

A NOCTURNE

In the little cleft of the rocks whence life first sprang
To birth, by the secret shadowy molten sea,
Where Aphrodite sprang to greet the sun,
Low voices murmur: shadowy under-world
In the void of time; light song of Erebus
On the lips of a courtesan of Rome—ah! list!
A wandering singer caught the light o' the stars
On his lips, and the sun-dawn of the world in his heart.

For I that dwelt within the city of Time
Was lost in a cloudy dawn; the silken veil
Of dew that clothed the green grass of the fields
Was the veil of Olympus; now the shadowy night
That sang to me, that sand, that sang to me,
Sprang from the underworld of Eld: the moon
That circled in the heavens sang to me,
And I that heard the olden monstrous lays
Of Eld, the dreaming wonders of the dawn,
Died, and still lie imprisoned in the rocks
By the salt sea, knowing of the doom of man,
But being dumb, as is the doom of man,
For nightfall is delight of Eld, and I
Wander bareheaded under the dark sky;
Calling and calling from the windy deeps,
The olden night still draws me; moonlight weeps
For sunlight faded in the dark; the sea
Is under the dark clouds; still one by one
Soft, silver stars creep silently upon me,
Leaving soft trails of light; O wonder dawn
Of the inverted thunder of the skies!
Back to the gardens of old Babylon,

The hanging lamps, the slow, enchanted moon,
The gold-eyed stars, the pillars of the sea,
And the call of her forgotten!—Oh, I lie
Under the stars, upon the dewy sward;
And all around me is the silent city,
The soft white city, softened by the dawn;
And I hear the sistrion, and I hear the songs
Sung to the hanging moon, and thou, Istar,
Radiantly comest on the brains of men
To the slow illumination of desire;
The old enchanted palace of the Will
Is thine, and god-like dreams of Eld are thine,
Of the underworld of the stars, beneath the sea,
Beyond the cloudy palaces of the hills.
Ah! Never hath the dawn been nearer thee!

 Fallen to idle sleep, and borne within
The Temple of Mind, the soul of Night is bared
Under the starry canopy of the worlds,
And the lamp is set upon her bier; let be,
Let her still slumber! Oh, my radiant one,
Thou that art born of the dew and of the stars,
Come thou to me, while that the soft night sleeps,
O thou far inmost and supernal Dawn,
O thou that bearest the torch for the feast o' the gods!
In the core of Night I found thee, and a rose
Was thy heart, and thorns were thy crown, and tiny rosebuds.
Girt thy green mantle, and thy yellow hair
Glittered with the dust of the stars! By the river-side
Thou camest unto me; ho, the secret night
When I stared into the water under the moon,
Singing and tumbling on its way to the sea!
The soft stream flowed under the milky stars,
And there were poplars by the water-side,
Gazing upon themselves; but I was blind,
Blinder than wood, more silent than the moon;
And so thou camest to me! Oh, my darling,
My little rose-lipped darling, fountain-cool

Thy hands, and thine eyes bright with celestial fire
Drawn from the world's heart! Oh, my little one,
Come to me here in the great slow silences,
In the radiant dimness of the after-glow
Of the passionate ache of the world; I am Pan no more,
But the Virgin of the starlight of the world.
Her in the silence, in the great, green woods,
Lie thou with me! Slumber with me to-night
Under the stars, and the yellow drifting moon.
We will love no more as Syrinx and Pan; Diana!
Come unto me, and I will grant the thing
Thou cravest! Oh! the foaming milk of the stars!
I bear the red-tipped lilies under the moon!

Rosa Ignota! Ah! the pale moon flowers;
The soft shy glances, and the virgin unwon!
Oh! the sweet burden of the sunless hours:
Love! I am conquered! Nay, love! I have won!
Oh, feeble moon-light! Oh sweet stars undone
By the pale longing of Eld! O Virgin word,
Under the silent moon I bear the Sword!
Oh, the soft burden of the sunken sun
I bear a chalice of lilies under the moon!
I bear the red-tipped lilies under the moon!

Light is no more; oh! let us swoon and die!
And the secret way is starlit, star-bestrewn,
Star-guarded, star-set under the starry moon!
Is there no way but this beneath the sky?
Oh, moon of Eld, ah! shall we die or swoon?
O Rose eclipsed, O Rose, my rose of roses,
The night is pale to death; the lyre reposes
Under the star-shot glamour of the moon
And all her palest roses.

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