

THE GARDEN OF JANUS

BY

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THE GARDEN OF JANUS

I

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!

II

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.

III

I woke from this. I lay upon the lawn;
They had thrown roses on the moss

THE EQUINOX

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.

IV

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 ?

V

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.

VI

I will not weep ; nay, I will follow him.
Perchance he is not far,

THE GARDEN OF JANUS

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.

VII

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 ragged earth about their roots that lay.

VIII

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 !

IX

At last I came unto the well, my soul.
In that still glass, I saw no sign

THE EQUINOX

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.

X

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.

XI

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.

XII

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 GARDEN OF JANUS

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 ?

XIII

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 plumèd casque
Of the dead warrior ;
Find no chaste corpse therein, but a soft-smiling whore.

XIV

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.

XV

It detonated. Nature, God, mankind
Like sulphur, nitre, charcoal, once

THE EQUINOX

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*.

XVI

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.

XVII

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.

XVIII

With that a goat came running from the cave
That lurked below the tall white cliff.

THE GARDEN OF JANUS

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!

XIX

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!

XX

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!

XXI

Yet all that Sea was swallowed up therein;
So they were not, and it was not.

THE EQUINOX

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 !

XXII

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.

XXIII

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.

XXIV

More ; in this journey I had clean forgotten
The quest, my lover. But the tomb

THE GARDEN OF JANUS

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!

XXV

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 in stead
Of mouth he hath
One minute point of jet ; silence, the lightning path !

XXVI

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 no bough
Nor branch nor twig nor bud, from never until now.

XXVII

This thought I bred within my bowels, I am.
I am in him, as he in me ;

THE EQUINOX

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.

XXVIII

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 dæmonic dawn
When he did split
My spirit with his lightnings and enveloped it !

XXIX

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 !

XXX

Yet I that am the babe, the sire, the dam,
Am also none of these at all ;

THE GARDEN OF JANUS

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.

XXXI

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.

XXXII

This also I seal up. Read thou herein
 Whose eyes are blind ! 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.