

## THE SORCERESS

*To L. K——*

GIVE me the good sun streaming through  
Glimmering glades of yew,  
And the cool grass, and one chaste shrine  
That pious hands have builded ;  
And, oiled and scented, curled and gilded,  
A virgin, swimming like new wine  
In my grey old soul, that I may give  
His life to Pan, and live !

I have seen Love, and known  
A blasphemy, a violation  
And perfect profanation ;  
Wherefore the god hath flown.  
My heart no longer trembles  
If that blind Harper—blind, or he dissembles !—  
Touches its strings with burning finger-tips,  
Or fastens his soft lips  
About my soul. . . . Then what is left  
To a woman love-bereft ?

I have tasted Passion ; I have known  
How the sharpness and the softness and the sweetness  
Mix to one pomegranate's completeness  
Wherein Hell and Earth are shown.  
Oh fruit forbid ! was there but one ripe tree  
Fruitful for me ?  
Passion is gone—the wine is spilt  
And the sword broken at the hilt.

I have invoked the demon of debauch.  
All blinding wines, all soul-devouring crimes  
I have called to me, drilled the scarlet mimes

Of murder to my own fantastic nautch.  
And now—these demons mock me; for their pay  
They sucked my inmost soul away;  
And—naught may move me—I am lost,  
Exenterate, exhaust!

So therefore, Pan! a corpse I come before thee  
To call down Life from thine abode beyond Death.  
Three times I circle thee: three times my breath  
Breathes on thy mouth; three times I do adore Thee,  
Till thine eyes glitter and thy loose lips curl  
Make me the innocent alluring girl  
Of fifteen years—that were! so to recoil  
The same sweet garland. . . . Hither comes the lad  
With shy looks—let me blind him, let me soil  
His swan-soft body and his soul swan-pure!  
Ah! but my life is glad.  
Pan smiles! My suit preferred.  
Now, let these eyes allure  
And this worn throat throb, thrill with songs to woo him,  
Fiercer than ever mortal heard. . . .  
Ha! to him!