

The Two Secrets.

Originally published in the 2 December 1908 issue of Vanity Fair (UK edition).

She used to lie, superbly bare,
Wrapped in her harvest flame of hair,
And shooting from her steely-grey eyes
Inexorable destinies:
Mute oracles—mysterious—
A soul in a sarcophagus!
For I, though all my life abstain,
Through all the pulsing of my brain,
Through all the wisdom I have won
From this one and the other one
Saw nothing. Nothing. Had I known
And loved some Sphinx of steel and stone
While countless chiliads rolled, may be
I had not guessed her mystery

So there she lay, regarding me.
And I?—I gave the riddle up.
I drank the wine, admired the cup
As I suppose a wise man does
Unless he be the man of Uz
To scrape with shards a sore that grows
The more he irks it. I suppose
All men are fools who seek the truth
At such a price as joy and youth.
So there she used to lie. May be
Correggio's Antiope
Best paints you how she lay. And I
Loved her, and passed the matter by
Ending at last, one may dare say
In thinking that those eyes of grey
Meant naught, suspected naught, were blind,
Expressed the vacancy behind.

So life went on. One winter day
So silent and so still she lay
That I took cold regarding her.
I rose, I wrapped myself in fur;
Then came to her, my thoughts untold

Being that she, too, might be cold.

I laid my hand upon her breast.

Cold! Icy cold! Ah, you have guessed

Right. She was dead, quite dead.

And so,

You see, friend, I shall never know

She kept her secret.

—Leave me alone!

Or—I shall hardly keep my own!

ALEISTER CROWLEY