poison of a thousand evil flowers
And drain that cup of bitterness, my Lola?
That you have killed my safe and sunny hours—
A Venus to seduce Savonarola!
Why have you taken this most monstrous shape,
Imperious malison and hate flung after?
You clutch me like a gross lascivious ape,
And like a gloating devil's rings the laughter.
O sweet my maid, bethink yourself awhile!
Recall the glad kiss and the gentle smile!

II

Where are you? Who am I? O who am I?
Why do I lie and let you? I was strong—
I was so strong I might have bid you die
With one swift arrow from my quiver, song.
Now you are over me ; you hold me here;
You grip my flesh till bleeding bruises start;
You threaten me with—can I name the fear?
I always knew you never had a heart.
God! who am I? My Lola, speak to me!
Tell me you love me; tell me—I am dazed
With something terrible and strange I see
Even in the mouth that kissed, the lips that praised.
You leer above me like a brooding fiend
Waiting to leap upon a babe unweaned.

III

Kiss me at least! We always were good friends—
Kiss me for old times' sake—Kiss me just once!
I know this ends—as every sweet thing ends!
But—say you are not angry! Ere you pounce,
Forgive me! You could make me glad to die,
I think, if you would only kill me kindly.
Just one swift razor-stroke—cut low!—and I
Would pass the portal happily and blindly.
Yes! I would like to think the fountain sprang
Straight from my throat and slaked your aching thirst,
Shot to your hot red heart one red hot pang,
Then left you cool and smiling as at first.
I give you freely my heart's agony.
But oh! oh! speak to me! do speak to me!

IV

God! do not wait then! kill me now; have done!
 Why do you watch me mute and immobile,
 Sitting like death between me and the sun,
 A sphinx with eyes of jade and jaws of steel?
 Let me rise up to kneel to you and pray!
 I hate this hell of agony supine.
 You killed her yesterday; kill me to-day;
 Let me not hang like Christ! Now snap my spine!
 Surely you know the trick—when from your lips
 I see a thin chill stream of stark black blood
 Trickling, the stream of hate that glows and grips
 My lesser life within its sickening flood.
 Be pitiful, and end your cruelty!
 Suck out the life of me, that I may die!

V

O brooding vampire, why art thou arisen?
 Why art thou so unquiet in the tomb?
 Why has thy corpse burst brilliant out of prison?
 Whence get the lips their blood, the cheeks their bloom?
 Is there no garlic I may wear against thee?
 No succour in the consecrated Host?
 Nay, if thou slay not it is thou restrainst thee.
 I am the virgin, thou the Holy Ghost.
 There is no comfort nor defence nor peace
 From thee (and all thy malice) in the world:
 Thou sittest through the aching centuries
 Like the old serpent in his horror curled
 Ready to strike home—and yet not striking
 Till thou hast lipped the victim to thy liking!

VI

Am I not beautiful? Your lithe mouth twitches
 As if already you were gluttoned on
 This fair firm flesh that fears you and yet itches
 —You know it—for some master malison.
 Perhaps you mean to let me go? Ah sweet!
 How seven times sweet if you will let me go—
 Oh! Oh! I want to worship at your feet.
 Why do you stab me with a smiling “No”?
 Say “no” at least—to see you sitting there
 So dumb is madness—why then, let me go!
 I will—and you sit quiet—did you dare?
 To everything the answer still is “No!”
 You coward! Coward! Coward! let me rise!—
 I cannot bear the hunger in your eyes.

VII

You are afraid of me—I see it now.
 You know that if you loose me, never again
 Will I be such a fool. I wonder how
 I ever took this destiny of pain.
 Loose me! You dare not. Take your eyes away!
 You dare not. O you laugh! You trust your power
 There you are wrong—but had you turned to-day
 I would have murdered you within the hour.
 Yes! you do well—you know the dreadful weight
 Pale silence sheds, not Atlas could uplift.
 You know the spell to conquer love and hate,
 To win the world and win it at a gift.
 You are afraid of that then—had you spoken
 You fear the spell upon me had been broken!

VIII

Even that taunt has left you smiling still,
 And silent still—and that is ten times worse.
 Where is my will, my adamant will?
 Curse God and die? I can nor die nor curse.
 Ah, but I can. The agony extends—
 I am wrapt up all in an equal hell.
 There is a point at which emotion ends.
 I am come through to peace, though pain yet swell
 Its paeon in my every vein and nerve.
 Try me, o God, convulse me to the marrow!
 I am it's element; I shall not swerve.
 I am Apollo too; I loose one arrow
 Swift enough, straight enough to conquer you.
 O Sphinx! Gaze on! I can be silent too.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

IX

Now then the pressure and the pain increase,
 And ever nearer grows the exulting rose
 Your face; and like a Malay with his kriss
 That runs amok your passion gleams and grows.
 It shakes me to the soul: by that you are stilled;
 You hold yourself together, like a man
 Stabbed to the heart, who, knowing he is killed,
 Lets his whole life out in his yataghan,
 And strikes one masterstroke. So now you breathe
 Close on my face; you strip me of defence;
 You sing in obscure words whose crowns enwreath
 My forehead with their viewless violence,
 So that I lie, as at the appointed term,
 Awaiting the foul kisses of the worm.

X

You close on me; by God, you breed in me!
 My flesh corrupt is tingling with the kiss
 Of myriads, like the innumerable sea
 In waves of life that feeds its boundless bliss
 On the eroded earth. These are your thoughts,
 Your living thoughts that throng my stagnant veins!
 Your jackals howl among the holy courts;
 Your monster brood of devils in my brains
 Laughs; oh! they feast on my decaying blood;
 They gnaw the last sweet morsel from my bones.—
 As on the parched-up earth there flames the flood
 Of the monsoon, black dust and barren stones
 Leap into green, so I whose epitaph
 Your passion writes, awake to live—to laugh!

XI

Even to the end of all must I resist.
 New deaths, new births, each minute boiling over.
 I can go on for ever, an you list—
 Now, now! O no! I will not. O my lover!
 Spare me! Enough! Take pity! Mutely moans
 Your mouth in little sobs and calls and cries
 And catches of the breath, whose bliss atones
 In once for all the long-drawn agonies.
 Now that the pain swings over into pleasure,
 Now that the union which is death is done,
 The wine of bliss rolls out in brimming measure.
 The moon is dead—all glory to the Sun!
 Now, now! Oh no! Oh no! I penetrate—
 I pierce. Enough. God! God! how Thou art great!

XII

Then closer, closer. No!—then stop—think well
 What is this wonder we awake. Now think
 We are cast down to the abyss of hell
 Or tremble upon heaven's dizzy brink—
 Which? All's the same. Go on. No—what is this?
 Why dally? To the hilt! Ah mine, ah mine!
 Kiss me—I cannot kiss you—kiss me! Kiss!
 Oh! God! Oh God! Forgive me; I am thine.—
 Horses and chariots that champ and clang!
 The roar of blazing cressets that environ
 The form that fuses in the perfect pang.
 A blast of air thorough the molten iron—
 One scream of light. Creating silence drops
 Into that silence when creation—stops.

XIII

So—é finita la commedia.
 “And if the King like not the comedy”
 (Twine in your hair the fallen gardenia!)
 “Why then, belike he likes it not, pardie!”
 What will the “King”—the British Public—say
 When they perceive their sorrow was my fun,
 Their Hecuba my mocking Brinvilliers?
 I neither know nor care. What we have done
 We have done. Admit, though, you are rare and rich!
 This palely-wandering knight has found a flame
 Both merciless and beautiful, you witch!
 You play the game, and frankly, as a game!
 This is the hour of prattle—tell me true!
 I have never net another such. Have you?

XIV

Yet all the comedy was tragedy.
 I truly felt all that I farced to feel.
 Because the wheel revolves, forsooth, shall we
 Deny a top and bottom to the wheel?
 I am the centre too, and stand apart.
 I am the All, who made the All, in All
 Who am, being Naught. I am the bloodbright Heart.
 Wreathed with the Snake, and chaos is their pall
 Thou art as I; this mystery is ours.
 These blood-bought bastards of futility
 Can never know us, fair and free-born flowers.
 So they may say—they will—of you and me:
 “These poets never know green cheese from chalk:
 “This is the sort of nonsense lovers talk.”

VIII

The Initiation

I

Lola! now look me straight between the eyes.
Our fate is come upon us. Tell me now
Love still shall arbitrate our destinies,
And joy inform the swart Plutonic brow.
Behold! the doom foreseen, the doom embraced,
Fastens its fang; the gods of death and birth
Make friends to slay us, Pilate interlaced
With Herod in obscene and murderous mirth.
Lola! come close! confront them! Let us read
The book once sealed, now open to our gaze!
Avenge our love and vindicate our breed
With courage to the ending of the days.
Since fall we must, o arm ourselves aright,
Fall fighting in the forefront of the fight!

II

First; let us face the foemen, number them,
Measure their arms! Who smiteth us? We wove
In grove and garden many a diadem
Dewy with all the purity of love.
The Hermes of the orchard lets the string
Slip from his finger, and the arrow speeds
Striking our love beneath the flamy wing
So that the heart of heaven breaks and bleeds.
That poisoned shaft fed with corrupting germs
Hath stricken us to earth: the wound corrodes,
Breeding within us all its noisome worms,
All the black larvae of the accursed abodes:—
The virgin of our reed-shrill ecstasies
Raped by the stinking satyr of disease !

III

I who have loved you—shall I love you now,
Your teeth dropt out, your fair flesh fallen away,
The Crown of Venus on your itching brow,
The coppery flush, the leprous scurf of grey?
The god that rots the living flesh of man
Fills up your mouth—one ulcer—with his groans
And all our blessings choke and turn to ban
The beast that gnaws the marrow of our bones.
Caught in corrupt caresses of disease,
Shall we dispute us with his fervour, fain
To woo with sores your turbid arteries
And kiss black ulcers in your spotted brain?
We married close, my Lola, with a kiss:—
Now for the lifelong lover, Syphilis!

IV

Yea! but we love. We win. The body's curse
 Is bitter, but he hath not won the whole.
 There's more than life in this brave universe.
 Death cannot touch the secret of the soul!
 Nor shall we shrink, although this further pang
 Strike through the liver with its fiery dart,
 The hope—the horrid hope—whose gleaming fang
 Now stirs, a serpent's, underneath your heart!
 For lo! not vainly we invoked the god
 That looseneth the girdle of a maid;
 Even now draws nigh the dreadful period
 That maketh all the mother-world afraid.
 With rotten fruit your belly is grown big
 —Thanks to the bastard god that cursed the fig!

V

Your swollen neck is grown a swollen breast
 Gushing with poisoned milk; your breath is caught
 In quick sharp gasps; you get nor sleep nor rest,
 The monster moving in you in his sport.
 Surely a monster! some unnatural thing,
 Some Minotaur of shame, no egg of pride
 To hatch the miniature of love and spring
 In your own image, subtly glorified.
 White swan you were! not Zeus but Cerberus
 Hath ravished you; you brood on harpy eggs—
 Sweet sister! is the wine too sour for us?
 We have drunk deep—nay! nay! but to the dregs!
 And all their bitterness is braver brew
 Than the dull syrup of the pious crew.

VI

Still we can laugh at burgesses and churls
 In our excess of agony and lust.
 We pity these poor prudes, insipid girls
 And tepid boys, these creatures of the dust.
 We pity all these meal-mouthed montebanks
 That prate of Jesus, ethics, faith and reason,
 These jerry-built dyspeptics, stuccoed cranks,
 Their lives one dreary plain, one moist dull season
 Like their grey land. O costive crapulence!
 They ache and strain within the water-closet
 Of church and State, their shocked bleat of offence:
 "This poet's life was such a failure". Was it?
 Fools! our worst boredom was a loftier thrill
 Than all you ever felt—or ever will.

VII

If we are weary, it is flesh that faints.
 We cannot bear such worlds of happiness.
 Even in this torture that consumes and taints,
 We writhe in bliss, one terrible caress
 Of the great Gods of Hells. Ah! surely, dear,
 Our way is wise, transcending human woe:
 We are most happy and of great good cheer.
 What do we know? It matters not. We know.
 This is enough, that we have slain the Sphinx,
 Worked out her wizardry, dissolved her doom;
 And though her wine be death to him that drinks
 We shall carouse for ever in the tomb.
 We drank bull's blood; and all our pangs immense
 Are better than eupeptic innocence.

VIII

Ah! if flesh fails, may we not also fail?
 May not the vulture liars gather round
 Our death-beds, and drone out their dismal tale
 With drawl and whine, the Galilean sound
 Of snuffle and twang? May not their stinking souls
 Interpret our last sighs as penitence
 When we close up the coruscating scrolls
 Of our life's joy, seal up the jar of sense
 To broach the starry flagon—splendid spilth?
 These creeping cravens shall be circumvented;
 They shall not belch their flatulence and filth
 On us, or tell the world that we repented.
 Come, as we strained it, let us break the tether
 In the last luxury—to die together!

IX

Let Death steal softly through the gate of sleep
 On tiptoe! win away the maiden life
 On velvet pinions to his azure steep;
 At ease, at peace, to woo her for a wife!
 His white horse waiting quietly without
 Let him push gently the delicious door
 And take us. We have lived. How should we doubt
 Or fear? we have lived well. For ever more
 We must be well. The cypress cannot daunt,
 Nor the acacia thrill; we are content
 To wonder in the shadowy groves, to haunt
 The dark delight of our own element;
 Or—could we send a messenger—to tell
 Our brothers of the happiness of Hell!

X

Are not the poppy-fields one snowy flame?
 Come, let us wander hand in hand therein,
 Straining with joyous juice our lips of shame,
 Draining their bitter draught of sterile sin!
 Are not the eyes of sleep already dull,
 The lashes drooping over their desire?
 Are not the gods awaiting to annul
 With Lethe the last flicker of the fire?
 Ay, let us kiss, my darling; let us twitch
 For the last time the flesh against the flesh,
 Before the coming of the lovely witch
 That shall excite our sleepy souls afresh,
 Anointing us with subtle drugs and suave,
 Fit for the grave, for love beyond the grave!

XI

For the last time, my Lola! Still the name
 Fills me with music, echoing afar
 Faint, like the rapture of some ghostly flame
 Rejoicing in some lone secreted star
 Beyond the visible heaven. Come to me!
 Come closer! Is not this as close as death?
 Are we not one to all eternity
 Jewelled with joy? Mix me your subtle breath
 Into the words well-known and never worn,
 Into the kiss well-kissed and never tired,
 Into the love well-loved and not forlorn,
 The love beyond all that ever was desired?
 Ay! all the cloudy must of life is strained
 To clearer liquor that our souls attained.

XII

How the yahoos will rage and rave about
 Our sloughs! "Appalling double suicide!
 "Orrible detiles". In the world without
 We never yet consented to abide.
 What should we care, within this cave of bliss,
 This ocean of content, wherein we dive
 And play like dolphins, for the horrid hiss
 Of blow-flies? Nay, they never were alive!
 O the sweet sleep that fastens on these brows!

O the enchantment of this dreamy god,
 My mystic sister, my mellific spouse,
 That shepherds us with his hermetic rod
 Into the flowery folds of love and sleep
 Where we have strayed—O never yet so deep!

XIII

Lola, dear Lola, how the stillness grows!
 How drowsy is the world, that folds her wings
 Over us, folding like a sunset rose
 Her crimson raptures to the night of things!
 How all the voices and the visions fail
 As we pass through into the silent hall
 Beyond the vapours and beyond the veil,
 Beyond the Nothing as beyond the All!
 Ah! then, our voice must also fail in this;
 Our symbols are but shadows in the sun;
 Love's self springs from the shadow of the kiss;
 Our bliss! O, that was hardly half begun!
 We fight the Fate as we have fought the foemen.
 The poison takes us.—Χαίρετε νιχῶμεν.

XIV

Farewell! O passionate world of changeful hours!
 Come, Lola, let us sleep! Elysian groves
 Await us and the beatific bowers
 Where Love is ours at last—as we were Love's.
 Come, with our mouths still kissing, with our limbs
 Still twined, relax the ecstasy! pass by
 To the abyss of night where no star swims!
 On to the end beyond the prophecy!
 Ah Lola mine! "No happy end is this"—
 I love you—ah! you love me—you love me!
 For we have passed beyond imagined bliss
 Into the kingdom of reality,
 Where we are crowned with flowers—yet closer creep!
 Sleep, Lola, now! I love you—sleep—ah, sleep!

Notes

THE AUGUR

- I. 6. **They.**—The Fates or Moirae.
- III. 11. **The dog-faced god.**—Anubis, the Threshold-Guardian of the ‘Gods’ of Egypt. Mantic means prophetic.
- IV. 14. **Child.**—The unhappy girl was at this time but 17 years old.
- VIII. 5. **Justine.**—The virtuous but victimized heroine of the infamous novel of the Marquis de Sade.
- XI. 6. **Sabbath.**—Consult Payne Knight : ‘Essays on the worship of Priapus’, Eliphaz Levi : ‘Dogme et rituel de la haute Magie’ and others.
- XIII. 12. 13. **Sigil.**—Sign-manual.

THE ALCHEMIST

- I. 8. **Wolfish queens.**—Thus these wicked wretches dare to speak of their kind and godly relations.
- II. 11. **Blind Worms—pious swine.**—The poor servants of God! Ah, well! we have our comfort in Him; like Our Blessed Lord, we can forgive. It is for our loving Lord to set His foot upon the necks of our enemies, and to cast them out into the blackness of darkness for ever.
- V. 12. 13. This is quite unintelligible to me.
- XI. I think this is what is called Echolalia, a sure sign of ‘degeneracy’; or, as I prefer to think, a wickedness which has gone, dreadful as it sounds to write, beyond the Infinite Mercy of God. “I will send them strong delusion.”
- XIII. 9. **Oriflamme.**—How obscene is all this symbolism!

THE HERMIT

- IV. 7. **Myrrh—Musk.**—The Perfumes of Sorrow and of Lust. Many prostitutes scent themselves strongly with musk, the better to allure their unhappy victims.
- VI. 8. **Maid.**—Proserpine, or Hecate. I think the latter, as Proserpine became wife of Hades.
- VII. This disgusting sonnet seems to refer to the wicked magical practice of travelling by the astral double.

- IX. Cannabis.—Indian hemp, a drug producing maniacal intoxication.
- X. 12. **Verlaine! Zola!**—These are the vampires that suck out the virtue from our young people, the foreign corrupters of our purer manners !
- XII. 7. **Attis—Abelard.**—‘Thirst’ here clearly means unhallowed lust, since Attis and Abelard were both mutilated persons.
- XIV. 13. 14. What Mad megalomania!

THE THAUMATURGE

- I. 1. Horrible blasphemy of this adaptation of Job to their vile purposes!
- IV. 14. **Ten bob.**—Vulgarity must always go with wickedness. Christ is not only a saving but a refining influence.
- V. 6. **Wolf’s tail.**—The Zodiacal Light, seen before dawn.
- XIV. 1. I suppose that such mixture of ribaldry, blasphemy, vulgarity, and obscenity, as this series of sonnets has never been known. But worse is to follow!

THE BLACK MASS

- IX. 6. A reference to the Bacchae of Euripides.

THE ADEPT

- I. 1. **Ra.**—The ‘Sun-God’
- I. 5. **Horus.**—The hawk, also a ‘Sun-God’
- II. 1. Apollonius of Tyana, the notorious pseudo-Christ, used to cover himself in wool in order to meditate.
- III. 7. **Fellatrix.**—Only a Latin dictionary can unveil the loathsome horror of this filthy word.
- IV. q sqq. —Impossible to comment on this shocking ‘sin against the Holy Ghost’ To compare the very Spirit or Breath of God to—Oh, Lord, how long?
- VI. 11. **Basilisk.**—a fabulous creature that slew all that it looked upon.
- IX. 1. **Lingam.**—The Hindu God(!)—the male organ of generation.

2. **Yoni**—Its feminine equivalent. That the poor Hindus should *worship* these shameful things! And we? Oh how poor and inadequate is all our missionary effort! Let us send out more, and yet more, to our perishing brothers!
5. Phædra was repulsed by her son Hippolytus; Semiramis received the willing embraces of her son Ninus.
- XI. 1. **Only Nothing is.**—There is much metaphysical nonsense culled from German Atheistic philosophy, in these poems. A wicked philosopher is far more dangerous than a mere voluptuary.
10. **Doomisday.**—An affected archaism for the day of Judgement. How can the writer dare to speak of this great day, on which he shall be damned for ever? “For he that believeth not is condemned already.”
- XII. 6. **Mother.**—Nature. How true would be these striking words, if only for “the love-taught magus, the hermaphrodite” with all its superstition, blasphemy, and obscenity, one were to write “The Christ-saved sinner, brought into the light”.
- XV. 10. **The arcanum in the adytum.**—More classical affectation for “the secret thing in the holy place”.

THE VAMPIRE

- I. 8. **Savonarola.**—An ascetic Florentine doctor.
- V. 1-6. For a good modern account of vampires and their habits, consult Mr Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*
- IX. 3. **Kriss.**—The Malayan dagger.
4. **Runs amok.**—Maddened by drink, these wretches run wildly through the streets, slaying all they meet until they themselves are slain. Only the gospel of Christ can save such.
8. **Yataghan.**—The Afghan sword.
- XII. 12. The writer is evidently thinking of the “Bessemer converter”.
- XIII. 1. “The comedy is finished”.
- 5-7. A reference to Hamlet and the Players.
10. 11. Reference to Keats’ *Belle Dame sans Merci*.
- XIV. 10. **Blood-bought bastards.**—Christians! O Saviour! what didst Thou come to save ?

- 6. Quoted from Arnold's Song Celestial.
- 7. 8. Quoted from a magical Coptic papyrus.

THE INITIATION

- III. This shocking sonnet awakes pity and disgust in equal proportions. If even then they had only turned to the "Great Physician!" But no! "God hardened Pharaoh's heart".
- IV. 14. Alas! no doubt that the reference is to our blessed Lord and Master, The barren fig-tree has been no doubt a stumbling-block to many weak souls. But the fig tree has here a deeper signification in its reference to certain loathsome forms of disease, and it is a symbol of lust. See Rosenbaum's "Plague of Lust"
- V. 1. **Swollen neck.**—A superstition of the ancients was that the neck swelled on the bridal night, and virginity was tested by the proportion of the skull and the neck. See Beverland "Draped Virginity".
- VI. Poor, poor deluded victims of Satan! If they only knew the holy joy of even the least of Jesu's lambs!
- VII. 13. **Bull's blood.**—Supposed to be a poison by the ancients. Thus Themistocles is said to have died.
- IX. 9. **Cypress.**—Symbol of death.
10. **Acacia.**—Symbol of resurrection.
- X. 1. **The poppy-fields.**—They killed themselves with laudanum.
- XII. 1. **Yahoos.**—See Swift's Voyage to Laputa. It is to be feared that the mad Dean intended to satirize mankind, the race for which the Lord of Glory died !
- XIII. Χαίρετε νικῶμεν. Rejoice, we conquer. It is very extraordinary how Satan's blindness and fury possess them to the very end. Even as they died, maybe one fervent cry of repentance to the dear Saviour of all men would have been heard, and the gates of Paradise swung open as Satan, cheated of his prey, sank yelling into the Pit. But alas ! there is no such word : nothing but a pagan Epicureanism even in the jaws of death.

A Prayer

Merciful and loving Father, almighty God, grant unto us Thy humble servants and ministers a double portion of Thy Spirit that our eyes may be opened to the wickedness of them that love Thee not, that by Thy grace our ministrations may be used to bring them out of darkness into Light, by the virtue of our crucified Lord, risen and ascended. Thine only-begotten Son, in Whose name we ask this Thy blessing. For Jesus Christ's sake, Amen.