

ATHOR AND ASAR

*To Frank Harris*

ON the black night, beneath the winter moon,  
I clothed me in the limbs of Clodia,  
Swooning my soul out into her red throat,  
So that the glimmer of our skins, the tune  
Of our ripe rhythm, seeded the hideous play  
Of death-worms crawling on a corpse, afloat  
    With life that takes its thirst  
    Only from things accurst.

Closer than Clodia's clasp, Death had me down  
To his black heart, and fed upon my breath,  
So that we seemed a stillness—whiter than  
The stars, more silent than the stars, a crown  
Of stars! For in the icy kiss of death  
I found that God that is denied to man  
    So long as love and thought  
    And life avail him aught.