

BELLADONNA

To Dot L—

My heart's blood hot upon your lips is reason
For the ensanguine banners of their bliss ;
My white soul that your malice took by treason
Is the cold ardour in your cheek, and this
My bower that was jasmine in its season
Is all your yellow snakes of hair, that hiss
And fasten all their fangs upon me—these
I knew, forget ; they leave your saint at ease.

I have forgotten all these things, erotic
While it was dark, while flesh corroded flesh
With cancerous kisses acrid and exotic
Like orchids, while the star-queen flung her mesh
Over us as we swam, one soul dicrotic
That blindly leapt through billow salt and fresh :—
Oh darkness ! how the perfume of it clings !
How then have I forgotten all these things ?

The light came on us kissing. Then I vaunted
My lust again, and drank that fearful cup
But—what new witchcraft held my soul enchanted ?
What necromancy sucked my spirit up ?
I saw the demon-archimage that haunted
Your eyes, that had me to his house to sup
My blood, and crunch my bones—mine agonies
To build into the rapture of your eyes !

So then I have forgotten all the other.
Only those eyes pursue me through the æon,
Whether by God's grace we love one another,
Whether I weave an ode or blare a pæan.
There is no help, my vampire and my mother !

But I am snared within those eyes Circean
That blaze at me from wall, or wood, or well
Their final knowledge of their final Hell.

For there is no soul, none, beyond ours, suave sister,
In the fierce light—the boon, the bane, the bliss,
The bale!—our eyes are born to burn and blister
And blast Love's queen herself in their abyss.
See! the scarred cheek where our lips lightly kissed her;
We whose eyes kiss, the sacramental kiss!
The kiss whose lightest petal is a curse
Fit to dissolve the ultimate universe.

Then, let us make a child! Shall he not be
A flame of fire, a ringless ocean, a wind
All-penetrating, a ten-branching tree,
A height of spirit, an abyss of mind?
Shall we not veil our eyes, lest he should see
The extreme secret in their soul confined
And die? Then let us also cease from seeing
And wake the lusty whirlwind of our being!

Come! let the night fall; let us drown what knows
In what exults; blot out the wizard figure
Of thought, and build the many-coloured rose
Your body on the cross, my body's rigour.
Chaos and Cosmos as God ebbs and flows
Less than your thrust—wring out the extreme vigour!
Annihilation take us, till we rise
Once more to the damnation in your eyes!