

VICTORY

Ah, God! that thou has made me thus,
Content of nought, intent to attain
The summits of hills amorous,
The crests desired of all of us,

By that fierce superflux of pain,
That battling with strange enemies,
The awful holocaust of gain,
And golden rushing of men slain

Before Thy throne, whose woven lies,
Fixed by enchantment in the dome
Of fiery aether, burn with eyes
Insatiate of Paradise—

Fixed, if the curse of brackish foam
Upon the salt unpiteous sea
Be fixed, or if the faith of Rome
Shall find in hearts of men a home

While men are living, fair and free—
Ah me, since justice must endure
And draw her sword at last, and be
The eternal conqueror of Thee.

And I, shall my support be sure
In that great day of righteous war?
Is my soul free? Is my heart pure?
Shall life diseased in death find cure?

Or shall the shameless barren whore
That rules my ways be found my guide,
Wed in bad bands so foul and sore
That Liberty shall be not more

Within my heart or at my side?
O Pleasure, whom I made my god,
And based my forehead for thy pride
And took thy bastard for my bride,

Subdued my shoulders to thy rod,
Casting before thy feet the things,
The virtues that thou didst hate; I trod
A bloody winepress, and went shod

With glorious feet stained through with rings,
Kissed blood that leapt to feel the tongue
Slip eager through the teeth, while clings
The lissome body, borne on wings

Of pain unspeakable, unsung,
To that tormentor, red and cruel,

Those teeth that bit for joy, and clung
Murderously amorous, while the young

Tender flesh burned, a quivering fuel
For strange desire, for strange desire,
Passion and penitence, and dule,
Love glowing some unholy jewel

Glittering frightful mid the mire.
Oh! Love, what utter sweetness yet!
What agony of curst hell-fire,
Shame, lust, and infamy, and ire,

Wrath in the highest heavens set,
Shame in the soul, and leaping lust
On pleasure's flaming parapet,
An Infamy that I forget.

As swords that flash forget the rust
That clings them round, as fighting men
Forget their wounds, with no distrust
Of death. Yea, dust may turn to dust,

Man's spirit to his God again,
But memory cannot fade, and while

My Hot devouring kisses rain
On thy worn face, in writhing pain

Biting my lips, that fiercely smile
As tigers' lips, and gnaw thy mouth,
Till the blood spurts in dainty style
And blinds and bruises me awhile,

Yet satiates the awful drouth ;
I suck, and shudder, and rave, and clutch,
Thy breasts, with wounds and sores uncouth,
Drenched with diseases of the south,

The hot south lands, where crooked crutch,
The leprous arm, the withered hand,
Bear sway, where thou wast nurtured, such
A queen as men delight to touch.

And I, between the wastes of sand
In one great harbour by a well,
Met thee, princess of such a band
Of merchantmen ; my curved brand

Then was raised high, as wild of yell,
We flashed and charged, and slew thy folk ;

Thou camest to my bed to dwell—
That day there clanged the gates of hell

Behind us twain; we never spoke
Save of love's bidding we might do,
Save on our lust to place a yoke
Too bitter to be lightly broke.

Each might we drew on, and something new
Of lust we learnt, insatiate we
Who wrote in blood the volumes through
That speak of love. But then there grew

A giant lust, strong as the sea;
And we with fresh delight assayed
The fierce sweet bond of tribady,
The strange strong sin of sodomy,

And thus from foe to foe betrayed,
No pain or pleasure but we knew
Its utterest essence, whence we made
All agonies, that God has paid

With rotting blood, save one, that few
Could dream of, so divine it is,
So exquisite, so rich to do,
The which to-night we meet unto—

To consummate the angry bliss
Of all excesses of delight;
The pain of this divine disease,
The luxury of the obscene kiss,

The carnal anguish, and the sight
Of sore bloody breasts and thighs,
The bright green river foamed with white,
The horrid spasms of the night.

Long have we lusted on this wise;
Now one delight, the last is left—
Come, I will lick thine haggard eyes,
And wallow on thee straddle-wise.

Here with thy fingers fierce and deft,
Take me, all bloody as it is,
And plunge within thy furious cleft
My fierce red pillar to the heft!

Suck deep the poison. Now I wis
The sweet pollution of thy breath
Was never so divine! Thy Kiss!
Ah, sweet Lord Christ! So sweet as this!
Ah, Christ! Together! Passion! Death!