

AT BORDJ-AN-NUS

EL ARABI! El Arabi! Burn in thy brilliance, mine own!
O Beautiful! O Barbarous! Seductive as a serpent is
That poises head and hood, and makes his body tremble to the drone
Of tom-tom and of cymbal wooed by love's assassin sorceries!

El Arabi! El Arabi!

The moon is down; we are alone;
May not our mouths meet, madden, mix, melt in the starlight of a kiss?

El Arabi!

There by the palms, the desert's edge, I drew thee to my heart and held
Thy shy slim beauty for a splendid second; and fell moaning back,
Smitten by Love's forked flashing rod—as if the uprooted mandrake yelled!
As if I had seen God, and died! I thirst! I writhe upon the rack!

El Arabi! El Arabi!

It is not love! I am compelled
By some fierce fate, a vulture poised, heaven's single ominous speck of black.

El Arabi!

There in the lonely bordj across the dreadful lines of sleeping men,
Swart sons of the Sahara, thou didst writhe slim, sinuous and swift,
Warning me with a viper's hiss—and was not death upon us then,
No bastard of thy maiden kiss? God's grace, the all-surpassing gift!

El Arabi! El Arabi!

Yea, death is man's Elixir when
Life's pale wine foams and splashes over his imagination's rim!

El Arabi!

El Arabi! El Arabi! witch-amber and obsidian
Thine eyes are, to ensorcell me, and leonine thy male caress.
Will not God grant us Paradise to end the music Earth began?
We play with loaded dice! He cannot choose but raise right hand to bless.

El Arabi! El Arabi!

Great is the love of God and man
While I am trembling in thine arms, wild wanderer of the wilderness!

El Arabi!

HILDA NORFOLK.