

before me. His little fascinating eyes fix me, and his body, still more shining in the moonlight, sways, as subtle and as strong as myself.

I dance again. I dance continually because his eyes have told me, "It is not harm that I would do you."

Slowly he sinks to the ground. He curls in upon himself, but his gaze never leaves mine — and I dance; I dance continually — .

From the abyss of the deep awaken squids. They cling to each other with their tentacles. Joyfully and lightly they run towards me, with little leaps upon the small white waves. O beautiful dancers!

Here they are; they surround me; they dance with me —
Strange lights afloat that blind me!

With my eyes closed I wheel upon myself; and, as I bend, my hair kisses the grass, and seems to wish to melt in it. Lively I leap up to break the spell; to feel running over my whole body the electric shudder that they unleash.

Strange floating perfumes intoxicate me. Strange floating sounds tear me away, and deafen me. I dance; I dance, but I no longer know it, and my hair is now so heavy that it drags me down. Now I relax beyond reaction, for in the earth my hair is rooted like the grass. O dread!

Now I am rivetted to the earth. My heart bounds in my breast, that sobs so strongly that I think it will kill me; and of all that surrounds me I know no more.

Slowly the serpent crawls over my body. Softly he presses me with his rings, as a timid lover might have done. Then still more softly his teeth nibble at my breast. And now he has gone away as if afraid of his own boldness.

And now, mastering me, they only, the squids, dance a mad saraband around my body, whose impotent leaps revolt the vain.

Strange sneering laughter floats around me. O to be able to tear myself from the damp soil! O to be able to cut off this hair that has betrayed me!

What would be the good? I am weary, weary. And now the squids, bended over me, fix me with their vast phosphorescent eyes, with eyes such as I never knew, and a long shudder of terror ripples my skin.

Now they resume their maniac gallop. . . . But whence prowl these sinister sneers of laughter?

O if I could only fly!

One of them leaves the dance, reaches towards me his horrible arms. I shut my eyes in the hope of losing consciousness, and I suffer the rape of his thousand mouths, which one after the other kiss me, and leave me, like fingers playing on a piano.

Now another advances; now another, and yet a third. Now every one of them plays upon my body, living keyboard, the most maddening sonata of sensuality.

I gasp and writhe, I shriek, I faint away; so sweet, so dangerous is the drunkenness which devours me!

Pity! my breath fails. Pity, one moment!

But what is this sneering laughter, and what frightful burning gnaws my whole being?

Little by little I feel my limbs weaken. My blood runs forth like a mountain torrent. It is they; it is they who so greedily drink it: so greedily, that I shall not have time to taste the flavor of this death!

They have taken all my bodily life; but they have spared my brain in lust of torture; to leave me conscious of the universe, to

leave me the right to agonize!

If they only knew!

But they know not. Now that they are fed full, now that they have done their murder, they move gorged away, crawling heavily, hideous to behold. And in the bosom of the deep they go to slumber.

Rivetted to this wounded, lifeless body, I still think. I think intensely, for no longer does anything of matter touch me with its foil. I hover in the highest spheres, where never human may attain; there I am at my ease. Now nothing is any longer too beautiful, or too great, or too pure. I am a freed spirit, a brain redeemed. I am Thought itself, robed and throned among its hand-maidens of understanding.

And suddenly a great pity encompasses me, a pity for that poor body, worn and inert, which is no longer I; which I look upon as a tedious disease conquered at last.

And that is how, thinking to leave me only the right of martyrdom, they leave the right to beatitude; the right to Godhead! . . .

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A warm and familiar perfume of dry leaves that shrivel, and of smoking chocolate, comes to tribadize my nostrils. The soft chanting of a beloved voice dissolves the dream. It flies. I find myself once more still stretched on the accustomed web of rushes amid the little Indian gods with their riddling smiles.

It is Nam, the faithful Nam, the epicene boy; himself the image of an idol that softly psalms the antique airs of his forsaken fatherland.

His sure instinct warns him of the end of the dream, and like a jeweller with a pearl beyond price, with his long limpid fingers he kneads the cone of miracle that makes man equal to the gods.

THE PRIESTESS OF THE GRAAL

The scarlet velvet clasped with star sapphires
Hangs like the sunset from the virgin throat
Upon the golden armor. Melilote
Upon the waters mad with phallic fires
Of day, the strong exultant face aspires
The spiritual breath. The firm hands dote
Upon the cloven chalice — see! there smote
Therein The Substance, sum of God's desires.

Chalcedony and coral and chrysoprase!
Quintessence of the life of moon and sun
Ablaze, abloom, ablush, Hilarion,
Within the compass of thy crimson Vase!
Lo! on my knees I crave the Sacrament. . . .
Lo! in my being buds the World's Event!