

MADONNA OF THE GOLDEN EYES

NIGHT brings madness; moonlight dips her
throat to madden us;
Love's swift purpose darts, the flash of a striking
adder.
Love that kills and kisses dwells above to sadden us;
Dawn brings reason back and the violet eyes grows
sadder.

O Madonna of the Golden Eyes!

Swooned the deep sunlight above the summer stream;
Droned the sleepy dragon-fly by the water spring;
Stood we in the noontide in a misty dream,
Fearful of our voices, of some sudden thing.

O Madonna of the Golden Eyes!

Dared we whisper? Dared we lift our eyes to see
there
In their desperate depth some mutual flame of treason?
Dared we move apart? So glad were we to be there,
Nothing in the world might change the constant
season.

O Madonna of the Golden Eyes!

Did a breath of wind disturb the lazy
day?
Did a soul of fear flit phantom-wise
across?
Suddenly we clasped and clave as
spirit unto clay;
Suddenly love swooped to us as swoops
the albatross.
O Madonna of the Golden
Eyes!

Did thy husband's venom breathe on
the trembling scale?
Did that voice corrupting cry across the
midnight air?
What decided? Gabriel may spin the
foolish tale.
What decided? We were lovers—who
should care?
O Madonna of the Golden
Eyes!

How we clave together! How we
strained caresses!
How the swooning limbs sank fainting
on the sward!
For the fiery dart raged fiercer; in
excesses
Long restrained, it cried, "Behold! I
am the Lord!"
O Madonna of the Golden
Eyes!

Yes, we sat with modest eyes and
murmuring lips
Downcast at the table, while the
husband drank his wine.
So thy sly, slow hand stretched
furtively; there slips

Deadly in his throat the poison
draught divine!

O Madonna of the Golden
Eyes!

Then we left his carcase with the
stealthy tread
Reverent, in presence of the silent
place ;
Then you burned, afire, caught up the
ghastly head,
Looked like Hell right into it, and sat
upon the face!

O Madonna of the Golden
Eyes!

“Come with me,” you whispered,
“come, and let the moon
Lend her light to madden us through
the hours of pleasure ;
Let the dayspring pass and brighten
into noon!
Yet no limit find our love, nor passion
find a measure!”

O Madonna of the Golden
Eyes!

Dawn brought reason back, and the
violet eyes are sadder,
O they were golden once, and I call
them golden still!
Dawn has brought remorse, the sting of
a foul swamp-adder—
I hate you! beast of Hell! I have
snapped Love’s manacle!

O Murderess of the Golden
Eyes!

O and you fix them on me! your lips
curse now—’tis fitter!
Snarl on! eat out your heart with the
poison that is its blood.
Speak! and her lips move now with
blasphemies cruel and bitter.
Slow the words creep forth as a sleepy
and deadly flood.

They glitter, those Satanic
eyes!

“Beast! I gave you my soul and my
body to all your lust!

Beast! I am damned in Hell for the kisses we
sucked from death!

Now remorse is yours, and love is fallen in dust—
I shall seek Him again for its sacramental breath!
Yes, fear the gold that glitters from these eyes!”

She took a dagger, and I could not stir.
She pierced my silent fascinated breast.
She held me with the deadly look of her.
I cried to Mary in the House of Rest;
“O Madonna of the Virgin eyes!”

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I pierced him to the very soul: I took
His whole life's love to me before he died;
Mad kisses mingled that enduring look
Of death-caught passion: in his death he cried,
“O Madonna of the Golden Eyes!”