

THE SUNFLOWER

To George Raffalovich

SO, for the vision of the strong amaze,
A Sunflower waved down above my days,
I had no thought for the cool, dim silence then,
Nor did any ink of mine flow through the pen
Wherein my darling vision I record.

I was entranced in maleness to my Lord.
He breathed upon the mirror, and desire
Smirched it; He seized upon the seven-stringed lyre,
And passed His hand thereover; the sistrion shook
The air about Him, and the holy book
He wrote in with His pen; the palimpsest
Glowed with new life, and, with new life possessed,
The changeling devils of the spheres arose
To chase the image of the world that blows
Over the face of the skies to hide the stars.
He said: I will darkly hide behind the bars,
And be a prisoner for the sake of man:
I will blow upon his spirit, even as a fan

That stirs the motes a-dancing in the sun;
I will breathe upon him, and "His will be done"
Thy God shall say, and I shall be adored,
And he shall bow in worship to his Lord.

And I will take two rods to juggle withal,
And the green-circled earth shall be my ball;
The barren mother. . . . Hush! Lend me thine ear;
Bend low; I may not speak aloud for fear
Any but thou should hear me, and blaspheme.
For know, the things that be not as they seem
Unto thine eyes are blasphemy to me,
And, should I perish, what would come to thee? . . .

I will give thee now the long-forgotten signs;
Speak them not loud, till I with heavenly wines
Am drunken, and in vision speak to thee.
That time is now; the new, soft word set free. . . .

- i. First, there shall be a Maiden, malely girt
With the Sword of Fire beneath a Hairy Shirt;
- ii. Next there shall be for sign a Pregnant Hog,
Wooed by the offspring of a Ram and Dog.
- iii. Then shall a Yellow Rose with Cankered Heart
Stand in the dream, until its Light depart.
- iv. And, fourth, the Halo of the Silver Moon,
Green-spotted, with the letter *hé* for rune.

- v. Fifthly, the Star set in a Shining Shield
That ruddy, drunken Mars bore on the field
When he had lain in Venus' breasts, and then
- vi. There shall be a Womb that hath borne Seven Men,
And slain them with its Stench, and last shall rise
- vii. A Wanton White, with Green Unseeing Eyes,
And she shall be the Thing that shall unveil
The Mystery of the Dark; heed thou my tale,
For I have chosen thee, who knowest not
The sacred signs, nay, nor the sacred spot.
But when thou knowest, slay a ram for me
Beneath the lowest branch upon the Tree
Of sacred Life, nor heed the Seer who comes
To slay thee with his foul and bleeding gums,
For he is nought to thee; nor heed the grace
Of the Maiden with the Moon within her face:
If she seduce thee, thou shalt be reborn
Where thou shalt not distinguish Night from Morn,
Where all the waters that shall quench thy thirst
Shall be the streamlets that of old did burst
Out of the rock at Moses' dread command.

Fear not! Thou hast a staff within thy hand
That shall vanquish light, and make the darkness loom
More darkly-luminous within the gloom.

Fear not, thou scribe of dread Osiris' tomb.

I was Osiris; I was sacrificed
Upon the altar of the speechless Christ;
And I was Isis, and her sister dumb.
When thou wouldst call me, seven times strike the drum;
One stroke on the sistron shall suffice. I dwell
Upon the borders of the seventh hell
And the second world whereon we planted man
In the primal light. From me the secret ran
Through the æthyr, till a greater god arose,
And stole the earth by standing on his toes
And blowing through the air; the sky grew blue,
And the stars silver, and his dawn was new
Upon the altar of the sun: this lord
Is dead to earth, and I shall be adored.

Take thou the prophecy, and set it down,
Ere thou summon me from the spheres of Blue and
Brown;
Take a red rose-leaf and a sword of fire,
And say: "I am the guardian of desire,
And summon thee to appear." Upon the lyre
Strike seven, and thirty-two upon the drum,
And, thou whom I have chosen, I will come.

Let not the fear of me abase thy pride;
I seek thee for a bridegroom; I, the bride,
Shall come to thee, unsought; be kind to her
Who comes to thee bearing a Sunflower.

And the two Rods shall strike, and there shall be
A mighty fire in heaven to set me free
From prison; sleep thou seven days again,
Until I bear the light into thy brain:
And thou art weary,—but await my word.
I go as Thunder, that came but as a Bird.

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