

## **Bathyllus. To Sliman bin Chirch**

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ENOUGH of the frail aspergillus!  
Enough of the censer of bronze!  
Thy beauty, thy boy, thy Bathyllus,  
Whose body is soft as a swan's,  
Splendid and sinewy slim,  
Cleanly and supple of limb,  
Waits for the hush of the hymn.

O gather me up in the vigour  
Of virile embraces, and bear  
My youth to the rush and the rigour  
Of marvellous mountainous air!  
Pass through the cool colonnades!  
Up through the gloom of the glades!  
Up! we are done with the shades.

My head is an ocean in anger  
With sleek and fantastical curls;  
My lips like a sunset for languor,  
My skin like a moonrise of pearls.  
Ah! but like stars in the deep  
Deep of the night, and asleep,  
Are the eyes that await thee, and weep.

Comest thou not, O my master,  
My God, my desirable one?  
Each breath is a death, a disaster,  
Till thou art arisen, O sun!  
Why should I wait in the wild,  
Who am thine, as a dove undefiled

In the arms of an ivory child ?

My body is oiled and anointed  
    With dews of Thessalian bud ;  
My nails are all polished and pointed  
    And gilded, wherethrough is the blood  
Like to a roseate stream  
In the hills of the west set a gleam  
That flows in its channel of cream.

Let us drink, O my Lord, let us fill us  
    With purple Falernian wine !  
Thy lips on the lips of Bathyllus  
    As we lock us and link and entwine,  
Eyes ever burning like coals  
For the passion that crowns and controls  
The mystical love of our souls.

Then, O if my pain were to kill me !—  
    In the garden of music and musk  
Touch thou—and the thoughts of it thrill me—  
    The poppy that flowers in the dusk !  
Poppy whose blossom is furred  
Deep in the breasts of the world—  
Ah! but the heart is impeared !

Not babes to the war of the ages  
    Thy dews of devotion beget ;  
But thoughts that illumine the sages  
    Are flowers of our fashioning yet.  
Music and song are thereof  
Gotten, my god, and above  
Love, the fulfilling of love.

Ah master! thy fire the enrichment  
    Of all the vain store of the shrine !

All mine to entice by bewitchment  
    The joy that is utterly thine!  
Ah! but thou sailest, a swan  
Stately and splendid upon  
The lake that was waste and wan!

Oh now! let thy rage interrupt  
    My mischievous petulant smile  
Whose secret is hot and corrupt,  
    Leers loose at the lips and is vile!  
Tear off the virginal wreath!  
Tear it with tigerish teeth!  
Then, oh the sword to its sheath!

Thine anger is redder and rougher;  
    Thou huntest with thyrsus and thong.  
Ah God! it is I that must suffer,  
    For thee 'tis enough to be strong.  
Strike! ere libation be spilt.  
Home! through the grace of the gilt.  
Stab! to the hilt! to the hilt!

Now, now, O my lover, be tender!  
    Break not the suspense of the swoon!  
O my lily in pagan splendour  
    That throbs in the heart of the moon!  
Ever the soul of me saith"  
Let me sink back into death! . . .

Hush me the heart of our breath!