

THE ENGLISH REVIEW

And the dome of heaven high-arched
Like his mouth is arid and parched,
And the caves of his heart high-spanned
Are choked with alkali sand!

Not this! but a thirst uncharted;
Body and soul alike
Traitors turned black-hearted,
Seeking a space to strike
In a victim already attuned
To one vast chord of wound;
Every separate bone
Cold, an incarnate groan
Distilled from the icy sperm
Of Hell's implacable worm;
Every drop of the river
Of blood aflame and a-quiver
With poison secret and sour—
With a sudden twitch at the last
Like certain jagged daggers.
(With blood-shot eyes dull-glassed
The screaming Malay staggers
Through his village aghast).
So blood wrenches its pain
Sardonic through heart and brain.
Every separate nerve
Awake and alert, on a curve
Whose asymptote's name is "never"
In a hyperbolic "for ever"!
A bitten and burning snake
Striking its venom within it,
As if it might serve to slake
The pain for the tithe of a minute.
Awake, for ever awake!
Awake as one never is
While sleep is a possible end,
Awake in the void, the abyss
Whose thirst is an echo of this
That martyrs, world without end,
(World without end, amen!)
The man that falters and yields
For the proverb's "month and an hour"