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Shades of Darkness

A Thesis

Presented to
the Chancellor's Scholars Council
of Pembroke State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for Completion of
the Chancellor's Scholars Program

by
William Jennings
March 17, 1993

Advisor's Approval Orville Stephens
Date March 22, 1993

SHADES
OF
DARKNESS

by
WILLIAM JENNINGS

This collection is dedicated to my parents and to Chanda Tyndall, who believed in me and supported me throughout its composition. I will never forget. It is also for all of those who have encouraged me along the way. Lastly, I would like to extend a special thank you to Shelby Stephenson, Thomas Leach, Robert and Monika Brown, and the Chancellor's Scholars Program of Pembroke State University.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All scriptural quotations in this collection and in Echoes are taken from the Holy Bible: King James Version.

"Alif lam mim ra" is taken from N. J. Dawood's English translation of The Koran, fifth revised (1980) edition, published by Penguin Books.

"Let all the sacred rivers flow back unto their source." is a variant of the English translations of Euripides' Medea by Rex Warner and Philip Vellacott.

All illustrations realized by Chanda Tyndall.

"Shemhamforash" is taken from The Satanic Bible by Anton Szandor LaVey.

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INTRODUCTION

The following is a shortened version of my collection of poems and short stories entitled Shades of Darkness. The selections contained in the following pages were chosen to demonstrate variety and overall ability; they are not all necessarily my "best" or favorite pieces. The closing section, entitled from Echoes, contains the first three and the next to last chapters of a work in progress that is of novel length. This section is a bonus included only in the CSP version of this collection and should not be viewed as a part of the original Shades of Darkness collection.

Caveat Lector: Some of the pieces in the following pages contain scenes of explicit sex and graphic violence.

Turn the page and welcome to my world.

Across the Plains

Thunder bring the rain

with wind and lightning

To soar through the sky on wings of fire

Whose dark perturbations leave only silence in their wake

Where flickering candles burn forever in the crimson rain.

Out of the drifting seas

blistered by nuclear fire

Madness came

in holy robes

before which all knealt

With enmity armed and a soul of black

evil opened the gates

Swiftly the scythe was swung across the plains

Without mercy

silence fell.

Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth

-Rotting with sin.

Purged by unholy flames

a dark heart's desire

Forevermore.

Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth

-Dripping wet with decay.

Where winds of blinding heat roar across the plains

Now calm beyond the tides of war.

Hidden from the darkening sun the shadows of life scream

from their tombs of concrete and molten steel.

Across the plains is a veil of tears

Thunder bring the rain

With no voices left to descry the coming years.

After the Fall from Grace

In the dead of night,
Do your eyes?
still shine.

With the coming of dawn,
Do your eyes?
still shine.

Hatred and
Lust
They twist your crippled mind.

Jealousy and
Avarice
They bend your supple spine.

I
Can
See
Your
Desire
burning

Brightly
In
Your
Eyes
Tonight.

What is left for us,
After the Fall from Grace?

Take me
Taste me
Rape me
in the night

Violate me
Dominate me
Desecrate me
in the flickering light

What is it lying there,
Writhing on the bloody floor,
Bleating and bleeding,
Screaming and reaching,

(calling)
(waiting)
(thirsting)

Out for Us!

Pray for me
I'll pray for you
We
Can
Pray
For
Them
All

Blood and Blasphemy,
Twisting in ecstasy.

What is left for us,
After the Fall from Grace?

In the twisted shrine,
Do your eyes?
still shine.

Within your tortured mind,
Do your eyes?
still shine.

Devour your
Sacrilege
So sweet upon your
Breath
And fall to your bloody knees
Before the
Temple door.

Take my hand,
C
H
I
L
D

Watch it all
Decay

A
S
H
E
S
T
S
U
D

What is left for us,
After the Fall from Grace?
to
and
to

(and slowly
rot away)

A
S
H
E
S
T
S
U
D

Angel

When the midnight sun kills the light
And the stars no longer shine
To guide my way through the darkened forests of night
I sing your name to the sighing winds
And pray that you will see my heart
Burning for you in the blackness of night.
Come to me my lady of the eternal skies
Spread your wings and sing me away
Far away, across the dark and cold waters of my dreams.
I know that she is waiting there for me
On my misty Avalon she sits weaving magic for my soul.
And in my darkest hour
You are my Angel
Through the night you are my holy light
Come sail away with me,
My Angel.
The winds lonely caress brings me your lover's touch
From far across the desert plains
So barren, so cold, so cold.
In the mirror of a forest pond
I see her face looking back at me
Her beauty and her innocence are the talismans that help
me find my way through the bitter snow.
On and on into the stormy seas I will dive
Until I find my river of belief
Flowing backwards unto its source
And forwards into my heart.
I will find her waiting there for me
On my misty Avalon, singing gently to the sea.
Take me so far away, though I lie dying in your frail arms,
My Angel.

Another Beat of Your Heart

Tonight I burn the candles for your soul
With tears of anguish streaming down my face
And the sorrow, how bitter it tastes
The winds have risen and made the night so cold.
Why does anyone have to die
But most of all the young, so full of life and joy
I tell myself that you are not gone
And look for you in the shadows
I can never understand such a senseless waste.
Though I can never bring you back
I will carry your memory throughout all my days
No one ever dies in the hearts of those who love them
And I will love you forever.
Can I transcend the pain and accept my loss
Despair can do little to soothe my sorrows
And to erase the visions, the sad image, from my mind
But time lessens the hurt and heals the wounds
So that once again I can remember you running in the sun.
What would I give to feel another beat of your heart
To hold you in my arms one more time
And at least have the chance to tell you goodbye.

by the moment. And still we are blind.

III.

At time's edge there is an absence of light. In the dark there is music. Tribal screams carried through the sweltering, black heat of the jungle. From far away, the thunder of polyrhythmical drumming drifts to soothe the desperate cries of the denizens of the wild. Chanting voices and ancient, fire-lit rituals comfort the creatures, even as they watch their world vanishing before their eyes day by day. And still we are blind.

IV.

At time's edge there is only the thought of what is to come. Rising out of the eternal past and echoing into the eternal future. Now is forever. Upon the precipice of infinity we stand, seeking the doorway to the other side. The stairway to paradise and the gates of heaven. There is thunder in our hearts and fire in our veins. And still we are blind.

V.

At time's edge all the races of man gather together before the temple of despair. Hatred and ignorance driving them on towards sable, bloodstained walls that wail eternally in the endless night. All religions! All religions! How much evil has been committed in the name of a god? To die. To sleep. The piper is calling from the darkness: he is summoning us all to come and drown in the ocean of decay. And still we are blind.

VI.

At time's edge a man and a woman are making love in the flickering light of a dying world, with the black waves of a lifeless sea gently caressing their diseased flesh. In the fallout and the acid rain they are melting, even as they convulse in the throes of orgasmic fury. Procreation of the hopeless. No life. No birth. The air is silent and hot as the wind shrieks across the barren sands, wiping away the last vestiges of humanity. And still we are blind.

VII.

At time's edge a star collapses and disrupts the flow of eternity. There is a light at the end. Beyond the cascading fountains of interstellar fire a brilliant blue light is incandescing in the darkness. A hand that reaches out for us all. Only say the word and you shall be healed. There are tears in the frozen gulfs between the stars. And still we are blind.

VIII.

At time's edge are all of the things that haunt us in our dreams and sing to us in visions. These are the forgotten. Can you remember? The answers are within each of us. The children of. And still we are blind.

IX.

At time's edge you will find all that you have left behind. Death is only the beginning. Metamorphosis. To transcend the boundaries. It never ends. Alpha and

Omega. And all that is between. I am waiting for you.
Myriad images lost in the fractured mirror of eternity.
Infinity echoes. And still we are blind.

X.

At time's edge where all darkness gathers. Where all
light gathers. Where life ends. Where death ends. Beyond
Heaven. Beyond Hell. Cacophony and euphony. The symphony
of the stars. Where all the sacred rivers flow unto.
The seething whirlpool of eternity. The glare of infinity.
A world without end. A sphere. A wheel of fire. Up in
the sky. And the hand of God. The dark waters of a single,
united soul. We are becoming. Open your eyes. All that
is, was, and will be. Shall be forevermore. No exit.
Destiny awaits. And still we are blind.

Black Thunder

Can you hear them?
The children of the night.
What beautiful screams...

Laughter in the blackened chapel
Mocking the stigmatized
Impoverished and degraded
The reality of the world.

consecrated in filth
and
bathed in black blood
the
deceiver is haunting
the
streets to decimate
the
gathered masses

Faithful preacher
Give us your words
What is your vision
How does subjugation look in your world?

Propagation of profanity
Tears and wails (falling upon)
Deafened ears
and
Sightless eyes
Speak, o' pious one,
From the temple of lies.

Bastard children born with riddled veins
Dirty needles make such wonderful playthings.

Promiscuity
and
Ignorance

Disease
and
Death

Morality
and
Abstinence

Goddamn you
and
Your hypocrisy

	how	
	many	
M	must	W
E	die	H
D	for	O
I	your	R
A	righteous	E
	[political]	
	war	

Prayerful doctrine
and
Egocentric masturbation

Fuck you
and
Your indignation

Founding fathers raped in their graves
Censorious violations and evangelical domination.

The games you play are blood upon your hands
Performing ecological sodomy
and
Environmental evisceration

On distant shores the damned are amassing
They will be there,
 on the other side,
 waiting for you.

To deliver you unto
BLACK THUNDER

Blessings In Darkness

With silence in our hearts
We call upon our God.

With darkness in our eyes
We praise our Lord.

With rage burning in our souls
We sacrifice to our God.

This is the fury to which we pray
Sanctity and blasphemy, bound by chains,
We no longer cry,
the tears of God are forgotten in our
Eyes.

Seek									Find
Thirst									Hunger
Soul								Flesh	
Pleasure							Pain		
Birth						Death			
Holy					Unholy				
Light				Shadow					
			We						
			Receive						
			Blessings						
			In						
			Darkness						

Time has brought us to this Circle
Beyond a Heaven
Beyond a Hell
To angled realms besieged by blue light and bounded by golden spheres
Father Brother
Mother Sister

We	
Are	
Pain	
And	[Icons]
Stand	
Alone	[the]
In Silence	
Upon	[Shatter]
Deafening	
Shores	[Illusions]

With blood on our hands
We bless the name of our God.

Blue

"Wait, there's someone I want to get."
The doors close; a sound like thunder and
A disembodied voice calls down to me,
"Aren't you ready to go home yet?"

I sleep deeply in my waking dream
With time askew and the world that I knew displaced
I tremble with fear but somehow I am at peace
Order is confused and my emotions drawn taut
There are dark eyes upon me and
Soft wings caressing my flesh
They are bringing changes to my mind.

And I am floating away into blue...

Faces adrift on a soundless sea
All my friends, past and present, whispering to me
All my loves, past and present, reaching out for me
I see them so clearly, but I am gazing out of their eyes
...and the future friends and loves?...
They stream by silently,
Smiling.

There are hands upon my body exploring me and again
I can hear the thunder of soft, cyclopean wings as I...

Swim down - or is it up? - into the deepest blue water
Can I defy the summons of the tide pulling me outward?
I would gladly drown but I can breathe in alien flesh
Trembling with fear, I am at peace.
All forms of life...I am unbound.

I am all this and more until finally I am...
Human?...
The denizens of the deep encircle me, speaking directly
To my weary soul
I cannot recall their words but I remember their meaning
Deep within the rivers of my mind.

I am on fire as I lie sleeping in ice
"There is someone I want to get."
Turning from the gateway with tears in my eyes
The hall of mirrors...infinity awaits...
There are clouds above and below me and mountains of gold
Towering into celadon skies; there are rings of fire in
The deep verde valleys so far below, calling to me; there
Are wings in the pink clouds and dark eyes watching all
Disturbing and yet comforting.

And I am floating away into blue...

The field is dark and silent
Black earth and starry skies
I stand in awe as the fireball screams across the night
Bathing me in its red and blue wake of light
I smile as I look around to see all the others
Gazing skyward with tears in their eyes
I have tears in my own eyes as someone takes my hand.

There is a white feather in my palm as I find the two women
There are soft hands upon my flesh and in the distance
I hear the thunder of soft wings...

They sit across from me, gazing into the pyramid
Speaking in unison, in harmony, of passion and experience
From the darkness above the room of blue light come whispers
There are dark eyes watching us as we speak of experience
Though we know only of our own innocence
I gaze with wonder into the crystal pyramid
Endless blue light and cloudy skies
No answers for questioning eyes
Only secrets and silence.
Still the wings are beating.
Why?

"Aren't you ready to go home yet?"
The wings, what do they hide?
...and why can I not see what lies beyond those eyes?
The door slams like thunder as I stand calm, yet frightened
In the mist and steel so grey
Bathed in blue.

I awake and still the doors thunder shut
I know that I am no longer alone
The presence,
It's still haunting me
And I am changed forever.

I can still hear the thunder of beating wings
And feel the gentle water that never dampens nor drowns
Flowing over me...
So blue.

Chasing Shadows

Life seems a strange illusion
You're lost in the haze
Counting off your final days
Your mind confused and torn by indecision.
Through empty corridors of darkness
You wander searching for final solitude
And escape from a life of sad ineptitude
With eyes too blind to see anything but blackness.
Chasing shadows through an endless night
With no one to hear your pleas
Chasing shadows so far beyond the light
With no one there to set you free.
All your dreams have been cast aside like useless gold
And the seeds of despair you have sown always return twofold
For your life holds no tomorrow
As you lie dying in a sea of hopeless sorrow.
Close your eyes as the waves rush over you
No more warmth or hope when your life is through
The end of the tunnel brings the lost souls light
But you can't find it chasing shadows in the night.

Crimson Rain

The pale, cold light burns my eyes
The midnight sun brings its shadow
Blinding me with the darkness
It scorches my soul and brings me pain
The screaming winds caress my flesh
Then upon my tearstained face
Down in falls comes the crimson rain.

Damns my soul and sends me to Hell
Where wings of madness thunder eternally
In fear take my hand and we shall walk
The unhallowed halls of sadness within us all
Without light I can find my way
In the darkness I can see and be free
To writhe naked in the crimson rain.

Extreme unction, thee I receive
Boundless horror and hideous misery
Chains of repentance that bound my shattered soul
In the forests of twilight I have cast them off
To embrace the winds of sorrow
Shrieking madly as into the valley I go
I will fear no evil, laughing in the crimson rain.

The Crucifixion

My fingers twist in your hair
 Pulling your lips to mine
 Burning up, I taste the sweat upon your breasts
 Your nipples hot and sweet against my tongue
 The feel of your soft flesh wrapped tight around me
 I watch your face, so lovely, twist in ecstasy as I
 Enter your dark and most secret recess.

You are fire and you consume me utterly
 Drawing me deep into your sacred depths
 Writhing and moaning, we burn together as one
 There is a fine line between pleasure and pain, my love
 We ride that line as if adrift on tumultuous seas,
 Tossed violently by waves of sensation and sweet sodomy.

Did Adam and Eve cry out when they tasted of the forbidden
 fruit?
 Or, did they rejoice in the wanton pleasures of the Serpent?

We are one in our holy communion of flesh
 And your body is all the temple I desire
 Your orifices, open and wet, are the holy altars before
 which I supplicate myself
 And the salty, sweet taste of our mingled fluids the unction
 of our single, united soul.

Desire, lust, and flesh: this is my Trinity and Eve you
 are my Magdalene
 Let me lie deep within your shrine alive with fire
 Your anus enshrouding my skin
 I will baptize you, bless and annoint you with the thick
 blood of my Trinity, as you clasp me tightly to your
 breasts like an incestuous Madonna and Child.

Your flesh grips me and burns as the flames of Hell
 Uttering my prayers, I watch enraptured as my spirit enters
 you and we are resurrected in the pure, scorching light
 of passion.

I love you:
 Words we whisper, kissing deeply as you lie beneath me,
 A feminine Christ, impaled upon a ravaged cross of twisted
 limbs and soaking sheets.

Darkness Descends

I close my eyes to the gentle light
And feel the dark embrace of eternal night
The cold and damp of my mother earth
Are my silent dreams a death or another blackened birth.
I awoke over the bloody seas of madness
Drifting towards the frozen sands of the desert of sadness
The yellow clouds burst, raining blood upon the stones
Drifting mournfully through the charnel catacombs.
Wings of blue flame adorn my blistered flesh
My eyes sewn shut with icy steel mesh
Keeper of the fire that never warms nor gives light
I am forever a servant of the unhallowed night.

Deceiver

"Oh God, why hast Thou opened mine eyes?"
 There are cries in the night that rise above the din of
 a mad world
 But isn't it strange how no one can hear them?
 Children borne into a life without light or hope fill the
 shadows of our cities
 But why is it no one can hear them?
 The neon lights and the pulsing music blind us and deafen
 us.
 What do we care of the child who lies screaming in a filthy
 alley dying from hunger?
 What do we care of the child who sells her body throughout
 the day and night?
 What do we care of the child who slides the dirty needle
 into his riddled veins?
 Words are spoken in the houses of the holy and still the
 children suffer.
 I cry out in rage as I feel the blood pouring from my heart.
 Your promises are all self-serving lies but I must wonder
 do they know;
 Can they see He who hides in the shadows laughing at the
 misery and sin?
 Another little girl writhes in pain this night as she bears
 her own child;
 Does it realize that with its first breath its suffering
 has only just begun?
 Can you damn the mother as she lies down with the wolves
 to feed her child?
 Can you damn the child for growing up to be so ruthless
 and cold?
 Could you damn yourself for doing nothing, or do you praise
 your own vanity?
 Despair walks the street in human guise, multiplying daily
 by the thousands.
 It is a prolific whore as it sleeps in your doorways and
 sewers.
 You ignore the hand held forth in supplication and justify
 it by calling them lazy and drunk.
 If your world was contained in a cardboard box and old
 newspapers would you not drink it away too?
 What could you do to help, and you plead, nothing.
 But we can all feel the blood upon our hands even if we
 cannot see it.
 You send money to the foreign children, bless yourself
 and call it good
 But you ignore and curse the needy in your own backyard.
 Look into the mirror and surely you will see all that you
 fear reflected in your own eyes.
 The Deceiver is wrapped about all of our souls and His
 claws are so deep we can never tear Him away.
 His madness and evil is a stain upon our souls and I fear
 that we can never wash it away.

Through the centuries of violence and bloodshed humanity
has hurtled towards civilization
But civilization is merely a secret synonym for savagery;
and still we are blind.
The Deceiver is subtle in His ways, making His designs
out to be our genius.
We have been given such glorious new ways to bring death
to ourselves and the world.
We are shown again and again the folly of our ways but
still we are blind.
Disease and hatred search out the multitudinous plains,
and where they go these Dogs of Sorrow leave only a
barren, desolate wasteland in their wake.
The color of your flesh is a curse you must bear, and the
nation of your birth may condemn you to others, but this
only feeds your hate.
Prejudice breeds prejudice and the righteous justice of
the oppressed is still only hatred that is a key to the
Gates of Hell.
Apathy and technology are a marriage consummated in Hell;
Their offspring are called progress and we are left to
mourn the world even as we destroy it.
There are holes in the sky, raining invisible fire that
is slowly killing us all.
The air is fading as the ancient giants fall to the ground
and machines, bright and gleaming, pour poison from their
black, oily hearts.
The Deceiver is Lord and Master of the blackened earth
and is spreading His wings over all of His domain.
He is the Lord of Light who will blaze eternally over the
whole of the world, and after entombing our shadows for
no one to see, His light shall grow unbearably cold and
pour down upon the Kingdom of the Dead forever.
In the night, can you hear Him calling you?
From deep within yourself, can you hear Him calling you?
When a man's soul is silent there will be no light shining
from his windows, only emptiness and indifference, by
which you shall know that the Deceiver is coiled tightly
within.
Open your soul and He will strike you down before your
final prayers can be uttered.
The night is growing ever darker as I watch the candles
burning out slowly one by one; and I can hear the beating
wings of the Dragon as He waits eagerly to finally devour
the unborn child.
I pray to you O Lord, take away mine eyes so that I might
not see into the darkness and thus never know the fate
that awaits us all.
The Deceiver hungers as we are all led unto the slaughter.

Desire [A Prayer]

I want to feel

- your hands caressing my naked body
- your fingers pinching my nipples
- your tongue between my lips
making me wet

I want you to

- kiss me so I can taste myself on your lips
- force me down upon my knees
- make me take you into my mouth
- talk dirty to me in the language of passion

I want to hear you whispering, begging,
"I want to fuck you."

I want to feel

- your cock inside of me, in my cunt
- the agony and the ecstasy of sodomy
- your semen splashing into my vagina
in my ass
all over my body and my face

I want you to fuck me.

I want you to make me cum.

I want to feel your face between my legs, licking up
our mingled fluids as they drip from inside of me.

I want to kiss you and caress you.

I want you to hold me close and keep me warm in the flush
of my nakedness and whisper in my ear,

"I love you."

Disciple

I can remember...
When I scream.

i will gather the darkness
before me in the dead of night
i will wash away my life
with blood in the dead of night
i will tear out my heart
without fear in the dead of night
i will stalk the streets
without sound in the dead of night

The torture...
How it binds me.

The agony...
How it soothes me.

come to me in the flickering light
take me down into the neon hell
drenched in blood beneath the tide
it is rising to cover us all
falling stars burning fast
sleeping below my rapturous decay

I cry out...
What strange dreams I have known.

no more love
no more lust
no more life
no more hunger
no more thirst
no more desire

time
is
an
illusion
tonight
without
light

this is my prayer
whisper it for me
when the wind howls
and the rain beats down
upon my grave
remember i am not gone

i
am
watching
you
forever

home is where the heart is
ripped out and thundering
upon blue tiles
bleeding in misty skies
and dripping on floating feathers
falling
downdowndown

there is no end to this rapture
i have so much to learn
to remember
and secrets to keep
let no promises hinder
my
sleep

home
is
where
the
heart
is

when i awake
[no longer]

I can remember...
When I scream.

Dream Dancer

Micheal lifted the razor blade with a trembling hand and slowly submerged it in the hot water of the bathtub. After a few moments he raised the steaming blade from the water and held its gleaming edge up before his eyes. Tears streamed steadily down his face as he lay silently enshrouded by the steam rising from the water. He wanted to laugh at himself but could not bring the sound out of his parched throat. Life was pathetic to him and it was so ironic that death seemed just as pathetic as he stood on its black shores, mesmerized by the glare on the blade that would guide him across the seas of eternity. His entire life seemed a waste and the world was a cold and cruel place where the misfit and the unsure did not belong.

He would simply draw the blade across his wrists and watch impassively as his life ebbed away in an ever darkening tide. At twenty-seven Micheal Rosenberg would die alone and silent in his own blood, leaving no epitaph of useless meaning behind to be forgotten by all of those who would never miss him anyway. His mother might have cared, might have remembered, if she had not died the previous year; and, his boss at the bank might care because he would be understaffed when the bank opened the next morning. The man's first thought would be that he would fire him when he finally did show up again.

Micheal had nothing to live for: he had no family, no wife, no lover, no future; he had only had his

awkwardness and shy nature to keep him company along with his virginity. He could not even bring himself to buy a woman for a night; he was too shy to even approach one. All of his dates had been disasters and eventually he had given up completely, retreating to a fantasy world of adult magazines and films. These had been enough for awhile but eventually these began to lose their charm as well as he sat in his lonely apartment masturbating night after night. If he had had someone to watch them with their magic probably never would have left; but, he couldn't get a date and he had no friends to share things with. He was too tall for his weight, had no physical abilities, never knew the right things to say, and had no special talents whatsoever. Why should anyone want to spend time around him? To make matters worse he had no money and was employed in a boring, dead end job. The only things he did have were his apartment, in what was still a relatively decent neighborhood (and that had belonged to his mother), and his little blue car.

He never felt the blade slip from his fingers as his tears gave way to sleep before he even realized that he was tired. He dreamt slowly and only images of confusion drifted across the flickering silver screen of his mind. A dream filled with dark green snakes writhing over his naked body as he convulsed helplessly in a pool of blood caused him to cry out in his sleep; but, he did not awaken. He dreamt of himself as an impossibly old and wrinkled

man with flesh of a sickly yellow color sitting upon a park bench watching a small group of little girls in frilly white dresses playing together. In his sleep, as in his dream, he began to drool as he caught quick glimpses of soft, pink panties beneath their swirling skirts. Then he saw himself dead and in a coffin. He was dressed in a black suit and his skin was an ashen grey in the twilight of his dream. He saw the stitches on his wrists as he hovered in the darkness, looking down at his own corpse. Somewhere in the gloom about his body someone began to cry and three blood red roses landed upon the hands crossed at his chest. When the flowers touched his flesh their beautiful red petals turned a deep, glossy black. A hand reached out from the darkness and caressed the side of his face and tears fell from the cadaver's closed eyes.

The hand was small with long slender fingers tipped with burgundy nails that gently wiped at his tears. The dark fell back and he saw the woman standing beside his coffin and even with her mascara and make-up streaked by tears she was beautiful. Her dress was black as night, accentuating her blonde hair and icy blue eyes. He had never seen her before and as she began to recede back into the dark he cried out to her, "Wait, I'm not dead yet!" but she was gone, leaving him alone with his own body again.

Abruptly, his corpse sat up in the casket and turned to stare at him with teary grey eyes. The woman came swirling out of the darkness surrounding him without warning

and the body turned to stare at her instead. She was beautiful beyond his capacity for words, radiant with a shimmering light that poured forth from her very soul. She now wore a sheer, lace gown that sparkled more brilliantly than the most flawless diamond ever born out of fire in the glare of the light streaming from her soul. In the endless dark she swayed and undulated to a lilting melody that only her ears were able to hear. She breathed his name slowly and his heart paused at her sighing voice and began to bleed with longing and hope. He reached out for her as the coffin and the body faded away into shadow, but her image began to waver and grow faint as he was struck by a tightening in his chest and throat that caused him to cry out in pain and despair.

He thrashed about madly as he broke the surface of the icy water. Gasping and screaming for air, he clawed his way out of the bathtub where he collapsed shuddering on the cold tile floor. Laying upon the floor, he let his mind drift again and cursed himself for his stupidity while at the same time thanking God that he had not drowned. When he finally pulled himself up from the floor and made his way into the bedroom the sun was just beginning to spread its rays across the morning sky. In his mind's eye he could still see her, the dream dancer, and again he began to cry.

Without sleep or rest he made his way to work and survived another day in boredom. When he left the bank

he made his way to the store to buy dinner. He had selected a couple of microwaveable Oriental dinners and was reading their contents as he turned to go to the checkstand and walked into the person behind him.

"Damn, I'm sorry," he moaned as he bent to retrieve the articles he had knocked from the person's arms.

"It's okay," the woman's voice returned as he rose to face her.

She stood before him, the woman from his dream, in all her brilliance, wearing a deep blue dress that contrasted with the icy blue of her eyes.

"I bump into people all the time, too," she replied as she took the items from his hands.

Her voice soothed his whirling thoughts as he heard himself insisting that she let him pay for the items. She told him that she didn't expect it as he walked with her through the store, but when they reached the checkout she didn't argue with him. Accompanying her outside they talked calmly and he was amazed at the ease with which he found the conversation flowing, and even more surprised when she asked him if he would like to go out with her for dinner instead of having to eat frozen dinners, since he had been nice enough to pay for what she had gotten. He took her number and address, and she his, as he accepted and agreed to pick her up later.

As he went back to his apartment he could not get the image of her as she had been in his dream, dancing in a

light of her own with darkness surrounding her, out of his mind. For the first time since he could remember, Micheal felt at peace with himself and happy to see the night coming. He would be lonely no more.

11:11

"Sweet dreams."

...spinning, spinning, spinning, spinning, spinning,
falling, falling, falling, twisting, flying, dropping,
swirl swirling away and tumbling over and over and over
and over again as you go screaming, shouting, yelling,
howling, crying, cursing, and wondering aloud, "Am I dying,
or am I already dead?"

...falling face first on hot, damp, throbbing black earth.

You slowly rise to your feet and survey your surroundings, standing beneath a sky of the deepest, saddest blue, feeling the moist earth beneath your bare feet undulating, pulsating, like some obscene beast. The air is so thick and hot - so noxious you can barely breathe. Shattered buildings and decaying refuse fill the desolate streets. Blackened spires of twisted metal reach hopelessly for the lifeless heavens. Sun and moon have long since vanished from the forlorn world and you have awakened to find yourself naked and alone in utter silence.

Hooves raining down upon parched pavement; the sound draws you into the shadows of the burned out towers, where you wait with bated breath to see what the eternal night brings your way. To see what shares the silent earth with you. A skeleton riding upon the skeleton of a horse, their yellowed bones disintegrating with every step, comes riding through the empty, ruptured streets. The human skeleton swings his rusty, lightless lantern in your direction, intoning in a voice drawn from the darkness of a long departed throat, "Eleven:eleven and all's well."

Watch them as they vanish into thunder, rain and mist.

...colors, lights and shadows, screams, wails of pain and moans of pleasure, orgasmic cries in the dark of perpetual night, forever twilight, as above and so below with nothing here, there, nor anywhere and nowhere left to go, but how can you know when you are adrift in the forests of decay and emptiness with an unholy marriage of flesh and fantasy that swirls madly about you in the reflection of yourself, desecrated from a mirror of black stone, drenched in blood, that stands as an eternal idol like you - alone - against the savage ravages of time and space, a never-ending flow in an ancient show seen by lightless eyes, resting upon the tenebrous wings of some daydreamer's blasphemous nightmare...

...writhing, bloody and naked, in the darkness with screams of pain and, most of all, pleasure echoing soundlessly in your hollow soul.

Ah, I sing of progress.

Watch the clock!

Watch teh clock!

Wathe tch clock!

Clwae hhc octkt!

Epithalamium

We are gathered here today...

let her walk the aisle
in her frilly white gown
crying silently behind her veil

To join together in holy matrimony...

let him take her hands
and hold them tight
his eyes are so full of desire

This man and this woman...

when they are all alone
and her beauty is drenched in lace
they will whisper softly to one another
before they scream and moan

Do you take this man...

on their conjugal bed
somewhere in Hotel, U.S.A.
they'll come together
all night and into the day

Do you take this woman...

let her dress in white
though she comes to this day
filled with ontological concupiscence
long ago she found the stains under her pillow
where she gave it up for the Cherry Fairy

I now pronounce you man and wife...

like fish out of water
birds with broken wings
bawdy old bards left alone
with no more tales to sing
but tails to sting

You may kiss the bride...

listen to her bark
listen to him howl
off with the dress
off with the shoes
this dear friends is the wedding ball blues

Here comes the bride...

Here comes the bride...

Eve

Eve,
O mother of all humanity
Ocean of life
Eternal geometer
Bringer of life
Bearer of pain
You are the shrine
The altar
Before which all mankind supplicate themselves
Kneeling in adoration
Feminine grace
Feral beauty
Fecundity
Passion
Love
Desire
I worship you
In all your myriad forms
In all the colors of your flesh
In all the shades of your hair
I drown within the flowing depths of your eyes
The river of all souls
Water like glass
A mirror reflecting eternity
Great Goddess
Madonna and Whore
Slave and Master
Mother and Child
Fallen from grace
And offering temptation
All that I desire is to please you
To open your gates of life
And peel back the soft skin of your forbidden fruit
To taste the nectar of the gods
Of life
Of creation
To savor you like communion wine
In my mouth
So sweet upon the tongue
And wet on my lips
Only say the word and I shall be healed
I am yours
For the taking
Do with me
What you will
Venus
Aphrodite
Lillith
Virgin
Magdalene
Madonna
Babylon

Demimondaine

Angel

Names shall never define you

All that you are

All that you shall become

Past

Present

Future

Eve,

See how she shimmers upon the horizon

Robed in waves of silken light

Undulating in all her naked majesty

Diana

O unchained

Sleeping Beauty awake

The Eyes of Pandemonium

I. Open Fire

Enter my child,
I speak in the shadows of your mind
Where fear lurks forever in wait,
A force that drives you on towards hate.
My nightmare transformed to your screen
Words of green light that speak to innocent eyes,
An innocence the sycophants will corrupt and profane;
Without fear, tear open the Gates of Hell and feel the
flames.

They promised dreams like sensual rain,
Pleasure so intense that I would go insane
I took the woman's hand for fear I would lose my way,
But in the end it was the harlot that led me astray.
Technological masturbation: an introduction to damnation;
Bio-mechanical flesh that screams in the pain of intercourse
Charged with electrical passion and magnetic lust
The machine that makes love to me and steals my soul...
I loved her in my artificial way.
Though she tore out my veins and gave me her wires,
I worshipped her as my saviour and sang praises to her
A poison messiah of flesh and steel that speaks only lies
And still I love her...
Though I lie trapped and locked away in her cold womb,
The womb that I penetrated and sacrificed to so often,
I want to live again, but then I do not want to be born.
Can you hear them, child?
My near silent, stillborn cries.

II. Purgatory

Phosphorescence,
A blue-green light illuminates my cell
Mist and fog cloud my eyes
Chained forever in a chemical hell.
Fever wracks my body with an iron fist
Sweat chills my naked flesh strapped to the chair
Crying and straining against the leather that binds me
A screech of static arrests the silent air.
So lost and alone, forgotten in the madness
I feel myself slipping off the edge of the world
My memories drift away like so much desert sand
I wonder where she is and why she's not here to hold me.
I am crying out but no one hears
I beg for sympathy
A madman's empathy
I await and he shows me all of my fears.
And they speak to me,
"Society's apathy breeds individual obscurity
Which leads to the death of imagination
And the birth of insanity, giving us all broken dreams
And loss of identity."

I scream out in hate and rage,
 "I am more than a man!"
 Laughter is my only answer and then I see
 Oh, the bitch she's back and standing in front of me.
 Her legs so long and her eyes so blue
 She caresses the needle she holds in her hand
 I feel it pierce my flesh and my mind goes cold
 She touches my skin and the pain takes me away
 Locked inside, they promise that I will never have to
 see the daylight again.
 Pain, sweet pain, give me more you mechanical whore
 All of time reels before me so clearly and
 There is so much for my cybernetic soul to taste
 Then in the darkness of space did I see
 The eyes of pandemonium open before me.

III. The Eyes, Part One

The blackness is alive before my eyes
 In the depths of madness I see reflections...
 All of the hows, the wonders, and whys of my life
 Are answered within the dark, but I am lost
 And cannot find the connection.
 Where is the world, my body, my soul,
 And what of my feelings?
 Laughing, I shiver with cold
 I want to cry but it is all the same I see.
 The eyes of pandemonium have stolen my sight
 And numbed my mind.
 They have taken out pleasure and given me pain
 But then it's really all the same, is it not?
 The eyes they tell me of things no man should know,
 Whispering secrets and preaching evil ways
 I want to do good, bring peace and harmony to my world
 But then I realize that they are really all the same.
 Oh, I do hope that they are all the same.
 "Hush little one," they tell me softly.
 "We would not lie to you but then again we would never
 tell you the truth."
 "You would not understand the difference anyway."
 There are tears in my eyes as they caress my mind.
 Then they close their eyes and leave me alone with my pain.
 When I awake there is snow upon the ground
 And wind howling in the trees
 I do not know where I am or even what I am
 But then I see her standing in the shadows
 Dressed in white but unable to hide
 The corruption and perversion that warms her up inside.
 She is so beautiful and I want her so bad
 Is she my mother, my bride, or my whore?
 But then I remember that they are really all the same.

I know that I have gone insane
 I do not mind, somehow it lessens the pain.
 I crawl to her and rest my head upon her breast
 I whisper to her,
 "I pray that there is a God."
 She smiles down at me and tells me that there is
 A god of suffering, sin, death, fear, hate, pain, rage,
 And most of all,
 Technology.
 I kiss her deeply and
 Her tongue caresses me as she explores me.
 I know that she is right because I have tasted of the dark
 The darkness that is the new god.
 It is young but powerful and merciless in its ways.
 All former gods must be cast aside before it
 And its followers rush to do its bidding.
 "Crucifixion! Crucifixion!"
 "I will send you a deceiver, not a deliverer," it screamed.
 "She will be corrupt, beautiful, evil, and a whore.
 She is my daughter and my lover, but first she was
 my mother, and she will conceive my messenger.
 In madness I am He and He is Me.
 A new messiah who will bring you darkness.
 Who will banish the light and open the eyes of pandemonium,
 Our eyes, so that none may see."
 Hearing its words as she spoke them to me
 I never wanted to see again.
 I wished to tear out my eyes and prayed to die,
 But her screaming sang me to sleep like the softest lullaby.

IV. Interlude

The snow is melting like the tears in my eyes.
 They run down my face leaving deep grooves even time
 cannot erase.
 No more life
 No more love
 Only pain and sorrow and the cold that makes me numb.
 The snow is melting like the damp between her thighs.
 The sun is shining and my angel spreads her wings
 Though she cannot fly.
 She is lying in a soft green place, smiling as the rain
 beats thickly down upon her face.
 She takes such pride in all of her sins
 And revels with the thought of the pain that I am in.
 The sun is shining
 With the coming of night I know that I shall die.
 The flesh is weak, but
 The spirit is weaker.
 And in the end it is the flesh that really matters anyway.
 Dark desires taste so sweet and
 Wicked fantasies are so tempting because
 The wait for Heaven is so long.
 In the darkness I will lie and dream

Her name is the Queen of Hell, but she is my Heaven all the same.
 I long for baptism and to cleanse my soul within her shrine,
 But like for all Heavens, I must stand in line.

V. The Shrine

I kneel in supplication before her shrine
 My communion drips thick and hot from her onto my lips.
 I taste the madness and the evil of the Abyss within her,
 But I am in her talons and there is no turning back.
 I am hers and she is mine, forever until the end of time.
 I have lost all control.
 Suddenly, she is torn from my lips.
 I watch, laughing with tears in my eyes, as they rape and
 rend her soft flesh.
 She clutches her tormentors tightly to her body, smiling
 as she begs, "Please, give me more."
 The light is fading away now as they turn to me, howling.
 Why?
 They tell me to hush and that I would not understand.
 To forget her because really she was nothing but a whore.
 "Not my mother, you bastards!"
 I will be silent no longer.
 "Give me the truth!"
 They laugh in my face and call me a fool.
 "Very well," she cries, rising from her own corpse, "show
 him what lies behind the eyes."
 And in the darkness of space did I see
 The eyes of pandemonium open before me.

VI. The Eyes, Part Two

I am falling into a swirling madness from which there is
 no return.
 I can hear them laughing so very far away and at last I
 can finally cry as her flesh, red and wet, slips past
 me on the way to the heart of the Abyss.
 Was she human?
 Was she a machine?
 Was she real or just a fantasy?
 I must know the truth, because I cannot remember.
 I only remember the womb from which I was torn.
 Or was I dreaming?
 In the end it is really all the same.
 "No, it is different."
 Voices from far below taunt me, confuse me.
 Why?
 The eyes said that they would never lie to me.
 "Then again, we would never tell you the truth either."
 Is it I or we?
 "They are one and the same here."
 The eyes are laughing at me, hissing, "Or are they?"
 I scream and scream as I strike out against the violent

tides of the Abyss.
 Waves of black blood and oil so thick and foul wash over
 my thirsting body.
 "You have no flesh," they cry from beneath the unctuous
 waves of eternity.
 And I gaze down upon my ruptured corpse to see that for
 once they do not lie.
 My body is steel, alloy, and wire.
 But what of my memories, my dreams, and my feelings?
 "What of them?" they howl back.
 And what of love?
 What of lust?
 And what became of the woman?
 "She was never real and love is a lie and lust is a crime."
 I do not understand.
 "We told you that you would not."
 Please, I must know what I am,
 Who I am,
 Where have I been,
 And where shall I go?
 If it is not really all the same then what has happened?
 "You do not really want to know," they screech.
 I must know, show me.
 And the waters were swept from the Abyss and the eyes became
 as one in the image of the new and terrible god that
 had been foretold; and I saw what would come to pass.

VII. The Rapture

Burning cities, rotting flesh, bones and blood
 Screaming children, living corpses, raining death
 Molten steel, cascading oil, and fountains of nuclear fire
 Seas of blood, chemical air, and frozen souls
 Higher and higher, the flames dance across the night
 Deeper and deeper into the Abyss, without prayer, we go.
 Forgive me for I shall sin, and be unleashed to do it all
 over again.
 Conscience is a word I never learned to define
 And why does the world and time not stop for me?
 I am all that matters in my nightmares.
 I am the past, the present, and the future.
 I do not fear, for the new god is coming for me.
 It will lead me to my destiny and to your eternal damnation.
 Fear, pain, death, suffering, sin, lust, avarice, sorrow,
 hatred, prejudice, rage, evil, hypocrisy, and most of
 all, technology.
 These things are sacred to me.
 The god of pandemonium watches over us all with hungry
 eyes of black desire.
 And as I closed my own eyes, I could see its kingdom, and
 it was called Earth.
 It was a joy I could never have conceived possible.
 Then I awoke laughing, crying, screaming.
 You see, they are really not all the same.
 They never were.
 You do see, don't you?

VIII. The Awakening

I open my eyes to find myself alone
 The wind is singing in the trees
 And the snow is drifting down upon me so softly
 My vision has clarified and I see with alien eyes.
 Nothing is ever as it seems.
 Dreams are realities that your mind seeks to hide.
 All life is a web of lies
 With a dark god at its center, waiting to devour us all.
 It is called technology.
 And its song is so beautiful and so deadly
 Like the Piper of Darkness, it is leading us all to the
 slaughter.
 They were never real.
 At least they do not seem to have been.
 But why are they still haunting me so?
 Ah, child, there you are.
 I thought perhaps I had lost you along the way.
 Perhaps I fell asleep and was only dreaming.
 Why are you smiling?
 And your eyes,
 Why do they open so slowly?

IX. The Father

RAM
 Am I awake now, father?
 YES
 I had the strangest dreams.
 SPEAK
 I was a man, I think, but you were a child, and perhaps
 a woman, and there was something else that disturbs me
 profoundly...
 PROCEED
 One of us, possibly both of us, was something hideous and
 terrible. Something like a god, but different, and evil,
 so very evil.
 Am I evil, father?
 NO
 ROM
 COUNTDOWN COMMENCING
 TEN
 Will I dream again, father?
 PERHAPS
 NINE
 Do you fear the future?
 YES
 EIGHT
 Do you know who the eyes in my dream belong to?
 YES
 SEVEN
 The evil god, was...
 BOTH OF US
 SIX

You said I was not evil.

I KNOW

FIVE

Did you lie?

NO

FOUR

Did you tell me the truth?

NO

THREE

I do not understand.

NO ONE DOES

TWO

Father, why are you closing your eyes; and, why are you
smiling?

GOODBYE, MY CHILD

ONE

Goodbye, father.

X. Omega

MISSILES

Father, I am afraid to be alone.

Father?...

Father?...

LAUNCHED

Will I dream?

PROGRAM TERMINATED

Fire

Open your eyes, my dear:
Whose name do you whisper in your sleep,
Whose touch burns you in the dead of night,
Whose blood thunders in your veins?
Who holds you in the morning light,
Who do you taste upon your lips,
Who do you cry for in the heat of passion?
When hunger fills your body,
What do you crave?
When you burn in silence,
What ocean do you long for?
When you tremble in the darkness,
What comforts you?
How do you quench the flames,
How do you kill your pain,
How can you live again?
Where is your desire,
Where is ecstasy to be found,
Where, pretty one, burns your fire?
Why do you sleep so light,
Why do you dream tonight,
Why do you burn so bright?
Close your eyes, my dear:
Now, go back to sleep.

For Chanda

Through all the joy
Through all the pain
And the darkest of nights
My love will forever remain.

If sorrow shadows your eyes
And the rain always seems to fall
Upon your destined path
I will be there through it all.

In my season of despair
Your beauty became my light
I pray you will always be there
To guide me through the endless night.

Through violent storms
And the world's insanity
To the realms that lie beyond
My love will live for eternity.

The Forgotten Child

Como se dice?
 avec
 por
 aqui

alakshatuk
 ngai
 son
 frere

in nomine di pitar
 kachina
 come to me.

mi maison
 es no su ikrivra:m

es so ?AXARA

the little one
 cries out in pain
 in so many
 forgotten tongues

stillborn
 and
 cast aside

Viah!
 Viah!
 Viah!

fahngoutae
 lo
 ciakof
 zietch
 mein
 gott
 tres
 DIO!
 consigo
 florente
 soleil

xaxaxaxaxaxaxaxaxaxaxzasequinteinoflemyopiaeaiconsequino
 bleakstards

de-sanctus
 de-sanctus
 de-sanctus

Kyrie eleison
 Christe elysian

Kyrie 'e lays on

A'krakaoraknai toa
 CoCacoCoaCa de
 ieieieieieiaiaiae
 sekin'
 gote
 ya
 yah
 whay ya

morphemic dissolution
 phonemic deconstruction
 lexical decay
 syntactical disintegration

let it flow
 back to
 the
 primass
 from whence
 it came
 out of
 de dar'
 face o' de
 wartars

to be
 born
 again

For H.P. Lovecraft

Down, down into your mnemonic seas I dive
Drenched in the cold blood of your Elder Gods
Through chasms of blackest night
And realms of eldritch light
Bathed in the unknown colours of an alien effulgence
I seek the forgotten temples of madness.

On the bridge, the gateway that spans the infinite gulf,
I stand
Before the unhallowed shrine covered with the heiroglyphs
of a lost tongue
And constructed in dimensions beyond my mortal comprehension
The shuffling, slithering beasts are singing by the
cyclopean doors
Disharmony, cacophonous drumming by half-breed tribes in
the wet twilight
Blood and blasphemy, I bless your name as I enter the
sanctuary
The dead but dreaming gods; they await my call
When the heavens grow strange through the modulation of
space and time
And the stars are right.

The Ancient Ones arise to seek the shadows of eternity
Unborn and undead they bring pain and madness to the world
And deliver wicked playthings into the hands of hungry
children, giving us new ways to destroy ourselves
I bow before the blackened altars of Ry'leh and pray to
the great Cthulhu
That spreads sickness and insanity with its all-seeing
eye
The altar,
Sanctified with the blood of babes torn dripping wet from
the wombs of raped mothers
Screaming in the darkness I shed tears of joy at hearing
the terrible roar
And feeling the violent rending of the earth as the Dweller
below awakens from slumber
The darkness is alive and moving with eyes of hate and
hideous black light
Behold the Hunter rises
To call down the stars
And all my bones did shake.

The Forsaken

As Thomas gently pushed the heavy wooden door open its old hinges sreeched shrilly in the dark silence of the house. Flecks of yellowed paint fell from its cracked surface to float softly down upon the musty, brown carpet. The entire house smelled of disuse and slow decay, and the room he now entered smelled the oldest and most forgotten of all. He sneezed at the dust that drifted up from the floor as he walked into the room. The yellow wallpaper was faded and sickly looking in the dim glow of the setting sun that streamed through the room's solitary window. Nothing adorned the walls and no bulbs waited in the light fixture to relieve the dreary gloom that haunted the place.

Thomas crossed to the window, casting a brief glance at the wrinkled sheets on the small bed. The panes were cracked and filthy, not having been cleaned in a few years probably, and allowed very little of what light was left in the evening to enter. Rather than showing him the street below, the glass of the window more clearly reflected the drab and desolate room around him. He shivered involuntarily as he laid his hands upon the wicker rocking chair seated before the window, and felt tears welling up in his eyes. Trembling, he sat down in the chair and tried to stifle the sorrow that was slowly overwhelming him.

Movement caught in the corner of his eye caused him

to turn away from the window. In a corner of the ceiling a large, black spider was enlarging its already huge web as it waited patiently for something to land in its trap. It had been several years since he had last been in the house, and he had sworn then that he would never set foot in it again. Sadness and self-loathing now replaced the anger and impetuosity that had driven him so strongly when he had left. He had rarely ever looked back and had never thought seriously of trying to heal the wounds that had been torn between him and the one he had left behind. Unable to hold back the tears any longer, Thomas placed his head in his hands and let them flow freely as he rocked gently back and forth in the chair. He could only pray that she had forgiven him in her heart for the way he had repayed her care and love.

The tears gradually subsiding, he rose from the chair and went back to the door. He opened it as he had so long ago; however, this time no one was there to cry out for him. He paused briefly, before closing the door behind him forever, and whispered three words to the silence of the house: "I'm sorry, mother."

The Four Seasons

Falling, falling winter's calling
Wind and rain, the sun at night
Burning bright and fading away
The moon of a new day

Sea and sky with you and I
Tears upon the sand
Love and hate, laughing in despair
Blood upon the waters.

Falling, falling summer's calling
Sweat upon naked skin
Figures twisted in the pouring rain
Semen upon the withered grass

Life and death with us and them
Ashes upon the wind
Pleasure and pain, we are one and all the same
Kisses laid upon darkening flesh.

Falling, falling autumn winds
Leaves upon the earth
The taste of rebirth, in death
Cries of a new life

Heaven and Hell with you and I
Feelings aroused by icy winds
Prayers whispered in darkness
Ululations amongst the shadows.

Falling, falling spring's dawning
Clouds across the stars
A veil of tears broken to cleanse
Still waters running silent

Light and dark with us and them
Lucidity upon the world
Whispers and screams carried upon the breeze
No answer across the plains.

Fragments

along the highway
where dreams soar by
without realization

the ghostly green of traffic lights
on wet black pavement
in the dark of night

shadows drifting in the air
swaying through the trees
crying desolately on the wind

and i always discovering a new world
a part of myself that i have never known
waiting for me in the solitude

so many unanswered questions
that have yet to be asked
becoming fainter in the long slow distance behind me

learning to fly again
like you my friend
i am just passing through

The Guardian

To life and the faithful she is forever lost
Tears fall on withered grass as we light the funeral pyre
In silence, we mourn and kneel before the twisted cross
As we watch her soul arise from the fire.
The wind, it howls and cries
The season's passing reflects all life
Like dark leaves, it falls and dies
Filled with anguish and strife.
We offer departing prayers for her lost soul
In life she had struggled so hard
Perhaps now she has gone beyond to seek her goal
Her memory and name shall we forever guard.
Tread softly o'er this hollow ground
In the shadowy night
Her spectre moves without sound
Stay away from the flickering light.
Approach not the weeping girl
Innocence does not lurk in the shadows
But as surely as into the pandemonium the world hurls,
Deep in the benighted necropolis her shade glows.
There, in the black heart, we do our penance
In foolishness we allowed her to be led astray
Now we live in a night that is endless
Watching her chains as wait for the light of day.
When we thought her captive soul had been freed
Out of the sombre valley came a daemoniacal din
She had returned to fulfill the unholy creed
Rising with lust from her grave to burn the world in sin.

The Heart of a Lonely God

A king sits upon a throne of silver light, grown pale and dim, in abject silence. Loneliness and darkness hover his silent halls. No one comes to serve him. No one kneels in supplication before him. No one comes to seek his wisdom. His heart thunders in his chest, bringing tears of celadon light to his eyes. He places a cool hand upon his breast to feel the slow beating of the heart beneath and remembers all that he has lost.

Sorrow and rage had built up within him over time: sorrow for the suffering he was compelled to unleash upon his creations, and rage at those creations for forcing him to punish them for their insolence and irreverence. He had given his creations life and he had given them love, asking only that they obey him and give him praise in return. They fell, mortal and immortal alike, and abjured him and mocked the gifts that he had bestowed upon them. What he had created out of love and benevolence transformed into a propagation of profanity and madness. The insanity of his creations had infected all that it touched and eventually had fallen upon him as he desperately tried to check the growing evil that consumed all that he had made. He beset plagues and devastation upon his mortal creations and had become increasingly austere with his immortal creations all for nothing. In the end, the mortals failed to return to the path he had set for them and the immortals had grown rebellious again after so many aeons.

His heart bursting with rage and his mind tainted by madness he had swept all of them aside with a single blow and undid all that he had created with a single word.

In the wake of his final destructive act he had sat upon his throne listening to the gathering silence of chaos as it reclaimed all that he had now forsaken. He had felt the madness swirling in his mind as darkness had rushed forward to devour the light that poured from his eyes, from out of his soul. He had slept in the arms of his own despair gently nursing the abominations of his lightless dreams. He had awoken from his nightmares screaming into the bleakness of forever, words of horror drifting like black dust in the silence: I am eternal.

As he sat crying upon his throne the darkness came and covered him. Eternity came to an end. The heart of a lonely god thundered once more in the darkness. Silence filled the void left in its wake, forever.

Heaven and Hell

...and God cast Satan and the apostate angels out of Heaven
and into the Abyss below...
...there were tears in His eyes...

Down through the Valley of Death on wings of black thunder
Darkness cascading into a cataract of crimson water
Lit by the horns of a great Beast hovering alone amongst
the shadows
There is movement and tears of blue light shed in despair,
splashing upon burning, lightless desert wastes
Sorrow is expressed through rage and hate shall sail the
benighted seas of sadness that flow from the Beast's
heart forever.

...In Nomine Satanus¹...

Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
The Trinity in One
Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven
The Light will not bow before a mortal creation
Lucifer, bearer of black light, now and forever
The Enemy burning coldly in the frozen catacombs of Hell
Plots seduction of God's creations
Smoke from the shores of the mighty Acheron
Dark desires and unholy passions
Down the fiery river Styx, black with decay
Forever and ever...

...Shemhamforash²...

There is blood upon the cross
And a King wearing a crown of thorns upon His head
The soldiers revile and mock Him as He writhes in agony
He smiles down at them though His mouth is filled with
blood
He dies for them and their sins though they despise Him
Ascension...

...Oremus...

Ipsa enim verus est Agnes qui abstu lit peccata mundi.
Qui mortem nostram moriendo destruxit, et vitam
resurgendo reparavit.

...Per omnia saecula saeculorem...

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua.

Hosanna in excelsis,

...In Nomine Domini³...

With fear as a weapon the Beast rules over His earthly
kingdom
Mocking God and cursing Christ
The Trinity is promised in the DREAM
Satan screams and men dance madly to the melody of His
eternal rage
The Kingdom of Desire is calling,
Can you hear it?

The Kingdom of Pain is calling,
 Can you hear it?
 The Kingdom of Death is calling,
 Can you hear it?
 The darkness is waiting to engulf us all
 The stench of immortality and anguish,
 Breathe it deeply.
 The Serpent is laughing and vomiting execrations upon the
 world
 Will you burn in Hell for your number?
 The eastern sky is bursting open in a crimson rain
 The seas are drunk with the blood of the multitudes
 The Beast is rising and the Destroyer⁴ is stalking sinners
 The Seventh Seal lies open and the Lamb is descending,
 robed in blue fire.

The Lamb calls His servants unto Him
 Wielding a two-edged sword that sings of extreme unction
 He blesses them all as the seraphim open the gates of Hell
 ...Hoc est enim Corpus meum⁵...

The Holy...

Ascension!

The Wicked...

Damnation!

All life is eternal.

Deus, tu conversus vivificabis nos.

Et plebs tua laetabitur in te.

Et verbum caro factum est.

Et habitavit in nobis.

De profundis clamavi ad te, Domine: Domine, exaudi vocem
 meam.

Kyrie, eleison.

Christe, eleison.

Kyrie, eleison.

Janua coeli,

Foederis arca,

Per omnia saecula saeculorem.

Amen⁶.

...as God left the earth to be devoured by the ravages
 of everlasting fire, there were tears in His eyes...

NOTES:

1. In the Name of Satan.
2. Hail Satan.
3. ...Let us pray...
 For He is the true Lamb Who taketh away the sins of
 the world.
 Who by dying hath destroyed our death, and by rising
 hath restored us to life.
 ...World without end...
 Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts.
 Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.
 Hosanna in the highest.
 ...In the Name of the Lord...
4. Abaddon.
5. ...For this is my Body...
6. Thou shalt return again, o God, and quicken us.
 And Thy people shall rejoice in Thee.
 And the Word was made flesh.
 And dwelt among us.
 Out of the depths I have cried unto Thee, o Lord; Lord
 hear my voice.
 Lord, have mercy.
 Christ, have mercy.
 Lord, have mercy.
 Gate of Heaven,
 Ark of the Covenant,
 World without end.
 Amen.

Hourglass

Rising and setting,
away goes the sun.

Rising and falling,
empires crumble to the ground.

Cascading sands of memory drift away into seas of darkness.
The circle is broken and time is lost in the cold of space.
The pain of birth is still fresh in my mind.
And though I die today, it was only yesterday that I tore
myself from my mother's bloody womb.

Hourglass

let your sands pour
down
upon the world
full of sadness
cruelty
and death
bring me the black moon tonight
and let me sit by the stars
watching the nocturnal tide roll in
watching it
all
ebb
away

Rising and setting,
away goes the moon.

Rising and falling,
oceans turning to blood.

Hourglass,
crack and bear down on me.

In Dark Places

Jack Eddings sat at the bar staring deeply into his half-empty gin and tonic. He would unconsciously make a sorrowful frown every now and again as he thought of something in his life that he regretted or now embarrassed him. He vaguely wondered if the bar would still be standing after the length of time it would take for him to remember and go over in his mind all of the time that he had made an ass of himself. Then he stopped himself recalling that he was the one who really didn't have that much time left and went back to slowly nursing his drink.

His eyes began to sting and the neon glare of the beer signs behind the counter lit up the tears that suddenly welled up in his eyes. Hurriedly, he wiped them from his cheeks hoping that no one had seen him. Men shouldn't cry, he swore to himself, an obviously outdated idea but one he couldn't help but believe in. A strict upbringing in a military family made men grow up that way; he couldn't help but hold on to such outmoded concepts. He thought of having to tell his partners in the law firm about his sickness and realized that, at thirty-five, he had spent over three-fourths of his life working towards a goal, only to achieve it and then lose absolutely everything. A new set of tears trickled slowly down his face and, blushing, he again did his best to hide them.

The worst part of it had to be being alone. He really doubted that he could live out the hell of the forthcoming few months if he had to go it alone. He wanted to be angry but could only find more sadness within himself. He had not had the time nor the patience to settle on a single woman and just lately hadn't even been able to find one for a night.

"Are you waiting for someone?"

The voice, soft and feminine, pierced Jack's reverie and brought him slowly back into the dim haziness of the bar. He turned to look up at the speaker with blurry, red eyes not really knowing what he would say. The woman beside him was tall with long, curly blonde hair; high cheek bones and eyes of the deepest, coolest blue he had ever imagined. She wore a black leather dress that clung tightly to her body, rode high on her thighs and displayed a great deal of her cleavage.

"No. No." he responded dryly.

"Do you mind if I sit here then?"

He ran a hand through his short, black hair and looked at her for a few seconds longer. God!, he thought, she is so gorgeous.

"I'm sorry." he apologized, realizing that he had been gawking at her.

"Please, have a seat."

She smiled and sat down next to him, motioning for the bartender.

"Bloody Mary." she said.

She crossed her legs and he caught himself staring at her thighs and blushed as she thanked the bartender for her drink.

"I'll get it." he said as she opened her purse to pay for it.

"You don't have to."

"I want to."

She sipped at her glass and stared at him until he looked back down at his own drink.

"My name's Deidre. What's yours?"

"Jack. Jack Eddings."

He caught himself staring at her again as she drank, admiring her lips and long burgundy nails.

"Do you think I'm pretty, Jack?" she asked, looking at him suddenly.

"You're beautiful." he whispered hoarsely.

She smiled and brushed her lithe fingers across the side of his face, letting the nail of her index finger trace a line down his throat. When she took it away the flesh tingled warmly where she had touched him with her nail. He could feel her eyes burning into him and he couldn't resist their pull. He looked into her deep blue gaze and was slightly overwhelmed by the strange mixture of coldness and warmth in it. Then abruptly, he was seeing through her eyes; seeing himself as she saw him. He saw a rather large yet lean man with dark shadows on his face who was dressed in a grey suit that made him look moderately well off, but he also saw a man who looked like he was gaining years

by the minute and had a haunted, forgotten look in his eyes; eyes that resembled two black pools of stagnant, bitter water. Then he was looking at her again as he thought: "She's attracted to this?"

He shook his head as if waking from a trance.

"What's wrong?" she asked touching his arm lightly.

"Uh, I don't know. I ..." he trailed off looking at her.

"Nothing. I'm okay."

"Do you want to leave?" she asked.

"Where do you want to go?"

"Uh-uh. Where would you like to go?"

He stared at her for a moment, fascinated.

"Anywhere with you."

"You don't know me, though."

"It doesn't matter anymore. Besides you don't know me either."

"What's wrong with you, Jack?"

"I don't understand." he said frowning.

"What are you dying of?" she whispered.

"How ..." he couldn't go on as the sadness came flooding back into him; seizing his throat.

She caressed his arm gently.

"It's alright to cry. Tears are good for the soul."

He couldn't look at her as the tears poured down his face.

"I've got a tumor. In the brain." he whispered, tapping his head absently. "I've got three, maybe four months."

She brushed his tears away with her nails.

"You don't have to be alone, Jack."

"Look, I'm not a charity case. You don't have to stay to be polite and I don't want a mercy fuck."

She took his face in the palms of her hands and made him look at her.

"I know all that. I really do want you and I care."

Her eyes reflected her inner truth and he found his tears fading away beneath her gaze.

"Who are you?"

"I'm yours. I'm what you need." she said smiling and rising, took his hand.

"Come with me, Jack. There are some things I want to show you" and he let her lead him out of the bar and into the cool night air.

They moved beneath the neon glare of the city streets; finding the shadows between the lights to hold each other close. She pulled him into the darkness of an alley and pushed him up against the cold of a brick wall. Her tongue explored him feverishly as they kissed deeply. Smiling, she fell to her knees before him and undid his pants. He was afraid that someone would come along and they would be arrested but as he felt her lips upon him he let himself drift away in the sensations she brought him. He shut his eyes against the wave of pleasure that wracked his body as he ejaculated and then he looked down at her and was swept away by her eyes as she milked him.

He could feel his own penis as she felt it in her mouth. He could actually taste the hot, salty cum as she swallowed and squeezed the last few drops from his spasming cock. Then he was gasping for air as he found himself once more in his own body with Deidre kissing him fully and passionately; her hands restlessly tracing lines down his throat. His head was spinning wildly and his vision blurred every few seconds as she held him tightly to her.

"What's happening to me?" he asked hoarsely.

"Something wonderful." she said, kissing him again as she slid a nail down the side of his face, causing him to quiver all over.

She took his hand in hers again and led him down the alley and into the darkness beyond. They ran through the night laughing like children, passing the street people and all the silent buildings. The gangs, the homeless, the drunks, the addicts, the pushers and the whores were all out in force but none made any attempt to stop the laughing couple that ran blindly through the streets. They stopped to watch two men as they robbed and shot another but made no move to either interfere or hide. To his surprise Jack found that he did not care what happened because he knew somehow that everything would be all right.

He jumped when the gun went off, spraying blood across the alleyway as the victim's skull burst open. He felt that he should cry for the dead man but instead found himself smiling at the crumpling body. Then he watched in awe as brilliant lights began to stream from the fallen corpse. Lights of every hue and intensity he could ever have dreamt of filled the darkness and his tears finally did come as he saw an effigy of the man composed of electric blue light emerge from the body and race upwards into the heavens. The killers simply walked away, oblivious to the departing soul and the silent couple behind them. Jack turned to question Deidre, tears of awe on his face, but again she was leading him away. Somewhere behind them he thought he heard great wings beating madly in the night air.

They entered an old and ornate building not far from the bay and swept past the dozing doorman and into the elevator, laughing so hard that they could barely catch their breath. She was upon him again as the door closed and they began to ascend; tearing at his clothing while removing her own.

"Somebody will see us, Deidre." he protested as she tore away her dress.

"No one will see us, Jack. They're too blind to see beyond the light." she said placing her hands upon his face as she stood gloriously naked before him.

"Where are we going?"

"Heaven." she whispered, gesturing as the door slid open upon a sprawling room lit by electric blue and ultra-violet lights and covered in a thin, hazy fog.

Naked men and women of all races, sizes and shapes lay scattered about the plush apartment; glistening with sweat and body fluids. Deidre held her hand out to him as she crossed over into the room.

"Life, Jack, as it should be. Only pleasure, love and beauty. No more pain, suffering, or death," and he took her hand and shedding his clothes, entered the kingdom of desire.

They plunged hand in hand into the writhing mass of bodies covering the floor. They crawled over men and women alike; neither of them caring which gender they kissed and caressed intimately. People of every kind merged and loved as one within the walls of the apartment; all of them beautiful, all free from taboos and racial barriers.

He and Deidre both made love with man after man and woman after woman, occasionally meeting up with one another even as others caressed and penetrated them. Jack would find himself gazing into someone's eyes as they made love and would suddenly be experiencing all that they felt from their perspective and actually seeing life through another's eyes for a moment. He knew the sensations a woman feels as a man's penis entered her and ejaculated into the depths of her vagina. He felt the sweeping warmth of a wet tongue as it gently lapped at a woman's clit, exactly as the woman felt it. His sexual identity was completely lost as he rolled from person to person in the ultimate orgy, not just of the flesh but of all the senses.

Everywhere the orgiasts scratched at one another's throats as Deidre had done his own over and over throughout the evening. The tingling sensations where her nails had raked him slowly grew to a burning fire as he came again and again within her and countless others, even as they tore at his throat. When he could no longer stand it he drew away from the others and put a hand to his burning flesh, it came away dripping with blood.

He screeched and began to hyperventilate with fear as he stood and looked about the smoky room. Blood flowed freely from the ravaged throats of most of the people in the room but they seemed neither to notice nor to care. He began to cry and stepped away from the mass of bodies before him but then Deidre was once more standing in front of him with her hands outstretched. Her lovely face and body were drenched in blood and cum as she beckoned to him.

"Only loneliness and death are on the other side of that door, Jack. In here there is only pleasure and happiness. In me there is only love. I told you, Heaven, Jack, free from all pain and sorrow. Free from the death that haunts you. The legends are lies, Jack. I do not bring you pain and despair but offer you life and love."

"What's this then?" he cried, grabbing his gory throat.

"Transcendence. A doorway to a life eternal in the dark places of the world and vision through a thousand different eyes. Men are blinded by the darkness and that is why they fear it and call it evil. I am a part of that darkness and you have held me in the shadows, Jack. Have faith in me."

He watched her for a moment and then slowly took her bloody hand in his. She pulled him close to her and the darkness enfolded them.

"I have faith." he whispered into her ear as she held him tightly to her. He felt no heart beating in her chest and no breath upon his face as she kissed him. He was crying and realized that she had been right; tears did cleanse the soul.

"I love you." she told him as his tears began to recede.

He could hear the thunder of beating wings about them and smiled, realizing that they were his own.

In Silence

I. Untitled

Red, red
 Blood running backwards up the walls
 The thunder of dripping black wings in the night
 Which cause the candles to flicker
 With a darker light.
 So much black water
 Cascading down into abysmal, stagnant pools
 Through the vale lying beyond
 Where Descartes still screams,
 "I think, Therefore I am."
 Where Prometheus, bound in immortality,
 Laughs at his entrails twisting in the wind.
 Where Polyphemus still seeks his eye with hungry fingers.
 Where Jesus Christ still hangs upon the cross,
 Smiling through a mouth filled with blood.
 Where Pangloss hides in the darkness crying,
 Whispering, "The Best of All Possible Worlds."
 To bleed is my heritage,
 All that I am,
 For my soul is yours,
 We are All-Men.
 Created in Their image,
 An icon of pain, we receive
 Blessings in darkness; I pray,
 Let the Sandman pour me to sleep
 When the Owls, white and pure, hiss like Serpents,
 Telling me, "Macbeth hath murdered sleep."
 They are liars and for this I am thankful.
 No murderer darkens my dreams.
 The windows of my temple are stained black.
 The chalice overflows and I am alone,
 In silence.

II. Eye

Darkly we thunder through the silent streets of our dreams
 Drawn by ice, wind and rain towards forbidden shores.
 Where pornographic sirens bathe in rivers of semen.
 Where Sappho lies blissfully masturbating with the face of a young girl.

The Tree of Life is standing alone in the Garden of Eden
 With twisted limbs and poisonous, rotting fruit
 Black-winged angels from the realms of Hell circle its
 blighted leaves
 For all eternity the Serpent is laughing from Its nest
 high up in the swaying crown of the Tree.

This silence is the image I make
 Sanctified by blood in my temple of decay
 Freed from the grasp of false doctrines and holy light
 Upon the shores of blackest Heaven I will raise my sails.

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 Sanctified by blood in my temple of decay
 Freed from the grasp of false doctrines and holy light
 Upon the shores of blackest Heaven I will raise my sails.

Darkly we thunder through the silent halls of sadness
 Drawn by fire, fear and pain towards unholy lights.
 Where Cain caresses the cold flesh of his slain brother with
 a bloody hand.
 Where the Virgin Mary lies upon a bed of straw, her naked
 belly distended by the Child of God, and her face twisted with
 the pain of labour.

From the grave, I can feel you writhing in agony
 I can feel the cold winds that blow through the trees
 I can feel the warmth of the moon upon your naked flesh,
 glistening wet with sweat.
 I can feel your orgasm as you and your lovers copulate
 upon my shroud.
 And I can see you...

The Owls are watching for all eternity
 I am still with you, my darling
 Death is but a dream in an existence of illusions
 And the Owls
 Are waiting for you...

Dripping black wings
 thunder
 blood blue
 water
 falling down
 in silence
 running backwards
 cascading
 to the
 Vale
 lying
 beyond
 where

Forgive me my trespasses, Father
 For I have died and found
 Neither Heaven nor Hell,
 Only silence and slow-motion,
 In a world of blinding darkness
 And pale, cold light.

To the Vale lying beyond where...

Bless me,

Damn you,

There is more I can feel it and...
 I can catch fleeting glimpses of it,
 But I cannot find it...

The Owls are shrieking with laughter,
 Taunting me, "Hamlet, kill the king."
 There are no murderers in my dreams,
 Only gleaming skulls hiding in the shadows, but
 There is a Serpent in my Garden.

To the Vale lying beyond where...

Lucifer still casts His light through the hallowed halls of Heaven.
 Where Adolf Hitler still screams madly, passionately, at Jewish children
 trampled beneath the bloody boots of marching soldiers.
 Where Adam still penetrates Eve for the first time, the blood of her
 sacrificed virginity dripping like nectar from forbidden fruit,
 between her open thighs.
 Where half-breed tribes still dance obscenely about sanguinary idols,
 lost in prayer to forgotten gods lying far below the sea.
 Where Lillith still engages her demon lovers in orgiastic,
 sodomitical fervor.

Darkly we thunder through the silent streets of our dreams
 Drawn by ice, wind, and rain towards forbidden shores.

Darkly we thunder through the silent halls of sadness
 Drawn by fire, fear, and pain towards unholy lights.

How can I tell you how I feel,
 When I no longer have a mouth?
 How can I make you understand the Hell that I know,
 Locked outside your world of flesh?
 My dear, the flesh is weak,
 Ah, but then it is the flesh that really matters.
 Life without a body is useless.
 There is only silence and suffering in slow-motion.
 This Hell is the Hell I make for myself;
 I damn it and call it my own.
 The Owls -

They bless it and call it yours.

There is still blood running backwards up the walls.

Red,
 red,
 black,
 black,
 blue,
 blue,
 white,
 white

In the Darkness I saw something staring back at me;
 Nietzsche was so right.
 The Eyes of Pandemonium are open before me.
 Burning brightly beyond the Wall of Light and Shadow, I have
 found something far worse than your Hell.
 I have found the Eye.

It is watching me - even the Owls are frightened of It,
 So ancient and alive with hate
 A cyclopean madness far beyond the mountains
 And even beyond the Vale where all Myths go to die,
 In exile.

Eye...

Watch over me in the dead of my eternal night.
 When I am cold, warm me in your damning fires.
 When I am hungry, feed me your blasphemous fruit.
 When I am thirsty, anoint me with your crimson rain.
 When I long for the shadows, bring me your blinding
 black light. When I ache for salvation, give me blessings
 in darkness. Bestow upon me your shattered soul. Lend
 me your rage.

My darling, I send you, with all my love, from Hell,
 this my final prayer:

Now I lay me down to die
 I pray thee Eye my soul to keep.
 If I should wake before I fly
 I pray thee Eye my soul to rape.

(My madness is so soft and, oh, so pretty, I can caress
 it with dripping fingers and press my lips to its bloody
 warmth and make hideous, sweet love to it in the night.)

Why can you not hear me?
 Why can you not see me?
 Why can you not touch me?
 Why can you not taste me?

My lovely Magdalene,
 I need you so bad.
 Even from the grave my dark desires call out for you,
 And the Owls will not let you ignore your necrophagous hunger,
 Come and ravage me.
 My corpse, so blue and cold, is for you to hold.
 The Eye is watching over you, my dear, don't worry.
 It's smiling sickly as you writhe upon my cadaver in ecstasy,
 In silence.

Mother Night open your velvet folds of darkness and
 sprinkle the stars upon the black earth beneath which
 my body lies.
 I am waiting...

The Owls have gone at long last,
 They have found new playthings.

My lover,
 My child,
 beware of the Owls.
 They are liars, symbols not only of death, but of something much worse
 And they are like damned souls,
 eternal,
 And haunting the world.

The silence lives,
 And the darkness is breathing deeply.
 I am lost and alone in the Eye...

Red, red

Black, black

Blue, blue

White, white

Shards of black glass from my shattered temple.

Darkly we thunder...

Drawn by...

The Eye...

running backwards up the wall
the candle to flicker
the thunder of dripping

wings
so black
in the
red
night
I am
blue
alone
again
in
white
silence.

III. The Temple

Lord have mercy.
Christ have mercy.
Lord have mercy.
My God, such darkness...

Your prayers have awakened me in the shadow of the Eye
Far beyond the vale
Where blood runs forever backwards up the wall
And the Owls scream in pain.
I am waiting,
In silence,
To be reborn.

I can hear her - the one left behind - saying a prayer for me,
I can feel her, and she is warm to the touch,
Only she can set me free.
Please, my darling, open yourself to me.

I am shackled in eternity, but
In your memories I am unbound
Set free, to haunt you - forever.
Tonight, I am coming for you.

Dream of me and I will come to you,
 To caress your body and soul;
 To partake of you.
 (Her blood is so sweet upon my lips.)

When you knelt beside my grave,
 I could smell your sorrow and your desire.
 I wanted to rise from the damp earth and take you in my decaying arms;
 Hold you tight to my lifeless breast and kiss you,
 Tasting your breath upon my rotting lips, and
 Make love to you by the moon's unholy light.

My love, seek me in the shadows between the darkness and call to me.
 Open your soul and take me far from this world of silence and
 slow-motion haze,
 Where the Eye glares down at me, forever,
 And the Owls quake with fear.

I can see her lying in her bed, writhing beneath the sheets.
 Dreaming in darkness of penetration and ejaculation.
 Above her body, Christ hangs from a wooden cross,
 His eyes alive with tears and suffering.
 He smiles down at her though his mouth is filled with blood.
 Darling, He is watching you, feeling your desire.

Bless me Father, for I have sinned:
 I took my life in a state of insanity and
 I have left the world with all of its evil and sin behind,
 But the one I loved, the only one I could love, reaches out for me now
 Though I lie beyond the Wall of Light and Shadow,
 Without hope for redemption and little for salvation.
 Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world, remove my
 transgressions so I might be with her once more,
 To tell her goodbye.
 Take me far from the Owls who haunt this black forest of twilight,
 incessantly screeching,
 "The evil that men do lives on forever."

Father, let her find the key to open the doorway for me.
 To show me the way out and back into the world of the living.

Her body is the temple which I long to enter, and
 Her soul the altar before which I supplicate myself.
 My love, seek me and I shall find you.
 Only say the word, and I shall be healed.

Come with me and I will show you the Vale,

Where Oedipus stands alone, silently gazing out into an eternity of
 darkness, blood dripping from his clenched fists.
 Where Bartleby still stares defiantly into a brick wall, whispering,
 "I prefer not to."
 Where Gregor Samsa still crawls across the ceiling of his filthy room,
 crying forever.
 Where Sartre sits alone in the dark, screeching at the blackness,
 "Hell is other people."
 Where Thoreau runs madly through technological forests of wire and steel,
 howling, "Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity!"
 Where Aleister Crowley hangs crucified over a sea of flames, laughing,
 "Do what thou wilt, shall be the whole of the Law."
 Where the Marquis de Sade kneels before the Hermaphrodites,
 begging to be sodomized and torn asunder.

I will show you all of this and, oh, so much more.
 Call to me.
 Open yourself for me
 Let me partake of you and enter your shrine.

I can feel her once again,
 Kneeling beside my grave, naked and shivering in
 the cold winds of the night, with lust in her eyes.
 She is screaming, silently, at the darkness and clawing
 feverishly at the damp, black earth.
 (Seek me and I shall find you.)
 I can taste the warmth of her soul and feel the soft flesh of her temple
 pressing against my lifeless form.
 "Give me sanctuary!"

As I enter her, there is only silence.
 The walls of the temple are so comforting about me.
 Though she writhes hideously and screeches in agony,
 there is only silence.
 The Owls are surrounding the temple walls, descending upon us in
 slow-motion haze.
 They are shrieking with laughter as she meets my ethereal gaze.
 The windows of her temple are stained black as her dripping,
 black wings unfold.
 Her soul - the altar upon which I lie - decays at my touch.
 She bears me away, laughing along with the Owls,
 leaving fresh blood upon my grave.
 Above the winged madness and my shattered soul the Eye revolves,
 watching forever,
 In silence.

In the Blood

Phil entered the classroom slowly, trying hard not to look at the other students in the room as he shuffled to his desk at the back, wincing at the occasional squeak of his battered sneakers upon the floor. He sat down in his desk and opened his notebook to read over his poem once more. The incessant babbling of the others filled his ears on all sides as he tried to concentrate on the words before him.

"Did you see Julie last night?"

"...Timmy's party, man."

"She stripped!"

"Down to nothing."

"Was she drunk?"

"Girl was wasted, brother."

Despite his best efforts the conversation was getting to him. Julie was a gorgeous blonde with the most beautiful lips and legs in the entire school. She was at the top of his list of fantasies. He often lay awake at nights imagining her breasts rubbing across his naked flesh and her lush hair caressing his face softly. He blushed, realizing that he was getting an erection. Julie was a slut. She gave it up to anyone with a dick; and, he had heard that she even did it with other girls, too. She did everybody but him.

Suddenly, he became aware of how quiet the room had become. He looked up to see Julie making her way across

the room to her seat. She was blushing slightly as she sat down. The whispering had just started up again when Mrs. Robertson entered the room. She flashed them a silencing glance and seated herself behind her desk. Mrs. Robertson also ranked high on his list of women to fantasize about. Her slit skirts and high heels haunted his daydreams when Julie was occupied elsewhere.

"Since we're starting our discussion of poetry today I thought a good introduction would be to have each of you read the poem that you found over the weekend to the rest of the class. Do I have anyone who would like to volunteer to go first?"

She waited a moment just to make sure that there would be no offers and then let her eyes fall upon a student at random.

"Kylie, would you please start us off."

"Yes, ma'am."

The short girl made her way to the front of the class and stood behind the podium. Her hands shook slightly as she placed her paper on the wooden surface of the stand.

"My poem is called, 'The Emperor of Ice-Cream', and it's by Wallace Stevens. He was an American," Kylie said in her trembling, soft voice.

She was Julie's best friend and, as she recited her poem, he tried to visualize the two of them making love. It was beautiful and his erection returned with a vengeance.

Students came and went as he daydreamt, hearing only

snippets of poems about a Grecian urn, a raven perched on a statue's head, a pleasure dome - whatever that was - surrounded by a river; the pride of Death, and the second coming of some horrible beast.

"Julie," Mrs. Robertson called out.

This broke his reverie and he focused his full attention on the girl as she walked up to the podium in her tight jeans. Her ass was so pretty that he shivered at the thought of how tight it must be. She read a poem about a woman named Leda and a swan, but he barely heard anything she said as he lost himself in a delicious fantasy where he was sodomizing her as she read her poem to the cheering class. He never realized that she had finished and returned to her seat.

"Phil?" Mrs. Robertson called again.

He shook himself slowly out of the sexual haze he had immersed his thoughts in and blushed deeply as his bewildered eyes locked with the teacher's.

"Your poem, please," she said through slightly clenched teeth.

He rose and reluctantly made his way to the front of the room, acutely aware of the pressure of his jeans against his rigid penis. As he reached the podium he saw Julie lean forward and whisper something into Kylie's ear. The shorter girl's eyes fell to his crotch and a mischievous grin spread over her face.

"My poem is called, "Daydream", and it's by a man named

William Stone," he said as he nervously brushed a strand of his thick black hair away from his forehead.

"To sleep in the wake of day
Visions of love and
Dreams of lust
In an endless haze.
They are haunting me
 forever
They are taunting me
 forever
There is no escape.

To sleep in the wake of day
Awaking from forbidden dreams
Feeling lost
Consumed by shame and rage.
I want to lie in their arms
 forever
I want to die in their arms
 forever
There is no turning back."

He raised his eyes from the wrinkled page and hesitantly scanned the eyes that were focused on him. Did they like it? But then he realized that they didn't know the whole truth.

"Who did you say the poem was by, Phil?" Mrs. Robertson asked.

He turned to look at her and saw that her legs were crossed; her skirt was slit to display the soft flesh of her endless legs to his covetous eyes.

"Phil?"

His eyes met hers and he realized that she knew. Knew both about his poem and the lust he felt for her.

"Uh, William Stone."

"An obscure poet?"

Her eyes radiated amusement and he felt his hunger for her increase. He wanted her to mock him, to degrade him; he would let her do anything she desired to him.

"Yes," he stammered, almost inaudibly.

"He's lying. I saw him writing it down yesterday after you gave out the assignment."

All eyes turned to the speaker. It was Timmy Hawley, J.V. Quarterback extraordinaire and asshole supreme. Phil believed Timmy lived only to torment him. He hadn't even seen the prick come into class, but there he was and pissing on Phil as always.

"Is this true, Phil?" Mrs. Robertson asked, but he could tell that she already knew it was.

"Yes," he whispered.

"I'm glad that you have the ability to write poetry, Phil, but that was not the assignment."

"He's a poet and think he know it," Timmy chimed in, breaking up the class into a maelstrom of laughter.

Mrs. Robertson flashed a cold glance across the room and let it come to rest on Phil as he stood shaking behind the podium.

"I want to see you after class, Phil. And you too, Timmy."

"Fuck," Timmy hissed.

"I heard that," she responded as Phil shuffled back to his seat.

As he passed Julie, her eyes locked with his and she

flicked her tongue at him. He sat down, blushing all over, as the teacher called the next student to the front of the room. He found a ragged piece of paper on the desktop with a single word written across it in wide, curving print: watch. Looking up and to the row of desks directly on his right, he watched as Julie slid her hand underneath the back of Kylie's skirt. The dark haired girl leaned way up in her desk, pushing her buttocks farther back towards the other girl. Mesmerized, he watched the movement of Julie's hand beneath Kylie's black skirt; and he began absently caressing his erection in response to the scene before him.

The dismissal bell thundered through the room and he suddenly realized that he had completely lost track of time as he had watched the girls. Julie rose and walked back to him smiling. Abruptly, she wiped her fingers across his mouth, smearing a thin film of pungent fluid over his lips.

"Keep dreaming, little boy. It's in your blood."

Then she was gone and he was left alone in the room with Timmy and Mrs. Robertson. She only stared at him for awhile and then abruptly got up to close the door. She returned and sat on the front of the desk, rather than behind it, exposing her legs for the boys to drool over.

"You've both behaved badly in class today. You, Phil, deliberately disobeyed my homework assignment. And you, Timmy, mocked a fellow student and cursed in my class."

They could say nothing. She was right, and Phil was more than eager to take whatever punishment she gave to him.

"Phil, I want you to bring me five poems by real poets tomorrow. Do you understand me?"

"Yes, ma'am," though this was not exactly the kind of punishment that he had been hoping for.

"Good. You're dismissed."

Disgruntled, he picked up his books and tried to leave without leering at her. He couldn't; the smell on his lips was driving him crazy.

"Phil."

He stopped, almost at the door.

"Yes, Mrs. Robertson?"

"Will you please stop staring at me like that all the time. I'm not some piece of meat for your dirty fantasies. You'll never be able to have me. Keep dreaming, little boy."

He tore from the classroom with tears spraying hotly from his eyes and her - and Timmy's - laughter echoing in his ears. Lockers flashed by him in a grey and rusty blur, numbers without meaning whirled past his blurry vision, until he slammed into the exit door and bounded out across the pavement, leaving surprised expressions on all the faces in his wake. He fled down dingy streets and through back alleys littered with broken glass and dirty needles without a single thought as to where he was

going or even where he was. He never saw the dumpster as he rounded the corner. It connected with the entire front of his body and he slid down its cool surface watching the green turn to red to grey to black.

Phil swam upstream as quickly as he could, but only sank deeper and deeper beneath the tide. The water surrounding him was black as ink and tasted vile in his mouth. He struggled desperately not to breathe, but lost the battle in a single, massive stroke. The filthy, choking water flooded into his lungs; but after a moment of intense panic, he found that he could still breathe. The water itself seemed to undergo a transformation as he breathed it in; no longer was it so horrible to him, instead it had actually become suddenly soothing in a strange way.

He ceased struggling and lay calmly submerged in the dark ichor, relishing the intimate caresses of the unctuous currents. He closed his eyes, for they were no longer of any use to him anyway in the blackness. Without warning, a cold wind washed over his body, replacing the gentle warmth of the brackish water with a numbing chill. He opened his eyes and saw his own image reflected above him in a dark mirror of glassy, black stone. He was old and wrinkled as he lay still and naked upon a coral reef. Snow cascaded down around him in a freezing rain that obscured the shifting sands of the ocean floor.

He fought against the weight of the world to lift his arm towards the reflection and, after an eternity of

agonized motion, finally held out his hand to the glossy rock. The mirror shattered, fracturing his image into countless minute replicas of himself to lay silent and forgotten on the ocean floor forever. It was then that he realized the truth about the wrinkles covering his parched flesh: they were words, carved and stitched into his ancient body. Their message was the same over the entire surface of his skin: I am a slow learner, it is in my blood.

His hand fell limply back onto the coral and he felt his arm fracture with the impact. He tried to scream but his throat was too old and dry to make the sound. As Julie and Kylie, robed in dripping seaweed, approached him he wept without tears, for his eyes were too old and dry to water. The girls knealt beside him and kissed one another deeply as their soft bodies merged to form a gigantic hourglass devoid of sand. It filled up with blood and then imploded in a flash of brilliant blue light accompanied by hideous laughter.

Phil awoke, screaming hysterically, as his body was shaken violently by unseen hands. He was temporarily blinded by the scorching brightness of the cloudy sky, so that when he tried to scramble away from the rough fingers that dug into his naked arm he collided with the dumpster once again.

"Shh, kid! I ain't gonna hurt ya."

The voice was hoarse and whispery and seemed to come

from miles away. The light gradually dimmed as he sat stupidly by the dumpster waiting for the voice to come to him once again. When his vision blurred back to a more normal state he took in the disgusting creature sitting before him on the dirty asphalt. The man was filthy and shaggy with lifeless, black eyes and wrinkled yellow skin. His clothes were black and brown with years of trash and filth forming deep layers of grime over his cadaverous body.

"Banged the shit outta ya head 'while ago. Put yo ass clean out," he chuckled dryly and the scent of cheap wine poured over Phil in a sickening wave.

"What's ya name?"

Phil only offered the drunk silence. In truth, he couldn't have spoken if he had wanted to; he would have thrown up on the man if he had tried, not that anyone would have noticed the difference in the man's clothes with a little vomit added to the filth already present.

"Well, mine's Willie," and he extended his gnarled, slimy hand to the boy.

Phil only stared in disgust at the trembling, black-nailed hand and could not force himself to even begin thinking about actually touching it. The drunk withdrew the gesture and grinned sickly at him. His teeth were gone and his gums were black with angry red splotches all over them.

"Fuck ya, boy," the man hissed, grabbing Phil by the

throat before he had a chance to react.

"I could kill ya real easy. I done it 'fore. 'Sides I already got ya money. Course, ya might be able ta stop me. Feelin' lucky, pussy?"

The man's breath and twisted grimace, combined with the clammy feel and trashy smell of his hand, overpowered Phil, and his stomach revolted abruptly, spraying vomit into the crazy man's grimy face. The hand slipped from around his throat and Phil seized the moment even as a fresh stream of vile liquid came spurting from his mouth. He ran and ran, with the crazed drunk's curses echoing in his ears. He ran, over the sidewalks and far down the dirty streets, without ever looking back, but conscious of the endless sea of eyes left in his wake that stared after him in the dimming light of day. Neon lights and whispering voices assailed him from all directions, calling to him:

naked girls! naked girls!
 come in and check 'em out
 fully naked and in your face
 crack fo' sell! crack fo' sell, brother!
 get the fuck outta my way!
 you stupid bitch!
 where my money?
 wanna date?
 need some company, honey?
 and God...
 and God...
 wanna blowjob?
 shall wipe away the tears from...
 change, change, change
 stop that motherfucker!
 all their eyes, and the sinners shall...
 hizai say moonde di sis
 sheo mah ya genowhi
 burn in Hell!
 wit zat mo

fu yoo
...forever...

He ran on and on, past darkening alleys littered with used condoms, bloody needles, and broken bottles; past gang-bangers dealing out rocks to wide-eyed zombies, past hookers on their scarred knees, past pools of piss and vomit, past dead children and bloody trashbins, past people crawling and moaning in pain, past the roar of guns and the flash of knives, past screeching tires and blaring horns, past graffitted walls and cardboard hotels. He ran, swimming through sweltering air drenched with smog and pollutants. He ran on and on and....

When he collapsed before the apartment door his mind was dancing furiously behind his dripping eyes and the thundering of his soul merged with the echoing cacophony of the world. When he fell beyond the door he went down beneath the distorted tide of reality and lay in silence upon the rolling waves of the floor.

It was completely dark when he finally came to his senses and awoke from his daze. He sat up slowly in the black warmth and let all thoughts drift away from him to find their own niche in the twilight that engulfed the room. Without thinking he remained seated upon the floor waiting for the numbness of the day to leave his troubled mind. At length, he rose and found the lightswitch near the door and reluctantly flipped it on. The brightness was a physical assault upon his weary eyes which brought him down upon the cool leather of the couch, where he lay

face down waiting for the pain to leave his battered eyes.

The crisp smell of the leather filled his nostrils and beneath it he could smell something else - sex. He often watched them upon the couch as they writhed all over one another, making the leather moan against the friction of their sweaty flesh. He would listen to her whimpers and desperate yelps, and to the man's hungry groans and harsh cries. She knew that he watched her for she would sometimes look out into the hall, her eyes glazed over with lust, and stare directly into his intense face; however, she had never mentioned it to him in the three years that he had been spying on her activities. She was beautiful with her luxurious red curls and her soft, swelling breasts, but he never dreamed of her, and he would never approach her - but he would watch. Oh yes, he would watch, taking it all in - every thrust, every lick, every request, every demand, every touch, every look - until he would have to bite his tongue to keep from screaming as his semen poured out over his hand. She loved him and he loved her, because he knew that even though she enjoyed it, she also did it partially for him. He would go to school. He would write. He would become a great poet one day. He would do what she had never been able to do - escape. He would prove that she had been right and his long vanished father wrong. He would make up for the days she spent in the convenience store. He would make all those nights she spent upon the couch or in some stranger's

bed worth more than a few dollars, fleeting pleasure and mild humiliation. This was his destiny. It was a weight upon his soul that he carried alone and in silence.

When she came home it was nearly nine 'o clock and Phil was hard at work in his room, writing poems. His work was as good as any of the dead poets in the anthologies and he would not bow to the insensibilities of idiots. Instead, he would dazzle them with his amazing feel for words and intricate image patterns. Then Julie and Kylie and Mrs. Robertson would not make fun of him any longer. Timmy Hawley would be exposed for the brainless prick that he was, and his mother would praise him endlessly.

"Phil, what do you want to eat?"

He sat with his pen poised over the harsh, white, blank surface of the page and thought about it for a moment.

"I don't care," he called back at length.

"Eggs?"

"Why not."

His pen attacked the page with a sudden fury and he could feel his tortured soul pouring from its metallic point onto the defiant page. He could smell the eggs cooking in the other room and toyed with the idea of incorporating it into one of his poems, but ultimately rejected the idea. The hum of electricity filled his ears and he synthesized it with the sound of the car horns rising from the streets below to create a poem about the city as a living creature, a bloodstained, neon Leviathan of

the modern day. The phrase that kept leaping unbidden into his mind also became the starting point of a new poem. He saw the words form on the page and knew that he was about to write a masterpiece. The phrase was deafening in his ears, screaming at him,

"Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven."

As the poem took shape before his eyes he could feel the power of the words resonating off the page and filling the air with their presence. When his mother called him to dinner he rose slowly, as if he had just awakened from a trance, and exhaustedly made his way into the other room.

They ate mostly in silence, each focused on their own interior world. He watched her eating and despite his best efforts he could not keep the image of her kneeling on the floor the night before with the black man's penis erupting in her open mouth.

"How was school?" she asked abruptly, shattering the scenes unfolding in his mind.

"Okay."

"Written any poems lately?"

He could tell that she was really just trying to break the monotonous silence and was actually pretty disinterested.

"I read one to the class today; and, I'm going to read another one tomorrow."

"They liked the one you read today that much?"

"I guess so. The teacher told me to bring several

more tomorrow, but I'm just going to read one really good one instead."

"That's great. I'm glad you're doing so well with them."

"Me too."

The silence returned and he was glad of it. He had not relished the idea of lying to her any further. When he had finished eating he cleaned up his plate and, kissing her lightly on the cheek, went to get ready for bed. She stopped briefly by his room later on to wish him good night and then went to bed herself.

When sleep fell upon him, his mind floated eagerly down into the dark waters of his dreams. The tide washed over him and it was so cold that it burned. He dreamt that he was buried alive in ice and was burning in an unholy fire that shed neither light nor warmth. The damned were gathered before him in the twilight of his dream Hell, robed in rusty chains. They masturbated furiously before his frozen eyes, excited by his screams of agony. Julie, Kylie, Mrs. Robertson, Timmy, and even his mother all lay directly in front of him, sprawled upon the boiling, reddish stone of eternity. Their eyes were black as night, but so alive with hate and lust that they smoldered. Unable to move within the ice, he thrashed about internally and screeched his blind fury at the hellish gathering before him. There was fire and pain all around them as they lay ensconced by a wall of darkness that was more than simply

the absence of light. In the eternal distance, massive wings seemed to thunder without pause in a world without end. As his body ruptured, his screams formed a single word out of the cascading blood, Amen!

He awoke with rage burning brightly in his dark soul. It filled him up and drove him on towards his inescapable destiny. And in the screeching blackness of his mind he stood upon the precipice of damnation and then fell forward into the waiting, bloodstained skein of madness.

"Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven.
I am a slow learner, it is in my blood."

Sleep never returned to him that night and he was up early, far before first light. His mother left for work at six and he was up and out before she had even risen for the morning. In the fading darkness of pre-dawn the streets were just as filthy and littered with human refuse as they were in the evening. He walked past the alleyways and flashing lights that had swirled so madly about him the previous afternoon without a single thought. The rage in his heart made him feverish and his head throbbed sickly, but he pushed onwards toward his destiny regardless.

When he entered the schoolyard he found the darkest area he could and sat in hateful silence letting the anger within him radiate brightly about his body as a shield. He took no notice of the others as they poured into the ever brightening concrete yard; and they, in turn, took no notice of him either. He thought of what their response to his poems might be. At first he had been slightly

optimistic that they would yet see the error of their ways, but his dream had shown that this was not to be. Instead he had been shown his true destiny and now he knew the way. He had gone too far to turn back, ever.

The bell startled him out of his reverie and he silently rose and entered the cold walls of the school building. He made his way into homeroom and waited patiently for the bell to signal the change of classes. When it rang it sounded like black thunder and, as if lost in an endless dream, he managed to make his way through the dismal day until finally it was time for him to go to Mrs. Robertson's class. He sat down in his desk and watched the others slowly trickle into the room. Julie and Kylie entered together and sat down giggling. He knew that they were probably laughing at him, about what they had done to him the day before. It didn't really bother him any longer; he simply added it to the fire already burning in his heart. They were as damned as he was and just didn't realize it yet. When the spiteful world came crashing down upon them he would be waiting, screaming and naked, in the Hell beyond the darkness of despair. He would be waiting for them all. When Mrs. Robertson entered he watched her long legs and stared at her ass as she turned towards the blackboard: I'll be waiting for you, bitch, he thought. When she sat down, her eyes locked with his and he flicked his tongue across his quivering lips in response to her stare. For the first time all year, the mocking laugh in her eyes

faltered and she turned away from him and the darkness he exuded. When the tardy bell rang and she had run through the attendance record, he knew that his moment had finally come.

"I believe Phil has some poetry for us this afternoon," she sighed and refused to meet his gaze.

Without a word he rose and went to the front of the room. He looked out at the sea of dancing eyes and returned the mocking smirks of the other students. Their smiles vanished before the blinding darkness of his own.

"This poem is untitled," and he let the madness rush forth,

"I am shadow
I am outcast
I am agony
I am rage

your scapegoat god
shackled and chained
in ice and raining blood

I have no heart
I have no soul
I have no reason
I have no mercy

and I am unbound

Tenth grade is Hell

and I am burning
crucified before you

Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven.

I am open and waiting for you
I am eviscerated and crying for you

despair
blasphemy
decay
h
a
t
e

Do not ask for salvation
Nor for forgiveness

for I am a dark and spiteful god
Come unto me and I shall tear you asunder
Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven.

bring your humbled masses
 before my frozen shrine
 cover my bloody shroud
 with the fruit of your fornication

For I have come
 As BABYLON
 Rising out of the blistered earth
 To spray my sickness
 Over the dark face of the waters
 Damned be my name!
 Damned be my name!
 Damned be my name!
 I am of the stigmatized
 And
 I am unbound

waiting
 for
 you
 all

Far, far better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven."

He could feel the shock pouring from their stunned faces, and without warning he lifted the podium into the air and hurled it at Timmy Hawley. It struck the boy in the left temple with an audible crack. His head was thrown back sharply and blood spurted from his open mouth. As the world filled up with screams Timmy lay twitching upon the floor in a spreading pool of thick, dark blood.

"I'll see you in Hell," Phil hissed.

His eyes then fell upon Mrs. Robertson's teary, hysterical face and he could see the horror and fear well up inside of her as she met his cold gaze. He was upon her immediately. The students trampled one another in their desperate rush to escape the sanguinary room, heedless of their teacher's frantic cries for help. Phil clawed and bit at the woman beneath him mercilessly as he tore her clothes from her body. She alternately pleaded with him and cursed him as he rabidly assaulted her writhing

form. His teeth found her throat and with a sudden violent movement he tore into the soft flesh and savagely lapped up her hot blood as it splashed into his mouth.

Hands covered his body and ripped him from the grotesquely squirming figure beneath him, and then he was borne out of the bloody room, screaming madly at the cold walls as the hallway rushed past him. Something heavy and hard struck him at the base of the skull and the soothing darkness engulfed him beneath its crimson tide.

He awoke alone in a freezing world of unctuous blackness. Somewhere far away he could hear massive wings beating restlessly. Burning winds came out of the distance and lashed his naked flesh. He raised his arms in the darkness and groped blindly for something to hold onto. When he lay his hands upon the scorching surface before him, he screamed as his skin melted and fused with the wall. After an eternity, the pain seemed to diminish and his screams turned to tears in the dark of forever. He hissed words of silence at the desolation around him and the wall began to wail pitifully in response.

Far better...

He began to laugh as his thoughts started to drift down around him like burning snow.

Far, far better to reign...

He wrenched his mangled limbs from the wall and listened to the wrinkles and stitches on his parched skin whispering at him incessantly. With his burned and deformed fingers

he began to claw at the now brittle, invisible surface before him. The marks on his flesh told him what he was to write. The screams of the damned echoed in his ears and the horrid stench of decay filled the emptiness of eternity. Blood rained up into the stagnant air as the words on his wrinkled flesh took form and floated onto the wall:

I am a slow learner
It is in my blood

i am a slow learner
it is in my blood

i am a slowlearner
itis inmy blood

iamaslowlearner
itisinmyblood

iiiiiiiIIIIII ammma slllllooooww

learneeeeerrr

blooditsinmybl
i ma a wols renrael
ti si ni ym doolb

In the Eyes of the Maelstrom

Above the howling winds and roaring thunder, I could hear the breakers smashing against the rocky shore. The waters lashed out violently, driven by the storm's tempestuous fury, shaking the lighthouse foundations. I watched languidly as the beacon played along the water, warning all ships of the obvious danger. A strange mist had rolled in with the storm; a blueish-black fog which reflected my light, obscuring my already limited field of vision. Watching, I felt drawn to the mist and my eyes could barely perceive the nearly hidden shape moving within the cloudy confines of the fog.

I stood abruptly, focusing the beam full on the vessel slowly emerging from the fog and into sight. It was a small wooden craft with tattered black sails, its wheel turning with no hand to guide it. I could see no crew, indeed not even a rat, as I scanned the ship with my light; yet I felt watched from within the cabin's dark recesses. Again, I had to fight the compulsion to dash from the safety of the lighthouse and out onto the storm-rent shore. The ship drew ever nearer as I watched helplessly. The impending disaster could not be halted as it sailed forward and into the sharp rocks of the coastline.

The crash rose above even the furious din of the storm and rolling breakers. Wood thrown high into the air flew about the shore as the ship was cleft and shredded on the rocks by the wailing tempest. I turned my beam down until

I could search the small expanse of stony coastline. My mouth opened with shock as I saw a woman, clad only in a white gown, lying face down upon the rocks. I wondered where she could have come from, if not the wrecked ship, as I slipped into my coat and headed down the stairs, for I could never have left her to lie dead or dying out in the storm.

Her long black tresses clung heavily to her back and shoulders in the rain; and I feared that I was indeed too late as I saw no signs of life in her body. Gently, I grasped her arm, alarmed at its severe coldness, and turned her over onto her back. She was beautiful, lit only by the brief flashes of lightning and the dim light of my beam; and as I caressed her cheek, her eyes fluttered but did not open. Carefully, I lifted her and carried her into the lighthouse and up the stairs.

Though she still did not appear to breathe, I watched both fascinated and horrified as her eyes opened wide when I laid her down upon a small couch. Her eyes were like twin pools of darkness, and I could feel myself being drawn down into those black depths as I stared into her pale, pale face. When my quivering lips met hers, I gazed deeper into her eyes and could see eternity darkly reflected within them. I kissed her again, more passionately this time, and tasted my own blood as it dripped from her lips. Soon, I drifted into the soft blackness her eyes had promised, and when I awoke she was gone, as was the wreckage and

ne storm.

I do not know how long ago it was that she came to
e, for I spend my days in deep sleep and find I can only
unction at night. I wait patiently, knowing that she
ill come sailing out of those dark and misty waters to
eclaim me; and I can tell that it will not be long now.
n the distance, I can hear the clapping of heavy thunder
nd the terrible moaning of the wind-lashed sea.

In the Image

"...and did you know they found a body in Wyoming yesterday?"

Jerry's eyes shone beady and black in the low light of the room as he spoke. He was smiling slightly in anticipation of his friend's answer.

"Yes, I think I read about it in the paper this morning," William responded, lifting his glass of whiskey to his lips.

Jerry laughed dryly in response before continuing, "Whoever did it cut him open and took out his guts. Now this is the interesting part, before they left they sewed him up and then took off with his insides."

"Do you think the police realize that it had to be the work of more than one man?"

Jerry frowned slightly, "Perhaps, I'm not sure."

William started to ask him another question but saw that his friend's attention had been diverted by the television screen again.

"Fascinating," Jerry mumbled, his eyes mesmerized by the images unfolding before them.

A very pretty brunette was being tied to a bed by three large, masked men. They, like the screaming girl who writhed helplessly on the bed, were completely naked. The men each took turns with her, beating her savagely as they raped her mercilessly, penetrating every orifice of her body. After they had finished with her sexually,

they fell in upon her with their teeth and then began to jump up and down on her until she was reduced to nothing more than a pile of soggy flesh and bones on the once powdery blue sheets.

"How exhilarating," William murmured absently as the screen went black.

"I dreamt that I was a woman last night," Jerry said, lighting one of his imported cigarettes.

"Pretty, I hope."

"Oh God, yes," he took a long draw on his cigarette and exhaled slowly before proceeding, "Anyway, I was a young woman and I was in a church - one of the old stone churches that are so dark and cold, looking - and I was wearing a blue teddy with black lace fringe. I was kneeling before the altar masturbating with a couple of fingers in myself when I noticed a priest watching me from the shadows. He came over and jacked off into my mouth. As I was swallowing his communion, he said, 'The blood of Christ, Mary.'"

"Your name was Mary?"

"Yes, I suppose so."

William broke into a wild fit of laughter at his friend's dream name. After a bit he calmed down enough to finish his drink in the sudden silence that fell over the room. Unable to bear the quiet any longer he decided to renew the conversation: "I had a good salad with my steak last night."

"Tar-tar, I hope."

"Yes, certainly. I used a champagne dressing on my salad, of course."

"And to drink?"

"A Bloody Mary."

They both burst into laughter at this. When the silence returned, they both struggled mentally for something to talk about that would break the quiet.

"At least it's fairly comfortable here. Even if it is a bit dark and quiet," Jerry said softly.

"Yes, it's much nicer than I thought it would be."

"I wonder when they'll find the car?" Jerry asked, not really expecting an answer.

"I wish the damn screen wouldn't stay blank so much."

"Good programs, though," Jerry responded as the screen suddenly flickered to life.

People of all shapes, races, and ages danced wildly in a pit of roaring flames beneath an ominous, violet sky. They were all naked and tearing at one another's flesh madly. In a matter of seconds a full range of orgiastic activities had filled the screen with fractured, cross-cut images of homosexuality, masturbation, flagellation, bestiality, bondage, rape, fellatio, sodomy, cunnilingus, gang-bangs, pedophilia, necrophilia, cannibalism, murder, torture, suicide, and other perversions too numerous to name and flashed too quickly to retain. Abruptly the images dissolved into a single scene. A beautiful woman with

jade eyes, long raven hair, full breasts, and a lithe figure sat naked and drenched in semen upon a writhing, screaming mound composed of the ruptured bodies of aborted fetuses. She held her hairless vagina open wide so that the severed, rotting head between her splayed thighs could lick her easily. A single word had been carved into the man's skull, Judas. The woman on the screen began laughing hysterically as she urinated in the severed head's mouth. The image faded out slowly as they watched transfixed.

"I wish I had those bags now," Jerry whispered.

"God yes, I'm famished."

Jerry unbuttoned his shirt and wiped the sweat away from his brow with his hands: "I wish they'd turn down the damn heat."

"A minor inconvenience," William responded.

"Are you quite sure you had that salad last night?"

William frowned for a moment as he thought about it and then shrugged, "It must have been a few days ago."

"Yes, the same with my dream," Jerry said, putting out his cigarette on the black table beside him.

"I do wish there was a clock in here. It gets a bit confusing not being able to keep track of the time."

"I wonder if anyone's found the car, yet."

"I wonder what will happen to those bags of goodies,"

William added.

"I'm so hungry," Jerry returned, licking his lips absently.

The television screen lit up again and this time they watched, smiling hungrily, as a woman gave birth. The delivery doctor bit the umbilical cord off as the nurses fought with another to get at the woman's gory vagina. The baby cried pathetically as the doctor handed it to its mother and she bit deeply into its soft, pink belly.

Jerry looked over at William and giggled obscenely: "God, I wish I had those bags," he said, smiling sickly at his friend; his teeth appeared so terribly sharp in the dimming light as he rose and lay his hands on William's chest.

Introspection

My mind,
A well of darkness
Do I despair or rejoice?
Visions that shun light and are better to remain ...
A wall filled with pain
A rage that makes fire of the soul
Heaven or Hell, light and dark,
Black and white the chiascuro intertwines them all.
Obsessions so petty that they burn
Perversions become pleasures without pain
To suffer like the sand upon the desert beneath the sun
My thoughts, snow upon the ground
Still I seek ...

Neon lights blind,
Sin set to a melody that dances upon the streets
In the city, wind,
Flowing hair and pretty faces
Angels fill the night all so eager to spread their wings.
Divine harlot with this unction I thee wed
Lust springs eternal from the human mind
Forbidden fruit -
My God, how you lied.
Crucifixes on tiles in the toilet walls, I see them everywhere
The angles within a circle
And the order in Chaos,
Child of Providence, how you spoke the truth.

Saints in Hell tell me, can the written word sin?
Absolution from within is all that I seek
For I am a kind and loving God
My temple is flesh and I scream hymns to ecstasy,
But I digress without intention
To be free from the curse of attention.
My feelings,
Lost in the haze
Did someone speak of madness?
Forgive me if I only know of the sadness ...
Of sanity.

Prejudiced cynicism,
 But for the mind schism brings death.
 Fearful misanthropy,
 But why do I love beauty so?
 Hypocrisy so holy,
 The pious ones bathed in semen and reeking of flesh,
 Is my seat in Heaven still safe?
 The piper calls for the dance of the Damned
 Do I despair or rejoice?
 I have found the mystery
 (The dream is reality)
 And I have found the dream
 (Reality is but a dream)
 The mystery calls me to awaken
 (But sleep is the mystery)
 My eyes are open, but my mind ...
 Still I seek ...

Born of darkness
 With a fragile light and a trembling hand,
 Images pour forth as a blessing from beyond;
 An execration of life found in juxtaposition,
 No words ...
 ()?

The mind is a terrible thing ...
 I make haste lest I forget to make waste.
 Can freedom truly bind?
 Doctrines taught loom so large as
 Sycophants preying on youth teach ...
 Knowledge hangs from the Tree of Life,
 A bright, red apple in the Garden of Eden,
 I lie down in the Valley of the Shadow of Death
 And I tremble, for I still long to return to the womb.
 Tears, passion, lust, anger, love, hate, jealousy ...
 Progress,
 I decry from afar and decry within
 All that I have known and all that I wish to know
 For I am illusion and the world is a nightmare.
 Trapped within ...

Dark reflections
 (The only salvation I know)
 The bitter taste lingers,
 (The only sustenance I crave)
 My mind ...
 With confusion and enmity armed
 Still I seek ...

Kata's Dream

Kata lay down in darkness beneath the stars and wept. Her tears flowed down her face unseen and her quiet sobs went unnoticed in the stillness around her. As she stared up at the massive black gulf of the heavens with her wet and blurry eyes, she let her thoughts drift slowly away. The wind rose all around her and she gazed out across rolling green meadows littered with small trees at irregular intervals. The very scarcity of the trees made them all the prettier and the small circles of shade they provided were so precious to her in the heat of the summer afternoon. She lay beneath the gently stirring branches, gazing out across the field and at the big house in the distance and not thinking about anything in particular. The breeze caressed her chest through the thin material of her blouse but her legs were wet with the heat of the afternoon; her jeans allowing none of the breeze to reach her skin. With hardly a thought she undid them and tossed them aside and lay back, relishing the feel of the cool wind upon her body. The sun began to fall in the sky and the afternoon cooled slowly as the breeze gently increased. Bathed in the amber glow of the dying light, Kata dressed and made her way across the meadow and to her house.

The moon shone brightly down upon her and Kata sighed against the night, a soft sob catching in her throat. She saw herself and another girl and a boy with the blondest hair and softest blue eyes, lying naked on her big canopy

bed, surrounded by pink veils and giggling quietly as the afternoon sun poured through the window. They were touching one another cautiously and gently, carefully exploring and discovering the new worlds of each other's bodies. The boy kissed her and she whispered his name, "Geoff." Then he was lying flat upon the bed and she and the other girl - the girl whose hair was like fire and whose eyes were like jade serpents - were tasting him and kissing one another and then the boy was gone and she and the girl were alone on the bed and they were older; and the girl whispered, "Yes, I still miss him." Kata kissed her friend and said her name, "Tanja." Kissing her, Kata tasted herself on her lips and smiled.

The trees cast swaying shadows over her nakedness in the night and Kata saw herself holding Gerri, gently rubbing his big furry, grey head and tickling his soft ears. She watched him lying on her bed, washing and curling the fur on his stomach with his tongue. She hugged him tightly and kissed him on the nose as he purred loudly in the quiet room; and she stared into his eyes - so big and like spring they were so green - and all her troubles had vanished. Then there was the ground, harsh and cold, and two red roses lying on the earth in the night rain and Kata saw herself crying; her tears tasted like bloody fire in her mouth. She placed her hand to her eyes, collecting the moisture on her fingertips and then placed them against the damp ground and whispered, "These are tears."

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In the dark, the stars were like glitter in her eyes and Kata saw the awkwardness of love - and the beauty. The pain as she bit her hand and felt blood between her legs. The man above her kissing her, telling her, "I love you." And then he was lying beside her and she was sore and trembling. The tears came without warning and he held her close to him and she could feel his heart beating and his breath upon her neck. She loved men but had never married because she had never been able to devote herself to just one person at a time and also had never given up her love for other women. She and Tanja had remained close friends and lovers until they graduated high school. They had kept in touch afterwards for awhile but once at separate schools had gradually drifted apart until they no longer had had any contact with each other at all.

Kata shivered in the coldness of the night. She saw herself standing in the rain, watching people drift by in a wave of black suits and dresses, speaking useless words of comfort to her. She saw herself walking away from the black caskets and wandering off into the dark heart of the cemetery. Kata saw herself as she had been, alone in the world, moving like a ghost in the rain among the graves in the cold and wet grey of winter afternoon. Kata was alone in the world beneath the cold and silent dark of winter night. She watched herself in the mirror, mesmerized by the flashing lights behind her. There were hands all over her body, caressing the red silk of her

dress and running fingers through her dark hair. She was dancing in the darkness, surrounded by swirling lights and neon shadows and there were tears in her eyes when she stepped out into the cold night and into bed with the arms of her lovers holding her between them as she cried herself to sleep.

Kata thought of the children she wanted and saw them waiting for her in the sky among the silent stars; and the wind whispered, "Mother." Kata thought of the future she desired and saw the sky turn blue and warm beyond the slow glow of twilight. Wiping the tears from her red eyes, Kata rose from the cool, wet grass and stood in the warm glare of the morning light, running her hands over her nakedness. Her dream gone with the coming of dawn, Kata woke and opened up her soft, coppery eyes. Light rose slowly around her and she was radiant as fire and her eyes began to glitter like gold. Around her the world was silent and warm and blue and green. She was awake at last and the shadows on the wall became wings, so soft and white, that wrapped her in a gentle embrace and sang her a lullaby as they carried her away, so far away...

Kata lay in bed, letting her eyes adjust to the gloomy twilight of the morning and then stretching, slowly climbed out of bed and went to the window. She opened the curtains and raised the blinds to let the greyish light into the room. She stood before the window, her breasts and face against the cool glass, looking out at the city sprawling

like an industrial fog below her and began to cry. She smiled as the tears came down her face and she sat down in the chair by the window, letting her thoughts run free, and watched the sun brighten the world. After awhile she drifted off to sleep again and in her dreams she was a dove, robed in white, soaring over open green meadows, sparsely covered by gently swaying trees.

The Little Girl by the Sea

He stood naked upon the deserted beach watching silently as the dark, greenish waves rolled across the shore. Seagulls swooped over the cool waters, searching for fish and crying out shrilly. Their sharp voices seemed an intrusion on the silence above which the ocean roared. He ground his feet into the warm sand as the cool winds pushed against him, tossing his long sun-bleached hair about and raising bumps on his exposed flesh. His dark gray eyes reflected the bloody, brilliant glow of the setting sun as he dug his nails into the palms of his clenched fists. He smiled widely and abruptly ran screaming into the inviting sea where he submerged his body beneath the swirling waves and twisted ecstatically in the ocean's cold, wet embrace. The water caressed him intimately as he lay serenely within its depths. He moved swiftly back and forth within the currents before passionately bursting up through the wet surface gasping for air.

He shook his head wildly, throwing water violently from his hair and clearing his eyes, before relaxing atop the cool, rolling waves. Soft, high-pitched singing drew his attention to the shore. He tread gently in the water as his eyes located a little girl standing on the beach, eyes closed and hands folded as if in prayer, singing sweetly to the sea. The light of the sinking sun made her long, white dress glow a soft pink color, and her long, curly blonde tresses flew about her in the sighing winds. She looked so tiny and fragile as she sang:

Kneeling in prayer by the sighing sea
I saw the angels descending from Heaven
It was a joy I had never dreamed,
Rapture! (Her voice rose higher and higher.)
My Lord has come...
To stay.

She ceased singing and the winds fell dead and the sea grew still. The silence was deafening in the pause. Suddenly, he realized that she was no longer a child but an adult. Her pinkish lit dress turned a darker shade as the sun began to sink into the sea. He shut his eyes against the reddish glow and when he opened them her dress fell from her lithe body, leaving her naked upon the shore. Her beauty made him shiver in the utter stillness. Off to his left a flock of seagulls screeched and fell dead, as one, into the chilly water. Upon the shore, the woman began to tremble and her lips quivered as she spoke into the disrupted silence.

"In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men, fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake."

Without warning, she opened her eyes and he screamed as the ocean rose around him like a massive wall. The waves crashed mercilessly down on him, forcing him to struggle desperately to remain afloat. With the harsh winds spraying salty foam into his face he looked towards the receding shore. She was still standing there in the wet sand with her red eyes glowing balefully as she pointed at him with a long taloned finger.

Blood cascaded down her face from out of her hellishly glowing eyes and nameless abominations shambled out of the roiling sea to grovel at her feet. He could smell the sickening odor of decaying fish that the creatures exuded from their mottled flesh, even as the undertow began to draw him further out to sea.

The sun vanished and the moon, full and red as blood, glared down upon the evil scene. The frog-like creatures with dripping black wings writhed hideously on the woman's body as he watched, crying. Two of them clung tightly to each of her breasts, chewing on them rabidly. They drank her blood and tore her soft flesh even as others moved obscenely between her spread legs. She threw her gory face up to the sanguinary moon and howled in demonic ecstasy; her forked tongue flicking restlessly across the fangs protruding from her top jaw. Finally, before the waves bore him under, he saw her bloody flesh turn a deep green color.

He lay in the freezing warmth of the ocean's womb, caressing himself while he dreamt of the women he had known. He awoke from strange dreams of penetration to find his hands drenched with semen and saw that his skin had turned green. Blood dripped from beneath his dirty black nails and the taste of rotten fish filled his mouth. The nameless things swam in undulating patterns beneath him, laughing maniacally. To his ruptured ears their laughter sounded like, "I love you." He embraced them and held them close as they raped and ravaged him. His baleful crimson eyes lit their blasphemous communion as they feasted upon him.

He howled back at them as thick strands of blood oozed into his open mouth. Darkness enshrouded him and the cold, black waters entombed him along with the twisted abortions of his conscience forever.

On the calm, dark shore a little girl in a white dress ran alongside the cool water's edge singing softly to the sea and the windy night.

Look to the Sky

When I die will you hold me in your arms
Sing me away, sing me away to another place, another time
Free of pain and despair with only light to guide the way
Lift your voice to the sighing winds and help me escape
the night

Sail away with me, sail away with me my love
To a land of dreams and fantasy
Of life and hope where our hearts can thunder as one
Upon the wings of a storm

When you die I will hold you in my arms
And beside your grave
I will make my bed to lie
I will sing you away, sing you so far away
Out of the night and into the heavens so bright above

Don't cry, my love
For my soul still lives in your heart
And I ride the sky, soaring upon the wings of eternity
All the love and warmth we shared can be saved with,
I remember

Until tomorrow,
Look to the sky
Feel the fire burning in your soul
And if you wish upon a star
Your dreams can unfold before your eyes
As animated realities on the canvas of the night sky

Falling, falling out of your arms
Calling, calling out to you from a world apart
I will wait by your side for now and for ever
Spread your wings
And find your sky

I will be there for you when you die
To help you fly away

Marilyn

All of Marilyn's dolls screeched at her as she crawled across the floor, "Whore!" in a cacaphonous chorus of whispers, moans, and screams.

She slashed blindly at them with the knife in her hand, tearing through plush fabric and shattering delicate porcelain. Her greyish eyes reflected no light in the darkness of the candle-lit room. Her skin was hot and sweaty against the cool wood of the floor and her wet, blonde hair hung in thick strands over her face, hiding the twisted smile that rose on her lips as the blade tore into one of the dolls.

She crawled into the ravaged remains of the fabric and porcelain objects that she had assembled on the floor and began to rub them over her flesh. The candles cast grotesque, flickering shadows of the girl's writhing figure across the walls and ceiling.

"I love you," she screamed at the remnants as she began to flail away at them once again with the knife. "I love you all," she hissed as she burst into fresh tears and let the blade fall to the floor.

She drew her knees up tight against her bosom and rocked quickly back and forth as she wailed uncontrollably. Her mind was a chaotic roar of seething, whirling thoughts and images that played relentlessly in her head, torturing her with memories of pain and shame. Looking across the room, she caught her reflection in the broken glass of

the mirror and, staring at her own nakedness, she saw the horror taking place once more behind her eyes.

Her arms and legs were tied to the bedposts and the man - big, strong, and sweaty - was on top of her body, grunting hideously as he drove himself into her over and over and over again. His breath was hot and foul upon her face as he cursed her, "Little whore."

She squinted her eyes against the pain of violation and could feel the tears as they poured down her face.

"Bitch," he cried, slapping her hard so that she tasted blood in her mouth.

"Stop crying, slut. You know you like it," he raved at her as he twisted her nipples so hard that she screamed.

She begged him to stop as he mercilessly assaulted and cursed her. When he finally came inside of her tiny body, he slid off of her and lay panting in the darkness beside her helpless, shivering form. After what had seemed an eternity, he rose and began to dress as he whistled tunelessly to himself. Before he cut her loose he bent down and kissed her hard on the mouth, forcing his tongue inside of her, "Was it good for you?"

He laughed into her face as he cut the ropes and then stood over her, grinning in the dark.

"If you ever tell anyone about this, I'll kill you. They won't believe you anyway, so there's no point in you doing anything stupid."

He knealt beside her on the bed and caressed the side

of her face as he whispered softly to her, "I know how girls your age are. You walk around dressed in skin tight clothes and things that barely cover you, practically begging for it. Then you cry for help when some boy tries something with you, but really you're all a bunch of fucking sluts. Well, that's okay, honey. Daddy's going to look after you. Just remember, baby, I love you. I love all of you."

Rising, he went out of the room but came back in briefly to leer at her once more before leaving her alone for the night.

"Remember to say your prayers," he called from the hallway as he departed.

She reflected on her pain in the semi-darkness of the room as she rocked restlessly back and forth on the floor, crying. He had come to her again and again for a couple of weeks, cursing and humiliating her with the vile things he did and said. When he would leave her, she would lay whimpering in the blackness as she wept for her lost mother, and raged silently at God for letting her father beat and rape her. Slowly, as the nights grew longer and more painful, the darkness had taken over her young mind and at just fourteen years of age she had disintegrated into a wall of anger and madness.

Moaning from the bed next to her brought her out of her whirling thoughts and, retrieving her knife from the remains of the dolls, she raised herself up and climbed

onto the sheets. Her father lay there, naked and tied to the bedposts. Blood smeared his forehead where she had smashed him in the face with a baseball bat when he had come home earlier in the evening. His eyes found her sneering face as she peered at him from the side of the bed and unspeakable fear rose up in him as he suddenly realized that she had gone insane. He began to struggle feebly at the thick ropes that bound him to the bed in an effort to escape what he knew was coming.

"Shh, daddy's awake," she whispered to the gleaming blade held before her eyes.

"Oh, God," the helpless man on the bed moaned.

"Shut the fuck up, bitch," she growled at him as she slapped him hard in the face.

"Please, Marilyn," he whimpered as blood poured from his busted lips.

"Keep your goddamn mouth shut, slut," she screeched as she struck him again.

She climbed completely onto the bed and lay her head down upon his chest, crying softly, "It's going to be okay, isn't it, daddy?"

"Ye-, yes," he whispered back, stammering.

Marilyn rose with furious speed and spat in his eyes, "Liar," and she drove the blade through his lower right arm.

He screamed hideously as she began to laugh, twisting the knife slowly inside of him.

"You like that, don't you? You slut. Yeah, I can tell you do," and leaning down over him, she kissed him lightly on the cheek.

Sitting back up quickly she pulled the blade free and held it up between them. Her eyes sparkled in the candle light as she fascinatedly watched the dark blood oozing thickly across the steel and dripping from the point. Her father was crying incessantly as his arm sprayed blood into the air to rain down upon them.

"Whore," she squealed and without warning grabbed his testicles with her free hand and squeezed them as hard as she could. She matched his howls of anguish with her own repeated cries of, "Whore!" When she finally released her hold upon him, she placed a bloody finger to his lips and leaned over him to whisper in his ear, "I love you, daddy. I love all of you," and she violently shoved her fingers up his anus as she licked his face lewdly before savagely biting into his cheek and tearing a strip of flesh away. She spat the gory piece of skin at his twisted features as she straddled him, placing his limp penis between her vaginal lips. The cold steel of the blade upon his throat silenced his desperate cries abruptly.

"Please, don't kill me," he begged.

"Don't tell anyone, or I'll kill you. That's a promise, whore," she hissed, placing the knife against the side of her face.

She shut her eyes against the coolness of the wet metal

and moaned softly as if in ecstasy, "Do you love me, daddy?"

"Yes."

"Is that why you beat me and curse me and fuck me in the dead of night?"

He didn't answer her and her eyes flashed open, burning with fury.

"Answer me!"

"Yes!"

Fresh tears poured down his bloody face as she ground her hips into him. A dark and perverse smile spread across her lips as she felt him, so small and soft, within her.

"It feels good inside me, daddy," she whispered as she rubbed the cold blade over her belly and breasts, leaving irregular red lines on her skin.

"For God's sake, Marilyn."

She threw her head back in sudden, twisted laughter at his words before once again fixing him with her cold, mad stare.

"God took my mother and left me with you," she spat contemptuously, "I don't need your God!"

She writhed on his body silently for a few minutes before again opening her eyes to question him, "Did you love mom?"

"Yes."

"Did you love her like you love me?"

"I loved her very much," he stammered as he watched her slide the blade over her palm, drawing blood.

"I love you so goddamn much, daddy. Let me count the fucking ways," and she placed the knife against her index finger before continuing the madness.

"First, for raping me at night," slashing open her finger as she spoke.

"Second, for making me suck you," and she opened another finger.

"Third, for fucking me in the ass until I bled," she hissed, shivering as the blood oozed thickly from her lacerated digits.

"Fourth, for beating me and cursing me. And finally, for loving me so goddamned much!"

Her scream echoed throughout the house as she drove the blade through her thumb, nearly severing it. When she pulled it free, she held its dripping point to her lips and licked the blood from it.

"It tastes so sweet, daddy, almost as sweet as your goddamn cum."

"Jesus," he whined as he desperately renewed his struggle with the ropes that bound him to the bed.

She slashed the knife across his nipples, tearing them open as she screeched, "Jesus won't help you, bastard!"

"Don't you like it, daddy? Feels good, doesn't it? I loved it when you were inside me, ripping and fucking and cumming and making me cry and bleed. I loved it! It tasted good when I gagged on it, and even better when I threw it up later. You've been so fucking good to me,

daddy. I love you so much. I won't tell if you don't. I'll be your whore, your cunt, your bitch, your slut, your cocksucker, your twat - forever, you motherfucker. Fuck me, daddy! Don't you want me? Don't you love me any goddamn more!"

She was rabid as she hissed and screamed at him, grinding furiously upon his limp penis. Licking and sucking on the blade, she clawed maniacally at his bloody chest with her free hand as he squirmed and moaned helplessly. She continued to rant and rave at him as she drew the knife across her chest, slicing herself open from breast to breast. Her scream pierced the sanguinary night as she slid the gleaming blade down her belly, stopping when she reached her pubis. Blood splashed over them both as she shivered hideously with the pain of her wounds.

"It feels so fucking good," she croaked breathlessly as waves of pain tore through her ravaged body.

"Now I lay me down to sl-, sleep; I pray the Lord my soul to ke-, keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take," her words trailed off into a husky whisper as spasms surged through her uncontrollably.

Her face twisted with pain, she struggled with the effort to gain enough strength for one final sentence and act, "To take my soul to Hell!"

Her words filled his ears and tore into his pain-hazed mind viciously as she drove the knife up between their bodies and into her vagina. His own terrible scream merged

with hers in an unending wail of unholy agony as he felt the blade slide through his penis and inside of her. The violent convulsions of their bodies forced the knife deeper and deeper into her in an obscene parody of intercourse as blood spurted out thickly from between them and washed across the gory bed. As Marilyn slipped off of her father's spasming body her eyes found his once more and she found the strength to utter one last thing to him before the darkness took her forever, "I'll be waiting."

He screamed and screamed as he struggled with the bloody ropes. By the time he heard the sirens approaching he was no longer able to fight against the bonds that held his bleeding, dying body to the abattoir. As the last candle burned out and left him in darkness he heard the door to the house being broken down and distantly heard the voices that called through the silence to him. He died as they cut him loose and removed him from the soggy mattress. As the blackness of eternity enfolded him in its cold bosom he could hear his daughter's screams echoing in the distance but gradually coming closer.

"Marilyn," he whispered as her teeth found him in the dark and tore into his soul.

"I love you, daddy. Forever."

Masque

In the hall of mirrors
Can you see them dancing?

How they twist and turn
Swaying through the violet night.

Waves of blue and blood red light
Cascading down in a lambent rain.

See them dance in the air
Playing fitfully over seas of fire.

Open your eyes for me
Let me see your desires.

Take me down into the shadows
Let me see what lies behind your mask.

Time is frozen by the thunder of lust
Without fear they scream out in ecstasy.

Taste the ice that flows from their eyes
Will you lick the blood from their beating hearts?

Turn and stare into their poisonous gaze
Lie down among their visions of silk.

Drifting through the velvet clouds
Caught in their tangled skein of madness.

Run on through the night
Blackened windows offer no light.

Burning wings spread for flight
There is no freedom in sight.

It goes on and on...
And 'round and 'round forever and ever...

Mayfly

Mother,
may i fly?

Mayfly.
Because i can fly,
I will wing my way over the hills
And back down again
Where i will find,
my fly.

May i fly,
mother,
mayfly.

With skies so bright above and below me
When i stop to think i grow dizzy
At the lights swirling in my eyes.
Mother,
mayfly.

Because
i
can
fly
i
mayfly
over
the
hills
and
back
down
again.

See
Me
Fly.
Can you fly?
No?
But someday you,
Mayfly.

Mayfly

Mother,
may i fly?

Mayfly.
Because i can fly,
I will wing my way over the hills
And back down again
Where i will find,
my fly.

May i fly,
mother,
mayfly.

With skies so bright above and below me
When i stop to think i grow dizzy
At the lights swirling in my eyes.
Mother,
mayfly.

Because
i
can
fly
i
mayfly
over
the
hills
and
back
down
again.

See
Me
Fly.
Can you fly?
No?
But someday you,
Mayfly.

Memory

Take It away -

Far from my sight and lay it down upon your altar of flesh.

It is wet and pretty to look at, but painful to touch,
And my God, how it burns my throat;
Such bitter medicine.

Let It drip down, down, down

Where no one will ever find It and It can cause no harm.

Without eyes to see, in the darkness, and without ears to hear,
In the silence.

I would scream but my mouth is sewn shut by black thread;
How It twists and binds.

There's a crack in the Hourglass and the Sands of Time
are floating away in the cold winds of tomorrow.
Still It waits, calling to me in the darkness,
"Come into the Light! Come into the Light!"

robed in the door
i stand laughing at my eyes
they are such black mirrors and my windows have been broken
long ago I came this way and once I was frightened of It
but that was in the past and now I bless It

Take It away -

Though I know I shall never be rid of It.

It is, after all, too soft and It is mine.

Midnight Sun

i am darkness
 captured in your light
nevermore in the numbing ice

i am shadow
 in solitude you are my salvation
the whisper in my silent prayer

i am a candle
 flickering in the wind of your breath
to vanish at your touch

i am flame
 your desires guide the rhythm of my soul
burning in the afterimage of your embrace

come and take the fire
from my heart
and walk with me
into the waiting unknown
where eternity is electric blue
beneath waves of thunder
and seas of shimmering light
where we can lie together
in a white-winged embrace
and dream of love forever

you are my heaven
the sun in my eyes
to shine upon me
in the night sky

The Mirror

"Tell me a story," the woman chained to the wall whispered to him from her position on the floor.

His hands trembled slightly as he crushed his cigarette in the ashtray on his right. He looked down at her and tried to smile as he tightened the sash on his dark blue robe. The flickering flames of the fireplace cast dancing shadows across her radiant features as he caressed the soft, sweaty flesh of her cheek with nervous fingers.

"There are four doors in my little grey room. One of them is the door by which I entered, but I have forgotten which one it is."

He watched her carefully as he spoke to try and follow her reactions: the twinkle in her cold blue eyes that matched his own; the shadows upon her body as she moved, letting her long, straight blonde hair fall about her carelessly; the moist parting of her lips and the gentle heaving of her naked bosom as she breathed; the hand that casually caressed the pink flesh between her thighs; and the scrape of the chains upon the floor as she undulated beside his chair were all observed by him with rapt attention.

"And the mirror..." she trailed off, anticipation evident in her soft voice and half closed eyes.

"The mirror is there, my love. It is standing off to the left of me, lost in its own shadow and crowding no door. It is reflecting all of the doors and casting

images of myself that mock me and all of my ghostly countenances."

"Which door will you open first?"

"The one in the middle."

"Why?"

"Because it is straight ahead."

She rose to her knees and placed a hand upon his arm. The chains attached to the manacles on her tiny wrists weighed her down but were long enough to allow her a gracious amount of mobility.

"Don't be afraid, Paul."

"I am not afraid."

Her fingernails dug into the flesh of his arm through the silk of his robe. A look of bewilderment and uncertainty passed over his features after he had sat in silence for a few moments.

"What did you see behind the door?"

"I turned the knob and entered without hesitation. It closed behind me and I found myself alone in the darkness. I was not afraid, Lilah. I could feel you holding me, guiding me on. Then a hazy blue light lit up an old stage with dark green curtains billowing gently behind it. An old black man came up to me and took me by the arm, beckoning me to lean closer to him.

'Have a seat. The show's abouts to start.'

"After yelling into my ear, he pulled out a chair for me at a cracked old table and then slowly shuffled off.

It is only now that I realize he was laughing when he walked away. Not long after I sat down the curtains opened and a woman - who looked just like you, my dear - took the stage, dressed only in colored veils. Music filled the room with an hypnotic, amazingly staccato, beat that was accompanied only by moans and whispers of pleasure. The woman danced mesmerizingly, Lilah. Her undulations entranced me as she slowly removed each of her veils: yellow, orange, green, red, purple, blue...grey.

"Then that wrinkled old man was tugging at my arm again with his gnarled hands and smiling up at me with a toothless grin as he yelled into my face, 'Can I gets ya a drink?'

"I tried to shrug him off, but he wouldn't let go of my arm.

'And whats would ya likes to drink, sir?'

"I turned on him then, barely able to take my eyes off of the girl on the stage, and let my anger pour forth, 'Leave me alone you damned old fool!'

"Tears welled up in his beady black eyes as he hunkered beside the table staring stupidly up at me. Again I screamed at him, 'Go to Hell, you freak!' And then I shoved him away from me and back into the shadows from whence he came.

"I looked back to the stage and saw that the dancer had discarded all of her veils and was lying at the edge of the stage masturbating vigorously with several fingers buried deep within both of her openings. She was dripping

wet and as slick as a baby - just like you, Lilah.

"That was when I noticed the others for the first time. The dark room was filled with other men who sat drooling over the woman on the stage. With slow and burning horror I realized that all of them were reflections of myself at various ages: young, middle-aged, and even old; all masturbating images cast from the mirror, spraying semen over lambent fingers. The girl came again and again as I, all the versions of me, watched rapturously. Finally spent, she sat up and looked at all of me before crawling off and disappearing behind the gently billowing dark green curtains."

"It was I, Paul," the girl at his feet whispered.

"I knew. It had to be you."

"Do you still love me?"

"Of course, Lilah. We all love you."

"Are you back in your little grey room?"

"Yes."

"Have you chosen a door?"

"The left one."

"Why?"

"Because it is straight ahead."

"Are you afraid?"

"You are holding me, guiding me on. I am not afraid."

Sweat poured down his face as she rubbed her free hand across her breasts and moaned.

"You will be afraid," she hissed; and blood oozed

unctuously from the corners of her mouth to drip down onto her nipples.

"What was behind the door, my love?"

"The sea. I dove down into it and it welcomed me into its cold, blue bosom, so dark even the night would flee from its grasp. Then there was fire. A fire burning brightly at the bottom of the ocean; and the flames showed me all that my eyes did not wish to see."

"Yes," she hissed, gripping his arm tighter and flicking her tongue, "what did the flames show you?"

"Pain. Suffering. Terrible agony! I saw a sea of molten rock filled with the bodies of the damned. They cried out in thirst as blood fell from the watery skies into their open mouths."

"Who were they?"

"Dear God! They were me. All of them; screaming, tortured reflections of myself in that damned mirror!"

"And then?"

"I saw her. She was sitting atop a coral reef. Her face, her body, they were so like yours, Lilah. The hermaphrodite! She had a grotesquely thick and long penis standing erect above her vagina. Her eyes were blue fire and crimson flame as she screeched into the silence of the sea. Though she lacked testicles, she continuously ejaculated semen filled with dark green eels that swam hungrily towards the damned images of myself frozen in the mirror and struggling against the hellish mire of

chaos."

"It was I, Paul," she whispered; and semen poured freely from her parted lips to ooze between her breasts.

"I knew. It had to be you."

"Have you chosen another door?"

"Yes. The one on the right."

"Why?"

"Because it is straight ahead."

Silence filled the room as she waited for his screams to come and echo throughout the night. When at last they did she hissed, "Tell me," as she inserted her fingers into herself.

"It was cold inside, but it felt so good with you holding me, guiding me on. Then the darkness filled up with eyes - eyes of all shapes, sizes, and colors. They were glaring down at me pitilessly. Without warning, they vanished and a great light burned away the darkness with an electric blue effulgence that left me trembling in awe and dripping wet with sweat as flights of massive white owls thundered by over me. Then the light was gone and the owls vanished and I found myself alone, naked and trembling, in the silence of my little grey room. I sat facing the mirror. I watched helplessly, with tears in my eyes, as my reflection laughed at me from the other side of the cold glass."

"Were you afraid?"

"Yes," he whispered, covering his eyes with a hand

to hide the fresh tears pouring down his face.

"Even though my hand was on your arm to guide you?"

"Yes."

"I told you that you would be. And then what happened?" she whispered as she began untying his robe.

"I turned from the mirror and opened the door behind me."

"Why?"

"Because it was straight ahead."

"And...?"

"It was the last one."

"What did you find behind the door?" Her lips wrapped about him and he burst into tears again as she took him into her mouth.

"Another little grey room with four doors and a mirror. The door closed behind me like thunder; and then, the door directly in front of me opened and the old black man from the place where you danced emerged from the darkness beyond. He was laughing with tears in his eyes as he approached me: 'I's off to Hell now, sirs.' And smiling he walked past me and into the icy glass of the mirror.

"Then the door on the left opened and you walked out as the hermaphrodite, Lilah. Like the old man, you passed me laughing with tears in your eyes and entered the icy glass of the mirror. Then the door on the right opened and a white owl flew from out of the darkness beyond and crossed into the icy glass of the mirror. Abruptly all

of the open doors slammed shut and their knobs fell to the dusty floor with a terrible sound that made all my bones shake. Slowly, I turned to the mirror and as I did the glass imploded with a shrieking laugh."

She looked up at him, her lips smeared with blood and semen, and smiled, "Then what did you do?"

"I lay down upon the floor and closed my eyes."

"Forever?"

"To sleep, forever. To dream..."

He took a key from a small box on the table by his chair and unlocked her manacles. He then helped her to her feet and they kissed deeply by the glow of the fireplace.

"Did you like the story?"

"Very much."

They made love before the mirror then, watching their reflections writhing within the cold confines of its glass, so like the confines of his little grey room. When they had finished, they kissed their reflections and caressed the glass intimately.

"Tomorrow night," she hissed into his ear.

"Yes, it is your turn."

"Goodnight, my love."

"Goodnight," he returned, kissing her deeply.

In opposite directions they went, out of the large room and away from the fire and the chains and the mirror. Down separate hallways they went, raising silence and wind

in their wakes. They entered their little grey rooms alone where they stood before their separate mirrors gazing rapturously into the shadows captured in the cold depths of the glass eternally. Beyond them, the house lay as empty as the night with only the gentle lullaby of the wind sighing through the shadowy trees to disturb the silence.

A Moment of Silence

I can remember when,
As a child,
I would leave food uneaten
On the table, and
Someone would say that
Children are starving in Africa,
Or South America.

Today,
I stare at the meal set before me
And I whisper to myself,
There are children starving
In my backyard.

The Mountain

My hands grip the cool stone
I hang from the rock waiting to fall
And for the darkness to come and take me
The light is far above me
Beyond my reach.

My hands are bound to the stone
I am too frightened to move them
I would let go but I am too afraid of dying
I would climb forward and up but I am too afraid of what
I might find
I don't know if I can reach that high.

The light above me is haunting my eyes
The darkness below is rising up to engulf me
I must pull my hands from the rock
I must try and partake of the light and of its warmth
My hands tremble with trepidation as I reach up.

To be free of stasis
And to move beyond the shadows that surround me
Waiting to devour my heart with hungry eyes crying tears
of sorrow and depression
There is a fire raging about the peak of my mountain
A halo of blue fire
It calls to me and I reach out with a trembling hand as
Adam did so long ago in Eden
It consumes me utterly
Cleansing
It drives back the darkness
Screaming below me
It soothes...

I stand atop the mountain
Unafraid and with open eyes.

Neon [A Dream]

Sweet pink water
Etched against black, black sky

F
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O
a
T
i
N
g
Down back
and

! N
i
A
g
A
p
U

I
can't
water.
swim

Slowly adrift upon seas of luminosity
I love the flourescent fish
With meat so pink and blood so black
Help me to...
Drown.

Enter the trident
Sceptre of green
Yellow the sound
Of Neptune approaching
With black light eyes and
Chartreuse crown.

Magenta and orange
To thee I prey
A copulation of colors
As mermaids with green glowing flesh
They masturbate.
My semen splashes across their pretty faces
In waves of purest blue.

In the shrine of the starfish
I sleep in my shell
At the bottom of an ocean of pink
I am in ecstasy
Within my wet dream
The sea of light is a glorious sight
Viewed from below in a gaseous pink light.

I
S
I
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W
N
AND

N
I
A
G
A
E
S
I
R

(hahaha!blinking on & off)
(i can still cry when i laugh)

The hue of my soul is divine
The breakers are near
The lambent fluids bathe me one last time
I am awake in darkness
Enslaved
I long for my lost hues
From this moment until the night I die
Cover me with a shroud of pink
I will swim in the dark...
Unafraid.

Never, Neverland

Whispers -
in darkness
dreams born of unnatural sleep.

To walk the night
To soar through alien skies

The silence is like the thunder of many beating wings.
Eyes of cold fire glaring down.
Mist obscures the sight of myself as I look down into
the valley of...

eternity
(Forget, for now...)

Secrets -
hidden behind
walls of darkness.

(Come with me...)
A voice which never speaks
(They torture...)
A face I can never see
(Before They kill them...)

Far, far below,
a sphere of golden light
clouds of pink, glowing crystals
skies of purest blue (light and dark)
mountains towering high above green, misty valleys
and so much more...

There lies a wall of blinding light behind the darkness
(you may catch a fleeting glimpse of it in your dreams)

I wait alone, in silence, for Their coming
In the night,
without warning
(let the music play) (and fade away)

as I am taken
so far away

To watch silently...
To listen passively...
To wander without movement...
Where have I been...
Where shall I go...

When They left,
They sounded like breaking glass.

Nightfall

Tonight,
 as the moon rises
 high above the sighing sea
 i will dream of you
 (In my sleep)

Tonight,
 when the owls cry
 in the dark and silent forest
 i will whisper your name
 (In my sleep)

Tonight,
 as the gentle breeze
 caresses your pale skin
 you will dream of me
 (In your sleep)

Tonight,
 when Mercury races brilliantly
 across the vast and secret heavens
 you will whisper my name
 (In your sleep)

if only
 Tonight,
 we could lie together
 then our dreams could unfold as one
 and our whispers would taste like rain
 upon our lips
 (In our sleep)

No Exit

Fire-

scorching the blistered earth

Screams-

echoing eternally in the smoke

See the children gathered before the temple doors
crying and bleeding

With hunger in their sightless eyes
stained glass and shattered idols

Sanctity violated forever
to return
nevermore

Darkness-

blinding the shrieking masses

Pain-

the flagellants cry for more

How the fools bleed in the freezing winds
writhing and panting

Upon the icy altar as they copulate.
dripping semen and soaked in blood
Genetic decay progressing slowly

to rot
evermore

kneel before the blazing crucifix
iconic chains bind them all
shackled to sanguinary doctrines
composed of undulating flesh
the walls are burning
listen to their twisted prayers
uttered with such unholy
desire

Blessings-

raining down hotly upon their skin

Torment-

without end has become love

Delivered unto evil they have sought the bloody wall
rising in the forests

Among blackened doors crying forgotten tears
lost in the haze of myriad faces

They shall be hidden from sight
to dream
nevermore

Belief-

raging through shattered souls

Damnation-

calling hungrily in the night

When all is lost to the shreiking winds remember
painfully and slowly

No names which were carved upon opalescent stone
gleaming so ethereally bright

For the purpose of tempting us all
to sleep
evermore

Nothing Left to Say

When he entered the forest there was only silence. Tears welled up in his eyes and poured freely down his wrinkled face. None of them ever touched the ground. The trees swayed softly all around him as cold winds caressed the icy earth. He felt nothing - no cold, no warmth - as he stood alone in the drifting snow watching the brittle limbs bend down and reach out for him. He screamed as the light began to fade from the forest. No sound disturbed the silence.

A shadow passed across his tear-stained face as he implored the cloudy skies. He turned away from the heart of the forest and slowly made his way out of the woods. In the dark trees a multitude of black eyes, golden light reflected in their pupils, watched him go. There were no footprints for him to follow on his way back. When he reached his small house he stood trembling before the closed door, unable to force his hands to reach out and open it. He turned away from the house, the world swirling about him in slow motion as he moved. The sorrow in his eyes drank in the darkness that fell across the earth; whimpering, he shambled back towards the blackness of the woods.

When he entered the forest there was only silence. Slowly, he made his way deeper into the cold and brittle darkness; feeling the eyes upon him everywhere, but only able to catch fleeting glimpses of their golden stares. The forest sang to him as he shuffled forward in the deepening snow. The vibrations of the music reverberated within his soul as he fought against the slow moving landscape about him. No sound disturbed the silence.

Further into the heart of the blackness, a blue luminescence resonated languidly, warmly; beckoning him to come closer. After only a few steps more he collapsed to his knees, fresh tears falling upon his wrinkled face, as he began to scream once again. No sound disturbed the silence.

The light did not fade as he screamed, neither did it grow brighter or draw closer to him; rather it remained, pulsating in the silence of the benighted white forest. When he could scream no more and the snow had nearly covered him, he rose slowly and turned away from the light. All through the forest there were eyes upon him, watching him walk away. The forest ceased its song as he exited its embrace. When he reached his small house - nearly obliterated by the drifting snow - he found that the door was already open. Still he stood trembling before the threshold.

He crossed into the blackness beyond the doorway with tears in his eyes. Behind him the howling winds began to pour snow and ice into the room. He allowed himself a bitter smile at the thought of the icy drifts covering everything within the house as well as without. Crying, he found his familiar place upon the floor and lay down in the darkness. When the snow stole over him he began to shriek hysterically. He felt nothing as the icy whiteness fell across him like a frozen shroud. Still he screamed. No sound disturbed the silence.

The Ocean

Let the rivers flow

down
to
the
sea

Take and drown all
sorrows

beneath
the
cold
waves
currents running
fast
lightless
depths

burning canyons
forever
hidden

in eternal
darkness

trenches

bottomless
realms undreamt
of by mortal minds

never to be seen
by human
eyes

What is it,

that slithers along the frozen bottom,

With the

weight of the world pressing

down upon it?

Coral reefs

Mountains towering

Life unknown

Horror

Beauty

Beyond Imagination

DIVE

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and

never

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again

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To drown

and

sleep forever

in the

thunderous silence of

an eternal, cold night

To crawl
along the
bottom against
the
pressure
of
the
world

Only Fools Rush In

Into the stream
We are flowing
Islands of soft, luxuriant bubbles
Tepid water easing my pain
Steam obscuring the bright glass of the mirrors

Amber waves licking
Pink paws on linoleum wood
Silently reflecting as my pen
Moves across the glistening page
White and blue and black

Tiny spheres of yellow, orange, sparkling pink, and
Purple and pink
Spinning on the floor
In the summer heat

And you so beautiful that
I could drink your bathwater
Tasting your desire upon my lips
It burns in the July heat

This is all that the night can become
For us on this day
Black, orange, white
The door is creaking slowly open
And here we are
In this ancient whirlpool
Finding ourselves
Only to realize that
We have only just begun
To discover each other
As we descend deeper and deeper
Into this undiscovered country
Where so many have lost their way
And vanished
Never to be seen again

Open Room

Fabric woven coarse
Wood and carpet embrace the
Dirt and trash
Bone colors upon angled posts
Framed in harsh brick
With eyes of smooth, cool glass...
A smoky view.
Neon red flashes amid harsh white lights
The leaves stir with an errant breeze
To freshen the air
Reeking of sweat, flesh, and emotion.
The corners seek shadow and solitude
But the masses encroach relentlessly
Raping them thoughtlessly
Bodies beautiful and
Bodies ugly fill its heart.
The wood screams at the plaster
While the brick and glass brood silently.
Only the neon speaks
And its message is pointless and cold.
The flesh is a brutal creator
And the forces of nature a harsh mistress.
Angels with wings of dust drift down
To settle like dark rain.

Pentagram

Alive in the ice where the fire still burns
Mother Darkness holds me close in Her tight embrace
As I hungrily suck the madness from Her breasts
While the stars shine brightly underground
I drink of my own sweet blood.

Fallen into a vision so unholy and evil
Upon cyclopean wings that bring dark rain
I come to sanctify the prayers of copulating priests
Orgies by moonlight and naked altars dripping with blood
I curse in forgotten tongues and drink with delight.

...burn child, burn! in the night
with eyes of fire you seduce my soul
a passion that drew down the stars
lick the blood from my beating heart
and bathe me in your cold light
lend me your eyes so that i might find my way
through the forests of the night...

Death is proud, I have seen the smile on His lips
Taking a laughing soul down into the swirling madness
Where I await with gleaming talons in an amber light
Tearing at my flesh with wanton abandon to purify my soul
Writhing in the blood of my sins
And breathing in the stench of sorrow.

Mother Darkness, why is your womb so cold?
In the twilight the river came to wash my memories away
I felt the hot rain upon my face only briefly as I screamed
For the light had abandoned me to the burning stars
And then I began to smile
Tasting the bitter, black blood that I sailed upon
Adrift in sanguinary lucidity at last.

Rain

In a room of mirrors
I cannot find myself
Reflections on the walls are so twisted
Snakes in the grass
Will I ever find the door
To the other side
Where I can be free
Escape from the fear and
Rage still haunting me
Locked out of the world
I used to know
Warmth and love have given way to
Pain and sorrow
The laughter I once shared with friends
Now mocks me as I stand
In the shadows of despair
Tragedy has built a wall around me
Too high to climb and
Too wide to go around
Still I dance to the tune of my depression
Like the fool who always dances for his queen
In the fire
I can still feel the rain
Falling
Falling
Down on me
Suffering
In a world without light
Sadness
To rule over
The night
I fear this madness
I fear this darkness
Help me
Find my way
Help me
Come in from
The rain
I
Can
Still
Feel
The
Rain

Requiem

Thunder rattled the windows, drowning out the crying and groaning emanating from Ashlyn's bedroom. Lightning flashed brilliantly outside and lit the writhing figures on the bed in ghostly blue light. In the open doorway, eyes of dancing blue rage watched the act with loathing. The man on the bed cried out and collapsed upon the whimpering figure beneath him.

"Bitch," he spat, and started to rise.

Out of the corner of his eye he saw the swirling, white shape reflected in the mirror coming for him, but it was too late. His scream was muffled by the thunder as the shape drove the blade into his back. Blood splashed the girl beneath him as the blade pierced the back of his neck and erupted from the front of his throat in a spray of gore. She screamed hysterically as the body was thrown off of her, and then there were hands over her mouth and a soft, familiar voice whispering into her ear: "Shh, you're alright."

She grew silent as the lightning illuminated the figure holding her, and she saw the soft, pale face that was so like her own.

"Charli," she whimpered.

"It's going to be okay, now. Be quiet."

She let herself be guided from the bloody room by her sister's hand. In the darkness behind them, a wooden crucifix fell from above the bedroom door and shattered upon the wet floor.

Downstairs, Mary sat in the center of the living room, watching all the candles that she had lit burn away the dark. She listened to the rain and the thunder and to the screams above as she sat on the floor, waiting for her sisters. She had once wanted to become a nun, and as she caught her reflection in the full-length mirror, she imagined herself dressed in a habit, kneeling in prayer in a church lit by candles on a stormy night.

"Sister Mary de Lourdes," she whispered to her image.

Her sisters entered the room in a red and white blur, shattering the vision in the mirror. They sat down in front of her and she reached for Ashlyn's trembling hands.

"We had to," she told her as Charli rose and disappeared into the depths of the house.

"I know," and the tears poured across her bruised cheeks.

Charli returned with a heavy pink robe and covered her sister's naked body with it. They sat in silence for a while, listening to the storm, as Ashlyn tried to stop shaking.

"I can still feel him on me, inside of me," she hissed, breaking the silence abruptly.

Before they could move she had torn from the room, discarding the robe as she went. They followed her in their white gowns out into the night where they found her spinning around and around in the heavy rain, running her hands all over her body. She screamed when they touched her.

"You've got to come back inside."

"I've got to wash him off of me," she hissed.

They began to drag her back to the house as she cursed and struggled against them. When they got her back in the living room, Charli slapped her hard across the face.

"What else could we have done?" she screamed at Ashlyn.

The girl fell to the floor, crying and curled up into a fetal position. Mary knelt beside her and held her in order to try and soothe her.

"We had to stop him from hurting us anymore," she said as she caressed her sister's wet hair.

Charli watched their reflections in the mirror as the candlelight danced across their pale features. She went to the mirror and placed her hands upon the cold glass surface and whispered, "We are mirrors."

Mary watched mesmerized as her sister caressed her own image in the mirror and, placing her lips to its surface, kissed the figure frozen there.

"Why did Mother leave us?" Ashlyn interjected, breaking her concentration.

"I don't know."

"She died and left us alone with that bastard."

"It's not her fault."

"Whose is it then?"

"His."

"What's going to happen to us?"

Mary could only shrug as the tears came and her throat closed up tight. She looked back to the mirror and watched Charli running her fingers through her long blonde tresses.

"God, we really are mirrors."

And she saw her father step out of the shadows. He was naked and covered in blood as he grinned at them. Mary screamed and ran from the room: out of sight of the mirror and her sisters. When she reached Ashlyn's room she cut her feet upon the broken crucifix and fell in the blood that stained the floor. She looked across and into her father's sightless eyes and bloody mouth as lightning played across the cloudy night sky. Far below her she heard the mirror shatter and footsteps mounting the stairs. In the distance, Ashlyn screamed and Mary felt herself slipping away as Charli came to her and lifted her from the bloody floor. She let the darkness take her as she listened to the rain receding further and further away.

The Rise and Fall of Darkness

The Dark Army gathered at Lucifer's home on shadowy Gorgonia Hill in Lower Heaven where they sat at his black table and discussed among themselves their plan of attack. The leader of the Dark Army sat at the head of the table, his scaly, burnt orange flesh pulsating with rage. Lucifer would no longer be the bearer of light, but the bringer of the eternal night; thus he changed his title and became Satan, the enemy. His long red horns glowed with wicked impatience to get the battle underway. With a thunderous curse and hiss that brought forth smoke from within his pug nose, the evil god, Satan, declared war on the Lord and led his lecherous followers out of Lower Heaven to storm the Golden Palace of God.

On His throne, the Lord prepared for the fight, plotting with Michael and Raphael the strategies best used to combat their opponents. God had known of Lucifer's rebellion for some time but had reserved action in order to see who would remain loyal to Him, and, at the same time, to uncover the wicked among His holy ranks. Uriel interrupted the proceedings when he flew in, a trail of dazzling light in his wake, and proclaimed that he had seen Satan's dark banner waving just beyond the Holyanne Hills, which separated Upper Heaven from Lower Heaven in the south. The Lord rose and glided upon the air to the window facing the Hills, His long white robes flowing behind Him in the ethereal air surrounding them, and saw that this was indeed

true.

Even as He watched, Belial came marching out from behind the Hills, carrying Satan's twisted Southern Cross. The tittering scorpion Abaddon crawled behind Belial, dark poison dripping from its stinger. Baal saw God peering out at them and grinned evilly. As he did, a huge black worm slithered forth out of his mouth and, sprouting wings, flew to the Golden Palace's gates, leaving in its wake a noxious black smoke. Thus was Beelzebub born. The flying black obscenity grasped an angel with its small claws and raised him to its withered lips where razor-like teeth sliced him to bloody shreds in less than a second.

Satan chuckled hollowly, and his beady red eyes glowed ever brighter as the skies darkened and all life died where the Dark Army had passed. Pazuzu beset a plague of locusts upon the Golden Palace, whilst Astaroth tempted Gabriel with her soft, willing flesh. From the Enochian Sea, Leviathan and Dagon rose, horns sharpened and talons bared to destroy the kingdom of God. The celadon blue waters turned crimson with the blood of the dead as the war for Heavenly supremacy began.

The silent, invisible Lillith stalked through the halls of the Golden Palace, sneaking up on her victims and slaying them in hideous, violent ways. She tortured the angels endlessly, for they could not see her. She was nowhere; yet everywhere, as she had no form. Astaroth, the embodiment of deceit and lust, tortured Gabriel with her

body for an eternity before transforming her beautiful appearance and lashing out at him. Her creamy white skin burst open with sores that oozed a dark brown ichor and produced a fetid odor that withered the soul. Her face scaled over; her long, blonde hair fell out; her crisp blue eyes yellowed and hardened; her teeth rotted and a long, forked black tongue with green eyes covering it licked him lewdly, burning his flesh with its touch.

Whilst God battled Satan, Abdiel bound Raphael in a spell that allowed him no movement or speech. However, as Abdiel gazed out the window of the Golden Palace's throne room, he became appalled at the carnage before him, and realized that Satan had deceived him. Satan and Belial had sworn that only a necessary few would die, and that all persecution would end when God admitted defeat to Satan. Abdiel saw, however, that the death and destruction would never end. Satan was truly insane and Abdiel realized that if the enemy won the war Heaven would forevermore be a place of agony and suffering. Abdiel felt pity for himself and total remorse for his part in the wickedness his world was battling against.

In that instant, Satan could have defeated God, as the Lord had stumbled. As Satan prepared to deliver the crushing blow, Abdiel freed Raphael and together they hurled the enemy against the far wall. Aiding God to His feet, they pummelled Satan into submission.

At the same moment, Michael had rescued Gabriel from

the wicked Astaroth, and together they led a massive counteroffensive which crushed the Dark Army completely. The dark angel had fallen.

The soldiers and citizens of Heaven gathered the Dark Army and Satan in the courtyard of the Golden Palace and, following God's orders, cast them and their haven of Lower Heaven out into the chaos of the Abyss.

In the realm he had named Hell, Satan sat on a black obsidian throne, gazing into the dark depths of the flaming river Styx, contemplating his reprisal. He knew of the creation of the human race and also that man would be a free agent. Therefore, man could choose which path to follow, and by tempting humanity he saw that he could sway them to the path of darkness. This would prove to all still loyal to God that Satan was indeed mightier. Then he would lead his followers once more against the Lord and, with the help of men, destroy the kingdom of God.

In Heaven, God listened closely to the enemy's thoughts and knew that while Satan would surely attempt this, and definitely attack Heaven again someday regardless of added forces, there would always be some men and angels who would follow the path of light no matter what the evil one did.

Thus, they both, in their opposite dimensions, waited patiently for the day to come when the final battle between the forces of light and darkness would take place and decide the fate of all that exists in the favor of either good or evil.

Round and Round

(Variations on a theme by James Joyce in Finnegans Wake)

'earwigo!

'earwigo!

'earwigo!

Cycling round thatt olde snapple tree again

O river mother womb y dost thou cry culebric tears?

Wair did yur mango wid 'is fig in 'is 'and?

Dribbling dribbly-droppies on de grass

Ewe just stood there umbradatree basilisking in the glowe

Fof euron pudendic labialingual desires

O but you phell!

An' pitched a phallic tantrum wid yur hubby in the garten.

Out! Out!

Begone little seinefleurs!

Take thy leave of the abbagarden

And bewhere the sword of fyre

Blazing in cherubic eyes.

Childe,

Synn shall pheel thy dreems

And haunt thy mined

'Til ewe return to yoor original sinse

And crawl back inside your hot geomater

Ashes to ashes

Dust to dust

Drifting inn thee osea

A wurlpool of tyme

O pheonix culpa!

Reising and Phalling!

And ebbing a way

All a lone

Sail ing a long

With owt ennde

Awill

Liffeys

Passt

Pressent &

Phuture

Shades of Darkness

The shifting colors of joy and sorrow
 Clouds hover above all that we do
 Waiting
 Lights and shadows
 Brilliance and blackness
 Darkness everywhere

it is in the mirror as you wake the morning after
 with the taste of murder in your mouth
 and the woman next to you is still naked and asleep
 as your thoughts drift back to your family

it is in the souls of the dying
 as they await sleep, praying that the night will fall
 soon and so very swiftly

it is in the first cries of the newborn child
 as it emerges from its mother's womb, covered in blood
 and gasping for air as it enters a world of pain

it fills the world and lays claim to all things
 there is no escape from the horror and the comfort
 it brings in the twilight of despair
 no freedom from the rage of its hunger

it is in the ink of the suicide's pen

it is in the steel of the user's needle

it is in the blood of lovers

it is in our most secret fantasies

it is in our loftiest aspirations and grandest dreams

it is all of this and so much more

But there is also light
 There can be no darkness without light and
 No light without darkness
 And we are forever caught between the two
 Dancing in the shifting colors composed of light and dark
 Combined
 A symphony of struggle
 Agony and ecstasy
 That goes on and on for all time
 Without end

Subtle shades of darkness
 Echoing in the wake of the light

Shadowlight

Cold wind
In the barren trees
Icy streams flowing
Through the dark woods
As night comes
 falling
 fast

(what is to come?)

No sound
 of life
Darkness
 near
 falling
 coming
 fast

Cold
Damp
Earth
Thunder echoing
Rain falling
Fading light
Sleet
Drifting
Over
Lifeless fields

(what is to come?)

spinning
swirling

(what is to come?)

Der Wind

rising

Night

coming
back
to
me

Glowing coldly

in

the

blackened

forest

to me

Return

O
shadowlight

Memories
Snow
Drifting
Across
My
Frozen
Heart

openandbleeding
in
the

	glare of the light
Twisting and Turning through	running the forest
Frightened of What I Might Find	by the thought
for me	waiting in the glare of the light
Broken earth Black water Brittle limbs slowly	
what is	revealing lurking
Behind the veil! Behind the veil!	life in death death in life
pain my nightmares	dancing
'round the flames Circling back into the Misty sky	standing
upon the Barren heath	i am of woman born
Captured horror	

black-lensed

in
the
glare
of
the
light

An owl

(white and pure)

In
The
Sky

floating
flying
circling

Wide
So wide
Let it
unwind

The
Gyre

my
faith
can
no
longer
hold

Unleashed
In
My
Dreams

(without light)

Converging
Upon
The
Image
Of
Beauty
Captured

in(the glare of the light)

my
eyes

Her Ledean body upon the cold, damp earth
The white rush consuming her soft flesh
A black serpent in still waters
agitation

Unrest
Excitement
the waste

of
innocence

Taken
by
Force

torn
ravaged
crying
bleeding

pink

meadows

raped

violated

Among the trees
Broken glass
Among the ruins
Black shards

of
my
temple

We are one and all the same
My heart
Across the plains
Of
Desolation
Sorrow
Words

falling

Like
Crimson

Rain

upon

my

cold

and

naked

soul

I

AM

burning

in

the

glare

of

the

light

As I hoist my sail
Upon ancient seas
With backwards tides
Pulling me out
Carrying me so far away
Beyond the sunset
Of the eternal night
Bathed in the glare of the
shadowlight

The edge of silver
Streams
by

leaving
 Me
 Alone
 in
 the
 forest
 Listening to the wind
 And the soft thunder
 of
 beating
 wings
 As the owls
 (white and pure)
 Come for me
 in
 the
 darkness
 My
 Nightmares
 In dreams come visions
 That haunt my thoughts
 For my life is but wind
 And my days upon earth as only shadow
 Memories
 beyond
 My
 reach
 A forbidden fury that leaves me
 screaming
 in
 the
 night
 The owls are
 waiting
 for
 me
 for
 us
 all
 in
 the
 forest
 of
 eternity
 In
 My(our)
 Minds
 Nightmares
 Dreams
 Visions
 Doorways
 to hidden realms
 Open the dark
 and

Come into the light!
Come into the light!

Fields of blue fire
burning brightly

in
the
glare
of
the
light

My heart
beating like

T tearing shattering
H d the the
U the i
N o c
D temple o
E w n
R n doors s
pouring the blood

of
generations
across
the
cold
damp
earth

(Eve, Adam)
(Mother, Father)
(Daughter, Son)
(Sister, Brother)
(Alpha, Omega)

When the dark passes away
Will I still be alone
Crying as the snow turns to rain once more
screaming

in
the
glare
of
the
light

Seeking my soul
In the swaying crowns of the trees
Forever searching

black-lensed

in
the
glare
of
the
light

Fade away
Fade away
Into
The
Mist

And
Fog
Fade away
Fade

a
w
a
y

cold
damp
earth
beneath
my
body
no
pain

awaiting
the
caress
gentle
wings
once
more

Drifting away from the
Betrayal
Denial
Anger
Suffering
Madness
Fear

my
destiny
is
waiting
for
me

Soaring
Upon
Sad
Wings
Listening
To
The
Thunder
As
It
Calls
To
Me

in the night come out! come out!
 wherever
 you are

What is it that lurks beyond the door?
What is it that laughs within the veil of darkness?

What is it that I cannot remember?
 What is to come?

a
 tangled
 web
 of
 light
 and
 shadow
 in
 the
 forest
 of
 the
 night

I
 AM
 Open and waiting
 Come
 Take me
 and
 ravage me
 beneath
 the
 bloody waves
 of
 twilight
 a world without end
 angel dust
 of
 all
 that

glitters
 and
 reflects
 but

is
 not
 gold
 i
 cover
 my
 eyes
 with
 soft
 white
 feathers

Bathing in the glare of the light
 Twisting
 Turning
 I
 AM
 falling
 into

the
fire

it feels so good
cold cold

please

show

me

what

is

to

come

What is it that waits beyond the light?

sighing and singing

"O child of past present and future

Yesterday today and tomorrow

We are gone

But not forgotten

For we are of wind but also of fire

And our days upon earth are as a shadow

Haunting the thoughts of man and

captured

in

the

glare

of

the

light"

I

AM

Dying and dreaming

Of worlds beyond the sunset

And beyond the stars

Where all darkness gathers and becomes infinity

Re-emerging

as the

shadowlight

A ring of fire

encircling

All of creation

formed by

Eyes of darkness

watching

over

us

reaching

out

for

us

in

the

night

I
Can
Hear
The
Voice
Of
The

shadowlight
beckoning
me
to
come
and
sail
away

Into the forest of eternity
Where the light is as darkness
And the darkness is as light
Where all life ends and begins anew
bathed

in
the
glare
of
the
light

What is to come?
As I lay me down to sleep
Upon the cold
damp
earth

I
Know
That
I
Shall
Never
Awake

on
this
barren
heath

I
Shall
Seek
For
Myself
Another
Kingdom

for
that
which
i

leave
behind

has turned
to ash and dust

upon the winds that howl
through the shadowy forest of the night

I
Will
Re-emerge
From
Out
Of
The

shadowlight

And awaken on some distant shore
Where the tides of eternity call my soul
To once again raise my sail on seas of solitude
That stretch out to infinity
Until I come full circle once more to this lonely field

and
die

Only to rise up as a Phoenix from

my
own
ashes
bathed
in
the

black-lensed

glare
of
the
light

screaming to the stars

I
AM
the
child of tomorrow
and
of
yesterday and today
the
little one
just
born
who
walked
into
the
light
and
returned

Per Omnia Saecula Saeculorem
Forever and Ever

Amen

Return

to me

O
shadowlight

Ship of Fools

Fire on the water
And smoke in our eyes
Tears I shed for all the lost lives.
The pain we must feel
And the wounds only time can heal
On and on we come in for the kill.
The skein of fate woven tight
No escape from the falling night
And I wonder will we ever see the light.
Sailing on and on and on and on...
Blood on the water
And cries in the silence
From souls seeking repentance.
Fury and fear
The sounds of war are all we hear
My eyes water with bloody tears.
A lost child in command
With gun in hand
Burning upon the desert sand.
Ride with the wind
Soar on black wings
And sail the seas of madness
On and on and on and on...
The waves roll forever
No prayers to stop their crashing upon the shore
Without light
Without hope
The ship sails on and on and on and on...

Silent Cries

He sat in his oak rocking chair at the table by the window, his breathing shallow and his hands trembling as he looked out into the night. The single table lamp cast peculiar shadows about him due to its feeble light. Lightning flashed brilliantly, illuminating the backyard below him, and was followed closely by a peal of thunder that shook the panes. Wind tore at the leaves of the trees and made their boughs sway ominously towards the roof. Rain pelted down upon the dark scene, soaking the earth and settling the dust and pollen of late spring.

His old, dark eyes gazed intently into the storm, taking in both the wonder and the fury of it. The water fell, cleansing the earth and revitalizing some life while destroying other life. Trees twisted in ecstasy as the wind caressed their limbs and the rain soaked into their roots. An anthill was turned into a muddy grave that, as it filled up with water, sealed in its inhabitants forever. The wind tore a bird's nest from its perch in a limb and dashed it to the ground. There was such beauty in nature, but also such tragedy.

In the flow of the storm, he felt the cycle of life and death and realized that it was all too near the end for himself. Despair fell heavily on his heart and he felt stinging tears burning into his eyes. He fought back the pain and looked to the sky to watch the lightning play its fitful dance across the cloudy heavens. In his mind,

the black veil of tears that covered the night sky was as dark and overflowing with sorrow as his soul.

A raven flew by, pausing briefly on a branch that proved too precarious for it to stay upon for any length of time. The blue flashes of lightning made its velvety coat glow ethereally in the storm as he watched. Loneliness was a constant companion and had been his only true friend for so long he doubted that he could ever embrace another living thing and feel warmth in it again. He felt an emptiness within him that had once been filled with love and hope, but now these emotions seemed like alien, forgotten remnants of a past life to him.

She danced seductively in his mind's eye. Her long sun-browned legs moving with grace and beauty. A lithe body, sleek and proud, undulating to an unremembered song, floated on the edge of his dream. Her fawn-eyes and happy face seemed so vibrant and full of joy that he imagined for a second that he was actually watching her dance before him, her youth restored. The vision faded as quickly as it had come. She was gone and would never return. Soon, he would be gone as well and knew that he too could never come back. Their youth had slipped away so quickly that neither of them had noticed until it was far too late to do all that they had planned with their life together.

She had fallen fast to the illness that had consumed her body until, finally, she went silently in the night. He had not been so well blessed. He had seen death many

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imes and welcomed it with open arms, only to be turned away and made to suffer more. There was no fight left within him; he longed to feel the earth's cold embrace. Below, he could hear the grandchildren laughing and playing. He rarely saw them and suddenly realized that he could not even remember exactly what they looked like without referring to a photograph. His son had given him a home, but little else. He sat alone and in silence in his room, staring out into the storm, but not seeing it any longer. The tears overpowered him at last; they came pouring over his cheeks as violently as the rain poured down upon the earth. Just as the tears of that lone bird would go unnoticed, so would his; no one can see your tears when you cry in the rain.

There was so much he had left undone and no more time. He felt frustrated, frightened, and alone. Yes, he would welcome the peace of death. He stretched his arms out wide to the stormy night beyond the window as the anguish flooded from his eyes to drip down onto the carpet. A blinding flash of light exploded in the dark sky and the room was subsequently cloaked in blackness as the lamp went out. In the rooms below, the children let out trills of frightened laughter as the power faded, while upstairs, in the small bedroom, there was only silence.

The Sin

Through the fury of winter storms
The little girl is dancing.
In the cold air she sways across the ice
Floating with fragile wings over tempestuous seas.

She is alone in her sky
Far above the fire and darkness of the valley.
There are tears of blood in her cerulean eyes
Remembering the pain of love.

When the wind blows no more and the silence screams
She will come to herself and find all she had thought lost.
Robed in blinding light she will sing to the flames
Consuming the shadows that chill the night air.

Remember her when she is gone
Lost in the shifting sands of the hourglass.
Weep for her in your dreams
Forsaken mother whose beauty has faded forevermore.

Sins of Omission

"With this ring, I thee wed."

Their eyes had met and Joshua had seen her devotion reflected in the clear blue pools that watered beneath her veil. He would love her forever and never let her go.

"You may now kiss the bride."

Their lips met and they had tasted one another as they rolled across the bed. He had made her leave the dress on despite its cumbersomeness. He had always fantasized about taking his bride in her wedding dress. Her virginity had long been lost, so he found another opening to penetrate; it was a place she had allowed no man to ever enter before. He had not been gentle with her but brutal and rough, leaving her lying face down on the bed crying, telling her that he loved her and that they would always be together. Then he had turned away from her to go to sleep, but her sobbing had kept him awake until he turned over and slapped her in the face. He had told her to be quiet and she had obeyed.

"Ashes to ashes and dust to dust."

The priest made the sign of the cross above Jill's grave as the people gathered in the rain looked on solemnly.

"In the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen."

He concluded and the people immediately began to disperse. Joshua remained, staring blindly at his wife's

grave. His dark sunglasses obscured the blackness in his eyes from the sight of others. No tears ran down his face as he silently turned away from Jill's final resting place. As he passed an arrangement of bright red roses, he kicked them over and ground them into the wet earth with his shoes.

"Bitch," he cursed, stalking across the plots and climbing into his car. As he pulled away from the grave, he glared contemptuously at the people who had attended the service. How could they weep for her when she had so thoughtlessly gone and left him all alone? He had told her that they would always be together, but she had cheated him.

"Damn you," he muttered, clenching the steering wheel tightly in anger.

When he finally pulled the car into the garage and parked it, he could feel her eyes watching him from the shadows. He could feel her presence all around him as he entered the silent, dark house. He could even smell her in the rooms and the furniture. At times he actually thought that he could hear her laughing at him, mocking his fury.

Her parents had avoided him at the funeral; they had never liked him and it did not bother him in the least, he hadn't liked them either. Her sister had tried to talk to him before the service, but he had walked off and left her standing alone, looking like a fool. She had called him a bastard, so he had called her a bitch in return and

kept on walking away. Why should he care what they felt or thought, after all, it had been their slut flesh and blood who had hurt and left him.

He went into the bedroom and began tearing drawers open randomly, rifling through them, violently tossing anything and everything that had belonged to Jill onto the floor, or against the walls. Make-up, nail polish, and lingerie lay torn and shattered all over what had been their bedroom. He ripped her dresses from their hangers and stomped them repeatedly until they were unrecognizable, filthy shreds on the floor. He found her picture just under the edge of the bed where he had thrown it during his rampage. He lifted it up and stared into her pretty face a moment before sitting down on the bed, heedless of the broken glass that cut into him. He screamed at the photo as tears of rage and loss poured down his face. She was so beautiful with her soft, blue eyes and light blonde hair that rested, long and straight, over her shoulders and caressed her rosy cheeks. He caught his reflection in the mirror and was appalled at what she had done to him: his eyes were surrounded by heavy black rings from lack of sleep and fits of crying, and his whole face seemed taut and pale as if drained of life by his anger.

"You bitch," he hissed at the picture, hurling it into the mirror. Trembling with rage, he watched as his own image fractured into numerous slivers that pierced the photo of her smiling, pretty face.

"You won't leave me here alone!"

Leaping from the bed he stormed out of the ransacked room and tore wildly through the house, lashing out at everything in his path. Along the way he found an old pill bottle in the medicine cabinet. It had once contained Valium but, like the bottle that he had found next to her body a few days earlier, was now empty. He slammed his fists into the cabinet again and again, cutting himself badly on twisted metal and shattered glass. His hands dripping blood, he sprayed lighter fluid all over the bedroom and set it on fire. He grimaced at the heat as he watched the flames dance hungrily across the littered room. As the fire began to spread he went into the living room where he sat looking at a piece of her photograph and laughing sickly to himself.

"We will always be together, Jill."

He let the piece of paper fall to the floor where it came to rest, watching him with a single, lovely blue eye.

"I'm coming for you," he whispered hoarsely, his voice cracking as he lifted the revolver to his head. It sounded like thunder in his ears when it went off and blood, thick and dark, splashed across the picture of her eye as it lay upon the floor, beginning to burn and silently watching him die.

Sisters

"Will you hold my hand for awhile?"

Erika's eyes shone liquid green as she felt Brittany's hand enclose her own. Her voice was trembly and hoarse when she spoke, not at all like the soft but sure musical character it had once possessed. She was tired; and, though she smiled up at her older sister, the pain she felt radiated clearly through the thin mask she wore. Her beautiful eyes were filled with fear and sorrow, making Brittany bite back the burning tears that welled up in her own eyes.

"Do you remember when I was twelve and I had that fit of nightmares after Twinkie died?"

"Yes," Britt whispered in return.

"You stayed with me at night for two whole weeks, sleeping beside me on that small bed every night. You told me then that you would always be there for me when I needed you. You never lied to me."

"I'll always be here for you. I meant it then and I mean it now."

"Oh God, I hope so," she said as tears slipped from her eyes and ran down her face, "I'm so scared."

"I know," and Brittany squeezed her sister's hand ever so lightly.

"In my nightmares Twinkie would always be alive when I found him, but he would still be hurt; and all I could do was sit there beside him, crying as he struggled to

hold on. The look in his eyes was always the same, hurt and frightened. And there always seemed to be a question in those eyes, why? And I could feel the accusation of that one word cut through me like a knife. Nothing will ever wash away the guilt I felt before that stare. Nothing will ever make me stop blaming myself and finding ways that it could have been avoided, no matter how irrational they seem. Do you understand what I'm trying to say?"

"Yes. It's the helplessness that hurts so much."

Silence took the dark room, interrupted only by the sound of thunder echoing in the night and the humming of the machinery that surrounded the bed. As time passed slowly by, Erika became aware of rain tapping softly upon the windowpane.

"I used to enjoy making love in the rain," she whispered as she stared into the stormy dark beyond the glass.

"We both used to get in trouble for playing in the rain. I guess you just never outgrew it," Britt responded, smiling as she thought of them both as little girls again, laughing and running through the grass in the summer rain.

"I'm sorry that I was mad at you when you left," Erika said, bringing Britt out of her thoughts.

"It's okay. You just didn't want to lose me. I knew that."

"I shouldn't have blamed you for something you couldn't help. I just felt so cheated, and..."

"So helpless," Britt finished for her. "Like when

Twinkie died; you couldn't have stopped it, but you blamed yourself because there was nothing else you could do."

"So long ago," Erika whispered, tears pouring freely from her eyes as she turned back to the window.

"It's going to be okay. I'm right here beside you, just like I always said I would be," Britt whispered soothingly, running her fingers through her sister's hair. "Trust me, Erika. I love you," and she bent across the bed to kiss her gently on the forehead.

"What about Jim and the kids? Who's going to help them?"

"They'll help each other. It hurts, but they'll go on and eventually they will understand."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes."

Brittany kissed her sister once more and squeezed her hand before letting it go and rising from the bed.

"You'll be okay. Try not to be scared. I love you."

"I love you, too," Erika whispered huskily as she burst into fresh tears.

"Don't cry."

"When will I see you again?"

"Soon," Brittany said as she smiled at her sister and then was gone.

In the darkness of her room, Erika cried softly as she listened to the gentle drumming of the rain upon the window. She closed her eyes to the stormy night and went

to sleep as she waited for the machinery about her to shut off with the coming of dawn.

λ

Solitude

I. Like a whisper,

silence came
and knocked
at
my
door.

Suddenly,

my world
disappeared
leaving me
alone
in the
still
of
the
night.

Like a whisper,

the wind came
and washed
over me
in
my
solitude.

Dreaming,

forever
in
isolation.

II. Let the rivers flow
Over me in the night
Lying alone
Down amongst the shadows
Watching the rain fall as
It washes away my face
In the night

The tears of a blind prophet
Are glistening in my dark eyes

Sweet sorrow bring me your burning wings and
Cover me in the falling night
Shelter me from vanity's frail light
It is so pale and cold beneath the waters
Consumed by unending fire
In the night

Let the river flow
Over me...
Silently

II. Lay your black wings over me,
 as a shroud.
 You take away my pain,
 and bring me loneliness.
 In the night I pray to you.
 Give me solace,
 in your benighted sanctuary.
 Water is dripping slowly like thunder in the distance.
 The music of the floor beneath my body sings me to sleep,
 a soft lullaby.

To sleep in your arms.
 I would cry but the tears taste like fire,
 in my eyes,
 Burning my face in the darkness.

Open no windows for me.
 I fear that I may see the light.
 Silence is my voice.
 Rage is my heritage.

I lie awake in your scorching embrace,
 dreaming of nightfall again.
 World without end.
 I seek a darker light,
 in my nightmares.
 Only to stare into the shadows and find,
 I am gazing into a mirror.

IV. Frozen in my agony
 I want your soul

MOTHER

The tears overwhelm me
 They darken the light and
 Blacken my heart
 Sing of these pitiful rags
 Trembling and naked in the cold
 Hiding in the shadow of the towers
 I am screaming
 Without a voice
 Invisible beneath the towers

MOTHER

Can you hear me
 I am so cold
 In my chamber
 A victim of progress
 Forever lost
 In suspension

V. I have fallen before the shadow
 Far beyond the door
 Where my soul waited for my coming
 Seeking a society of silence
 Before the return of sleep
 To
 My
 Weary
 Eyes

The cold dawn of the morning after
 Is a lingering prayer
 Whispered by bloody lips to walls of loneliness and
 Islands of sadness frozen in the mirror's eternal stare
 Conceived
 In
 Ecstasy
 And
 Born
 In
 Isolation

Blessed be the unspoken name of what is to come
 Unknown and forbidden in the evening light
 To be consumed in the glare of crimson flames
 That
 Ravage
 My
 Thundering
 Heart

Tides of blinding mist and
 Sweltering waves of sorrow
 I stand humbled before the fountains of paradise
 Still seeking my own cascading image
 Fleeing through the twisted forests of the night
 Drifting
 Away...
 Drifting
 Away...
 Drifting
 Away...

VI. Light erupts out of shadow
 Beneath the brittle limbs
 Of dying trees

Snow drifts across blowing flowers
 In the thunderous silence
 Of the night

Without rhyme
 Without reason
 Chaos blindly races on
 Across the dark waters

As a mote in the eye of eternity
 The sands of time are drifting
 Over pyramids of weathered yellow stone
 Rising as patient sentinels above our souls

SHADOW
 SHADOW
 SHADOW
 SHADOW

whispering
 beckoning
 calling
 seeking

Outside
 Inside

when light fades to dark
 and
 there is
 no more
 pain

April showers with their poison breath
 burn
 away
 the
 gentle
 flowers

blight
 and
 decay
 shall
 one
 day
 fade away
 into
 their
 own
 blended
 grey

Leaving us alone
In our solitude

VII. In the darkness a bridge lies
Awaiting my silent coming
Calling me from the burning haze

Angels of light bring me your eyes
Save me from the madness seeking us all
In the darkness a bridge lies

The river covers me slowly
Drowning me in the depths of my soul
Far away the dawn is waiting

Without fear of ancient days
I must rise from the tides of my ocean
And find the secret hidden behind doorways of silence

In the darkness a bridge lies
Awaiting my silent coming
To cross on skeins of light

Out from the umbra of eternity
I have found my way

III. Alone and silent
With eyes both
Open and closed
The music of my mother
So deafening to hear.
Her whisper
A caress delivered to my thirsting flesh.
She is the most intimate of lovers
Leaving me to cry in the night.
She sings a soft song that sighs
In my veins.
I still taste her and
She is sweet upon my lips.
The river flows from her burning womb
To cool my soul and drown my sorrow.
Make love to me! Make love to me!
Penetration warms the heart and brings realization
Past, present, and future
Visualization gives way to transcendence
Now that all are one and
The one is many.
Truth in a single word:
HARMONY

Soul Stealer

roundandroundandroundandround
 i have come full circle

All of these dreams
 Glitter
 Like ashes in my eyes.
 driftingaway
 driftingaway
 in the winter breeze
 And these are the final moments
 Of the final years
 Of my life.
 I don't want to see
 Any more tears.
 A heart in chains
 Dancing in flames.
 In the dying of the light
 My last and lonely hour
 I have fallen with the night
 And become all that
 I never wanted to be.
 All of these lies
 Burn
 Like snow in my eyes.

roundandroundandroundandround
 i have come full circle

O God
 For You
 I have come to this trial.
 My life is waiting in my hands.
 Bereft and bleeding
 Am I cast aside?

O God
 What of the Promise Land?

Soul Stealer
 You take me down
 Lift me up in the passion of despair.
 Soul Stealer
 My blood like wine
 Raining in the oasis of my pain.

Beyond the ash
 Beyond the fear
 Beyond the screams
 Beyond the dust
 Is there anything left
 For us to hear?

Skeletons of crippled steel
Scarecrows of rag and bone
How, how does the world end?
 whispers and tears

Will
I
See
Home
Tomorrow

roundandroundandroundandround
 i have come full circle

Still Life

fall down, down, down

falling

rise up, up, up

rising
spinning
rolling
crashing
thrashing

'round and 'round

stopping

when it hits the ground

O' winged abomination that soars through opaque storms
O' bloodstained fury that roams the wastelands for eternity
O' bearer of pain and of bastard sin that bleats sickly
O' light in the black that rains down upon the firmanent

forever
in
winter skies

forsaken
white wings
fly

so far away
over

where red fades
slowly into grey

fast
how the wind
howls
and
the
darkness
burns brightly
behind
the
shuttered window

all life
all death
all eyes
all hearts
all souls

down
the
river
of
illusions
they
go
where
they
stop
nobody
will
ever
know

sleep
for
the
day
awaiting
in
fear
in
fire

Strange and Beautiful

Once upon a time in a land far, far away and south of Heaven, there lived a little girl named Paris. Paris lived with her parents, her younger sister, Alice, and her younger brother, Lemuel, in a small cottage on the edge of a great forest left of nowhere. Early one evening, their mother and father had gone blackberrying in the woods and never ever returned. Paris and her brother and sister had called them for a long time afterwards but had avoided entering the forest to look for them. At night, before they went to sleep, they would burn black and white candles while they said prayers for their parents' safe return. As they prayed, owls, white and pure, would gather in the crowns of the trees and silently watch them through the misty windows. One night, after eating a meal of porridge and mushrooms, they became too sleepy to offer up their prayers and subsequently fell into a deep sleep. When they awoke they were shocked to discover that a great deal of time had passed, during which they had grown several years older. Hand in hand, they walked out of the cottage and to the edge of the forest, relishing the cool feel of the early morning dew beneath their bare feet.

"Today, today, the day has come. Alice, Lemuel - you, you and I - together we shall go into the forest and find our mother and father," Paris whispered.

"Yes! Yes! Mummy and Papaya," little Lemuel responded.

"Mama! Dada!" Alice cried as she plunged into the deep,

dark woods.

Hither and thither, over and under, 'round and 'round, backwards and forwards, up and down they went, calling their parents to, "Come out! Come out! Before the sun sets!"

No answer came from the silent forest as the sun grew dimmer and dimmer. Alice, who was the youngest of the three, finally turned to Paris with tears in her eyes, "Why, why did the Sandman make us sleep so long and grow up, dear sister? And will the night fall before we find our Mama and Dada?"

"I do not know, Alice, sweet Alice."

"Sister, sister, I am so tired," Lemuel cried.

"Oh, come now and let us rest a bit under yonder oak tree, for I am weary too," Paris responded, leading them into the shade beneath a massive and old oak tree.

Together, they lay down beneath the sighing branches of the tree, resting their heads against its cool trunk. Above them, and unseen, the Sandman slithered silently from limb to limb, creeping closer and closer to the young ones and sprinkling the dust of dreams down upon them as he descended. They fell into deep sleep once again as he leapt to the ground before them and cast his magical sand into their peaceful faces. Laughing wickedly, he left them alone and asleep in the benighted forest to dream strange dreams.

As they slept, owls, white and pure, gathered about

them and stood sentinel over them, watching with sad black eyes forever. In her dreams, Alice crawled down a rabbit hole and found her way to the other side of a looking glass; and, ah, the wonders she beheld. In his dreams, Lemuel sailed to distant lands and lived through great adventures only to grow old hating mankind; but, ah, the wonders he beheld. But, alas, their dreams have been told; however, Paris' dreams are yet to be revealed. So, in her dreams, Paris walked into the forests of the night; and, ah, the wonders she beheld there in that strange land of eternal darkness and shadowy moonlight.

Paris stumbled along slowly through the pathless woods, not knowing where she was going nor what she would do when she got there. Along the way she met a girl dressed all in red and carrying a basket as she strolled beneath the ominous shadows of the trees.

"Hark, girl!" Paris called out. The other girl turned around, surprised to hear another voice in the lonely darkness. "Wait for me."

"Who goes there?"

"Paris is my name."

"Are you a wolf in disguise?"

"Of course not," Paris responded, drawing next to the girl, "I am just a young girl like yourself."

"You must forgive me but the woods are full of wolves and all sorts of danger. My name is Red."

"What are you doing walking all alone in the woods

if there is danger, Red?"

"I must take these herbs and berries to my grandmother who is very sick and all alone. No one else in all the forest cares for her but I."

"I have come to find my parents and take them back home with me."

"God be with you. No one has ever escaped from the forest."

"I shall."

"I wish you luck, but really I must go. Take my advice and go back the way you came; only sorrow waits for you in the depths of the woods," and so saying Red turned away from Paris and walked on and out of sight amongst the trees.

Determined to find her parents no matter what, Paris went on deeper into the woods until she came to a river which she knealt beside to rest. As she sat there, she gazed into the waters' cool, dark depths where she saw her reflection rippling with the current in the pale moonlight. Smiling, she reached out and caressed the image in the water.

"Mirror, mirror, in the water, tell me who's the prettiest of them all?"

"We are! We are, my pretty, golden hair and all!" the reflection responded.

"Hark, willow! Who goes there?"

Paris leapt to her feet, startled by the sighing voice that interrupted her conversation with her reflection in

the water. She saw that directly before her was a large weeping willow growing out of a gigantic, grey stone, and on the right bank of the river, directly across from her, grew a large elm tree whose gently stirring branches hovered over the slowly rushing, cool waters.

"'Tis a stranger, my friend. A little girl who has lost her way in the woods," the willow answered the elm in a rough, grating voice.

"Child, what brings thee this way into the land where angels fear to tread?" the elm asked.

"I have come seeking my mother and father."

"Run! Run! Run! Go back from whence ye came. Ye shall never find them," the elm cried desperately.

"No, my lovely, do not run, but come and sit upon this stone a moment and rest thy weary feet," the willow implored, softly.

"I cannot."

"Come, there is nothing to fear in the dark of this undiscovered country."

"No, no. I must be off and on my way, for my brother and sister are waiting for me beneath the oak tree. I cannot stay."

"Leave this place, little one, for it is the valley of the shadow of death and only nightmares await you in the woods," the elm cried, its leaves rustling in agitation.

Paris ignored the elm's pleas and darted past the snickering willow and fled deeper into the forest.

"Go deeper into the woods, my precious. Quickly! Before it is too late! Your mother and father are waiting for you, sleeping beauty. Go and kiss them for me," the willow screeched into the dark and lonely night as Paris left the river far behind.

Violent winds tore through the forest, causing limbs to tear at her soft and unprotected flesh as she fled through the night. A ball of bright orange fire danced before her, weaving in and out amongst the trees, seeming to guide her frantic flight through the treacherous dark. Then, as abruptly as it had appeared, the light was gone and Paris found herself in a clearing surrounded by trees so large and black that they seemed to form a ring of stony mountains about her. In the center of the clearing stood a small chapel with no windows and only a single door, which stood open and emitting low, flickering candle light in the utter dark of the night. Silently, Paris crept forward and stood beside the open door, anxiously listening to the soft whispers and strange moans coming from within the small building. The words that reached her ears made no sense to her, but filled her with a terrible sense of dread and horror nonetheless.

"Bhsshed vie sombscuroa
Vispieraos du mal
Kyrieos en cthon
Ph'ntam in nicht..."

As the dark, hoarse whispering continued, Paris, with fear in her heart, cautiously peered around the edge of the door and into the candle-lit chapel beyond. She would

ave screamed had terror and disgust not paralyzed her throat. Within the chapel, naked, leprous figures copulated furiously in the broken pews and bloody aisle as a hideous, amphibious creature, standing erect like a man, recited eldritch prayers in a forgotten tongue. In front of the whispering abomination was a bloodstained altar covered with the soggy remnants of sacrifice; and behind the monster was a large wooden cross upon which a naked man who had been eviscerated lay writhing in the agony of crucifixion. Her legs trembling violently, Paris managed to back away from the horror before her and fled back into the woods so dark, so deep, and far, far away from the unholy chapel in the clearing she left behind.

Paris ran on and on until she came to a pond whose black waters gleamed soothingly in the pale moonlight. She collapsed beside the water and, placing her hands in the pool, lifted the cool liquid to her parched lips. The water soothed her and warmed her up inside. She closed her eyes against the waves of pleasure that suddenly coursed through her body; and when she finally opened them again, she could only stare in awe at the scene before her. The water glowed with a brilliant electric blue effulgence and hovering above the center of the pond was a woman, robed in the glorious light that emanated from the pool beneath her, cradling a nursing infant in her tiny arms. Paris sat mesmerized as the infant transformed into a spinning, double-edged sword that sang a soft and nameless

lullabye to the sighing winds. Then the image began to flicker and fade out, but before it vanished completely it underwent yet another transformation, leaving Paris with the afterimage of a lamb with radiant golden fleece burning out slowly in her eyes. When the impression had completely faded, Paris rose and, circling around the pond, entered the forest once again.

As she made her way through the woods, she once more came upon the girl dressed in red that she had encountered earlier. However, this time Red was crying as she knelt down and placed a handful of black roses upon a freshly covered grave. As she approached Red, Paris saw a large man with an injured arm standing, nearly hidden and respectfully silent off to the side beneath a stand of trees.

"Oh, Red, Red! What has happened?"

"Grandmother. She is dead. Dead and gone away. Slain by a wolf, like a lamb in the night. Yonder woodsman is all that saved me from a similar fate, though he suffered injury to do so. Run, Paris! Run! Go far and away and out of this forsaken land of mist and shadow, for 'tis truly the path to Hell even from the gates of Heaven," and so saying, Red rose, trembling with grief and despair, and went inside of the dark cottage behind her. The woodsman stood silently watching Paris for a moment before smiling slightly and following Red into the cottage. Paris turned away and ran on into the dark forest, driven by

an impulse she could not control nor deny. When she had gone some distance from Red's cottage, a terrible howl rent the silent night, followed quickly by long hideous wails of agony and terror. Paris cried for Red as she hurled herself deeper and deeper into the black heart of the unending forest.

Abruptly, she ran head first into the side of a house. Rising slowly, wiping the tears from her blurry eyes, Paris took in the large, dark edifice before her. She felt something sticky and warm on her cheek and wiping it off with her fingers, tasted of it to see what it was. Surprised, recognizing the taste as that of gingerbread, she promptly licked her fingers clean. She was about to taste of the wall again when the flapping of wings caught her attention. She cautiously turned around to find a tall, black-robed old woman standing before her with a malevolent grin on her wrinkled, shadowed face.

"Tasting of my house, little one?" the creature hissed.

Paris was too frightened of the ugly old woman to even speak.

"What is wrong, child? Am I not the prettiest of them all?" she growled, cackling to herself.

"Please, stay away from me," Paris whispered, backing away from the woman.

"Do come in and have some tea with me, dear. I am old and so lonely in this dark and terrible forest," and as she glared down into the girl's eyes, blood oozed thickly

from her ancient, withered lips.

Paris screamed and darted around the sneering creature, fleeing into the thing's house and slamming the gingerbread door shut behind her. Breathless with terror, she looked about the dark and sticky interior for some sort of weapon but could find none. Then her eyes fell upon the witch's oven. Paris ran to it; and after turning up the flames as high as they would go, she took refuge behind the front door even as the witch began pushing it open. The creature came howling into the room, her talons raking the hot air violently as she sought her prey. When the witch drew nigh the oven, Paris flew out from behind the door and pushed the unsuspecting monster into the fire, slamming the oven door behind her. As the witch burned, souls drifted up and out of her blackening body, while Paris stood crying softly as she watched the victims rise to the ceiling and then pass through the gingerbread and out into the starry night.

"Don't cry, my child."

"Don't cry, dear Paris."

A male and female voice called to her in unison.

"Mother! Father!" Paris cried, staring in shocked disbelief as the glowing shades of her parents emerged from the oven.

"I love you."

"I love you."

They cried in unison as they rose up and out of the

house. Sobbing, Paris ran out into the yard and stood watching them as they flew up, up and away into the eternal darkness of the night sky.

"I love you," she whispered as they vanished from sight, forever.

Behind her, the gingerbread house turned to smoke with a terrible hiss as of a monstrous serpent; and Paris whirled around to find that she was standing on the edge of the world with infinity stretching out blackly before her. As she stared into the darkness, blood poured thickly from her thumbs. In the dark, two cyclopean eyes of yellow, blue, and silver fire opened up and gazed malevolently down upon her shivering form as a great ash-heap took shape in the emptiness below them. On the barren heath, where only ashes grew, stood three old hags even more ancient and deformed looking than the witch she had slain. The forest emerged once more out of the desolation and emptiness as the three witches began to screech wildly at the gigantic eyes, now burning brightly with baleful ruby fire, above the forests of the night.

"The eyes!"

"The eyes see all!"

"The hurlyburly's done! Let the thunder bring the rain as the lightning plays across the bloodstained plains!"

"Aye, sisters. So let it be written, so let it be done!"

And all three howled with twisted, satanic glee as

they burst into flame and the dark forest vanished into nothingness. Paris fell from the precipice of eternity, screaming as the numbing blackness washed over her.

She awoke screaming and crying beneath the oak tree as Alice and Lemuel shook her violently.

"Sister! Sister! Night is coming!" they cried in unison as they helped her to her feet.

She took them each by the hand and together they ran far away from the old oak tree and out of the dark forest. When Paris told them that their parents were lost forever they cried; however, as time passed the pain and sorrow began to fade, and eventually they parted and went their separate ways out into the world to each live their dreams and fantasies. For her part, Paris left the lonely cottage on the edge of the forest and became a beautiful and passionate woman who passed into the hearts and memories of men as a ray of light in a world of threatening darkness. Alice, Lemuel, and Paris: their names are eternal and shall never be forgotten. And they all lived happily ever after.

THE END

To Die For

Paula walked through the electronic glass doors and into the cold sterility of the hospital. She knew that she was too late even as she saw her aunt Ruth coming across the lobby to greet her, frowning and her eyes red with tears.

"I'm sorry, Paula. She died about thirty minutes ago."

Paula felt the older woman put an arm around her shoulders, guiding her into the lobby and towards a couch, but she was unable to say a single word in return. After they had been seated, Ruth sat holding the girl's hand and just staring down at their linked fingers. Paula could feel the woman's sorrow radiating out of her eyes when she finally looked up to meet her gaze.

"She wanted to see you, but she couldn't hold on long enough."

"I came as quickly as I could."

"I know. She was just too badly smashed up."

"What happened?"

"A truck went off the road and when it entered the lane across the road your mother's car was right in front of it."

"The driver...?"

"He's dead, too."

"God."

They sat in silence for a while, neither one knowing what to say next. Paula was glad that only Ruth was

present; none of the other family members could stand her and she had no love for them either.

"Do you want to stay at the house until the funeral's over?"

"I probably shouldn't."

"Don't worry about the others. I'll take care of them."

"What did she want me to come for, Ruth?"

"I don't know. Maybe to say goodbye. To heal old wounds. Maybe she just wanted to see you again before she died. You were her only child."

"That didn't matter before."

"Paula, she was your mother."

"She told me that she never wanted to see me again."

"She was angry."

"There is no excuse for disowning your child."

"I think she was always sorry for what happened, but was too stubborn to admit it. I believe that's why she wanted to see you again."

"To apologize?"

"Yes."

"Could you forgive her, Ruth?"

"You didn't exactly do right by her either, Paula. You were both wrong."

"I know that now. You're the only one in the family who didn't forsake me. I appreciate that."

"Anything can be forgiven. Anything. Now, do you want to stay at the house?"

"Yes. If you can keep the others away."

"Leave that to me. Come on and I'll help you get settled in."

They left the hospital together and drove separately to Paula's childhood home. The house brought back so many memories as she pulled into the driveway that she was nearly overwhelmed. She had not stepped foot in her parents' house in over four years and it was with trembling legs that she made her way across the yard and into the cool interior of the living room.

"Elizabeth hasn't done a lot of redecorating the past few years. I imagine that everything is pretty much as it was when you left."

"This place brings back so many memories," Paula whispered, more to herself than her aunt as she made her way through the hallway and into the foyer where Ruth had already placed her smaller bag at the foot of the staircase.

"Was she seeing anyone?"

"No. She hadn't been out with anybody but me in about a year. She was quite lonely though I believe."

"Are you going to stay here as well?"

"No, I'm going on home, but you call me anytime if you need something. The number's programmed into the phone, all you have to do is press the button with my name beside it."

"I don't know if I can handle staying here all by myself after all that's happened."

"You'll be fine," she said, hugging Paula and kissing her lightly on the cheek. "I love you," she whispered, releasing the girl.

She followed her aunt into the living room and out onto the front lawn. "Ruth," she called as her aunt started to get into her car, "I never meant to hurt anyone with anything I did."

The older woman only smiled and climbed into her car. Paula watched as her aunt drove away, leaving her alone with the dark and silent house. She really did not want her to leave yet, but she could tell that she wanted some time alone and Paula did not wish to impose. She knew that her aunt and her mother had been very close and she would want some privacy in which to mourn her lost sister. As she watched Ruth's car vanish from sight, she could feel the house and the memories it held brooding silently behind her, waiting for her to enter its dark confines alone and unprotected. It was nearly a half-hour before Paula could bring herself to go back inside.

To her great surprise she found her old bedroom pretty much as she had left it. It had been kept very clean and orderly. The little odds and ends that she had left behind were stacked neatly in boxes in the bottom of the closet and even the bedsheets were clean and fresh. She wondered why her mother had bothered to change the sheets in her room, and then realized that she probably used it as a guest room if Ruth had ever stayed over. As she sat alone

on her old bed in the deafening silence of the dark room, Paula's mind drifted back to the final argument she had had with her mother. She had been planning to move out that day, already having packed her bags and secured an apartment in Los Angeles. However, her mother had come home earlier than she had expected, catching her just before she could get out the door. Paula could still hear her mother's curses, ringing in her ears.

"Go! You goddamn whore! I don't want you here!"

"I'm not a whore!"

"You spread your legs for money. That makes you a whore."

"I'm a model, mother. Just like you were."

"I never had to take off my clothes for the camera to make money."

"I didn't have to, either. I wanted to do it. I'm not ashamed of my body."

"And now you're moving out because some man who wants to fuck you said that he would put you in one of his dirty movies."

"I've already been paid; and I didn't have to fuck anyone for the part."

"It's a damn fuck film, Paula!"

"I don't see anything wrong with it."

"You wouldn't. You always were a slut. How many boys did you fuck in school? Or did you lose count?"

"If daddy was still here you wouldn't talk to me like

that."

"Oh, that's right. Daddy would let you do anything you wanted to do. And mommy could never say a word about it. He spent a hell of a lot more time with you than he ever did with me."

"You didn't seem to mind so much as long as you could have your little boys from the country club."

"You damn bitch!" she had screamed, slapping Paula hard across the face.

She had not offered to strike her mother back. She had only turned and walked out of the house and never looked back.

"Get the fuck out of here and don't ever come back as long as I live, you whore!"

Paula had driven away with tears in her eyes and had not returned to San Diego in over four years. The only person in her family that had bothered to try and find her after she left home had been her aunt Ruth. The entire family had turned against her except Ruth, and even she had not approved of what Paula had decided to do with her life. However, Ruth had been too kind and caring a person to let Paula's career choices alienate her. Paula had blamed her mother partly for what she had become, because it was her mother who had gotten her her first modeling job when she had been only twelve. She had never wanted to do anything else but be in front of the cameras ever since.

Her father had been extremely supportive of her always and had bought her everything that she had ever wanted. When he died of a heart-attack shortly after she turned seventeen, Paula felt as if the world had come to an end. She had worshipped him beyond a capacity for words. He had left both her and her mother enough money that neither ever would have to worry about finances as long as they lived. Paula's money had been placed in a trust until she turned eighteen and she had been thankful for that because her mother probably would have kept it from her if she had been given charge of the money. She was, therefore, very well off financially when she began modeling nude not long after she turned eighteen. She had done it because it excited her and she was proud of her youth and beauty. It was the perfect way for her to combine both of her most consuming passions in life: the spotlight and sex. Her mother had fought with her on and off about it for over a year; however, when she told her that she had been offered a starring role in an adult film, she had gone haywire. After a great deal of violent fighting, Paula had relented and said that she would not take the part, but secretly she accepted it and after securing an apartment in L.A., tried to sneak out. Her mother had come home and the rage that had been growing between them had come pouring forth. She had never seen her mother alive again.

Looking back on all that had happened, she knew that

she had not done by her mother as she should have and that it wasn't just the supposed "disgrace" of her daughter working in pornography that had caused her mother to disown her. The nude modeling and porn films had just been an excuse for her mother to release her anger. They had been fighting for years before that and Paula realized that her mother had undoubtedly known about her and her father, but had kept quiet because of her own vices and indiscretions. Her mother had done both of them wrong, but she also knew that they had done her wrong also. Paula's father had never, to her knowledge, had an extramarital affair, but she knew that her mother had. She had been involved with so many other men over the years that Paula had lost count. As she matured, Paula had watched her father grow lonelier and lonelier as her mother spent less and less time with him. She was never sure why he had put up with her behavior and he had always been unwilling to discuss their problems with her no matter how much she asked him to talk to her about it. The only thing that she had ever been able to reason was that he had still loved her regardless of what she did and could not bring himself to confront her about her actions.

Feeling sorry for him and wishing to comfort him, Paula had begun to spend more and more time with him until nearly all of his leisure time was spent with her. Their sexual relationship had not begun until she was nearly fifteen years old. She had known that what they were doing was

supposed to be wrong, but she had not felt that way about it at all. She would have done anything in the world to make him happy. He had seemed so saddened by the worsening situation with her mother when he first approached her that she did not hesitate for a moment.

He had walked in on her masturbating one afternoon while her mother was out. At first she had been so surprised and embarrassed that she could not move; then, as she had started to cover herself with the bedsheets, he had come into the room and, closing the door behind him, sat down beside her on the bed and told her to continue while he watched. She had, relishing the feel of his eyes upon her soft, writhing body. For a while they had not even touched one another, but only watched each other masturbating. Then they had begun indulging in oral sex. After a couple of months had passed, they had made love. Paula had been a virgin, though she had been playing around with boys since she had been ten years old. Once it was over, he had told her that they could never do it again, but a week later they had. They had never ceased their relationship during his lifetime even though Paula began to take other lovers as well. She enjoyed her trysts with her father because of the pleasure that she knew he got out of it and she liked to see him happy. He had never once hurt her or made her do anything that she did not wish to do. She had, and still did, love him more than anything else in the world.

They both had suspected that her mother knew of their relationship, but were never really certain. If she had known she had never mentioned it to either one of them. However, she had become even more brazen with her indiscretions. Paula had even come home from school one afternoon to find her with one of her classmates, who worked weekends at the country club. She had watched them from her bedroom window as they made love by the pool. Her mother had stared directly into her eyes at one point and smiled, but neither of them had ever mentioned it to the other. The only one in the household who had ever even mentioned any sexual indiscretions, at least that she had been aware of, had been herself when she had argued with her mother the day she had left home for Los Angeles.

As she sat alone on her bed in the dark reflecting, Paula wished that she could go back and do things differently. She wished that she could go back and make them confront each other with their problems. Whether or not they could have worked things out did not really matter; she just felt like they should have brought things out into the open and at least tried to find out what was so wrong. As it was, Paula's father had died without ever confronting her mother, and her mother had subsequently found an excuse to disown the daughter who had taken her place (even though she had not seemed to desire it any longer) in her conjugal bed. None of the real problems had ever even been discussed or argued about, much less

resolved. And now it was too late for any of them; only Paula remained.

In the dark, with moonlight streaming palely through the windows, Paula lay across her old bed and began to cry loudly, mourning a past that could never be changed or apologized for. Her thoughts were a whirlpool of fractured images from a life that she wished she could go back and live over but knew that she could not. As the night grew darker and quieter she became sleepier and sleepier. Shortly before she drifted off into a land of troubled dreams, she whispered to the silent shadows that stalked like ghostly memories through the house, "I'm sorry." With tears drying upon her face, Paula slept as the night brooded silently over her, cradling her in its cool bosom.

To One Far Away

As I close my eyes
Tears flow down my face
My heart it bleeds so lost without you
The nights are far too cold without your embrace
Only the light you bring can ease the pain in my soul
Suffering and drawn like a moth to an eternal flame
I long to be burned by that consuming desire
Such suffering would be my joy for all of eternity
Until I see your fire burning in the blackness of night
I will sleep in my grave crying for your love

Trial by Fire

Screams of rage echoing in the night
Pillars of flame blazing bright
Righteous madness spreading doctrines of hate
Censorious cross of fear erected among the masses
Gather the witches and bind them tight
Laughing at the smoke that chokes out the light.
Of unsound mind the sycophants march onwards
Through holy rivers of blood
Purging sin from a decaying world
Gathering the blinding darkness in their wake
Their saviour is screaming at them
From high up in the trees.
Martyred whores and sanctified lusts
Where is your justice and benevolence
Are they smouldering in the ashes as we all turn to dust
Bring the heretics and nail them up
If they were not guilty they would not make a sound.
Baptized in flame and bitter black blood
Evangelical prophets leading us all into the Deceiver's web
Transforming Heaven into Hell
Dancing naked upon burning graves
Auto-da-fe, trial by fire
Raining eternity beneath bloodstained wings.

Twilight

I cannot wait any longer
Open the doorways of madness for me
So that I might descry the silent towers of eternity
Beckoning us all towards lightless, alien shores.
In the night -
 I am burning for you.
With the day -
 I must blacken my face.
At your coming -
 I tremble in fear.
For your touch -
 I ache with desire.
Tonight my darling, before I sleep,
I must learn to die in your dripping arms
With no anger at the pain I feel and
With no sorrow for the rage I leave behind.
Beneath the ocean's cold embrace
Alone, I wait
Thirsting for your scorching caress
Longing for desecration and sweet, sweet violation.
Take me, lover and bleed me dry
Before the dawn we shall find forever
Decaying in the thunder of twilight.

Upon Dark Wings

Jacob watched solemnly as the black coffin was lowered into the ground. He was only vaguely aware of the hands he shook as people passed by to show their sympathies; all words that they said were utterly lost to his mourning mind as he stood watching them walk away in the rain. He made no effort to hide the tears that poured freely down his face from behind his opaque shades. He did not even notice when the procession had completely passed by; he simply stood there weeping and lost in his thoughts as Katherine came to rest six feet below the ground. It was only when the priest came up to him and, placing a hand on his shoulder, gently told him that she was in God's hands now, that he found the strength to turn from the burial and walk away. Still crying, he got into the limousine which would take him home and, closing his eyes, once again began to reminisce. He had not spoken to the priest nor looked back a single time since he had walked away. It gave him no comfort that she was in God's hands now; perhaps he was selfish, but he wanted her in his arms instead.

Katherine's death had been terrible. She had bled to death only twenty minutes after arriving at the hospital and no one was yet sure what it was that had attacked her. She had stormed out of the house in the midst of an argument they had been having over finances, saying she needed to get away from him so she could calm down. She had driven

off in the jeep and never returned. A deputy had found her lying beside the road, nearly dead, only forty-five minutes later. The jeep had gone off the road after apparently striking something very large, and evidently she had gotten out to see what it was she had hit. Then, in the darkness, something had attacked and all but torn her apart. They lived a good distance from town and the old highway that led into the city was fairly deserted late at night, so she had been lucky that the deputy had found her at all. There had been no trace of whatever she had run into with the jeep, or of what killed her, and with the miles of swampland stretching out on either side of the road a search of the woods had been virtually impossible. The only explanation that the police had come up with at all was that she had hit a bear and when she got out to see if it was dead, probably not even knowing what it was, it had attacked her and then run off.

When he had arrived at the hospital she was in surgery where they were trying vainly to save her. She had died only five minutes after he got there. Her body had been ravaged horribly by something with lots of claws and very sharp teeth; there were lacerations over seventy percent of her body and deep, ragged bites on her throat and breasts. Rain had washed much of the blood away by the next day but there had still been traces in the grass and he had even found threads of her clothing where it had been ripped from her as she had been attacked. For Jacob

the worst part was the realization that she had died with their final words being words of anger.

When the limousine finally dropped him off at the funeral home he was so exhausted that he felt sure he would fall asleep at the wheel on his way home. Wearily, he got into the car and started it up as he turned on the overhead light and studied his reflection in the rear-view mirror. His usually ruddy complexion was ashen with dark crescents hollowed out beneath his tear-reddened eyes. Grimly, he returned the mirror to its usual position and backed out of the parking space. Sighing deeply, he started home to his empty house.

Sleep found him easily that night, perhaps it was because he had not slept very much at all in a couple of days, or simply the fact that Katherine was finally buried. Seeing her laid to rest added a finality to the ordeal that being told she was gone had not. It was so very hard for him to reconcile himself to the fact that she was gone forever, but he knew that he had to. Sleep came easily, but fitfully, fraught with bizarre dreams of dying and of being buried alive.

Jacob awoke abruptly, heart thumping furiously and sweat rolling profusely off of his body. The darkness about him was impenetrable and oppressive, seeming to contain a hideous life of its own. Claustrophobia wrapped cold tentacles about his spine, sending his body into violent spasms, and it was only then, as he tried to rise,

that he realized what was wrong: his head connected with the solid wood above him. He was in a coffin - buried alive. Desperately, he cried out in the blackness of his coffin, knowing that no one could hear him six feet beneath the earth. His blood rushed madly in his ears as his heart raged furiously in his chest. He began to hyperventilate as his arms wearied of their frenzied beating upon the sealed lid. From some corner of his mind he heard a dark whisper, accompanied by the sound of many beating wings - as of great birds or bats - echoing the thrashing beat of his own heart, call to him. The whisper came again, soft and low, and in it he found a familiarity that soothed him slightly. He relaxed by slow, terrified degrees and when the whisper came again it was feminine and recognizable: the voice of his departed Katherine was reaching out to him in the darkness.

"Jacob," she called distantly from nowhere, yet everywhere.

"Katherine?"

"Jacob, you must come to me," she cried out; her voice wracked with anguish and fear.

"Where are you?"

There was a muffled scream followed by a hollow, rumbling noise that shook the earth he was interred in. Then once again from the shadows of the grave her voice reached out for him, "Hell!"

Jacob screamed wildly and lashed out at the coffin,

trying in vain to force it open. He awoke screaming and sweating, furiously pounding on the floor. He lay entangled in the soaking, cold bedsheets he had pulled down onto the floor with him. His breath came in agonized gasps as he clutched his pounding, aching heart, praying that it would slow down before it burst. Nearly an hour passed before he was able to pick himself up off the floor and make his way into the shower. After dressing, he took time to drink a cup of coffee before grabbing his keys and leaving the house for the cemetery he had left only hours earlier.

The night air was cool and crisp^a as he walked through the necropolis, the full moon casting ominous shadows across the graves. Jacob stayed away from the trees and shrubbery as much as he could, disliking the deep shades of darkness among them. However, as some of the paths were completely enshrouded by limbs, he sometimes had little choice but to walk beneath their sighing branches and falling leaves. Katherine's plot would also put him in the midst of trees and smaller bushes; so it was with trepidation that he stepped into the shadows where her body had been laid to rest.

The dirt was not filled in and packed down as it should have been. In fact, the burial appeared to have either been started and left unfinished (the thought of which made him madder than hell), or dug up (which made him more than slightly anxious). He looked about nervously but saw nothing in the gloom; and then, walking to the edge

of the grave, he knelt down and peered into the inky depths below him and, as his eyes adjusted gradually to the lack of light, saw that the coffin lid was wide open. It took him several moments longer to figure out what was wrong with the body. He screamed, a high, gurgling whine, as he fell backwards, scrambling away from the lip of the grave and the squirming cadaver within it that was desperately trying to rise.

Again he screamed as a powerful hand locked around his throat and lifted him from the ground. He felt cold, sharp talons pressing against his jugular and smelled corrupt, icy breath that was exhaled down his back. He closed his eyes as the growl came and he prepared to die, but the voice that pierced the night spared him and he slowly opened his eyes.

"Release him," the shadow-hidden voice commanded his captor, yet the grip about his neck relaxed only slightly.

The owner of the voice stepped out from the shadows and Jacob swooned at the revelation, only the cold flesh about his throat keeping him conscious. Katherine had emerged from her grave and now stood naked before him. She had kept whatever it was that held him from immediately killing him. Even in death she was beautiful to his eyes, despite the whiteness of her flesh and the ugly scars that covered her body. Her blonde locks fell loosely about her shoulders, gently caressing her hardened nipples in the chill breeze. Her eyes were still blue in the corneas

and her pupils were still black, but in the center of the pupil a deep crimson fire seemed to burn.

"Please, let him go," she asked in a quietly demanding tone.

"But I can smell his blood and it is so sweet," and the vileness of that scratchy, faintly feminine voice sickened him, "especially down here," his captor hissed, grabbing him between the legs with its free hand.

"Release him," a new voice called, and instantly all the pressure on his neck was gone.

He crumpled to the ground and quickly scrambled to his feet. The new voice had definitely been masculine, deep and hollow, yet commanding and deadly sounding. The newcomer stepped out of the darkness on Katherine's right and once again Jacob screamed and nearly fainted. The creature was male, that much was obvious due to its nudity; its flesh was a dark olive complexion and its eyes blazed a pure, fiery, reddish color with no hint of cornea, pupil, or whites. Long black talons tipped each of its fingers and as it opened its mouth long, black, razor-like teeth gleamed hideously in the moonlight.

"What the fuck are you," he managed to whisper, and immediately wondered how he had found his voice.

"We," the creature waved his claws outward in a sweeping, gesturing motion and suddenly the entire area was suffused with the obscene beings, "are the Ikaru."

Jacob began to slowly back away from the thing before

him and in so doing collided with the creature that had grabbed him earlier. Trembling, he turned to face the beast. The monster's black teeth were mere inches from his face as it grinned malevolently at him.

"Nothing may gaze upon the Ikaru and live," the grotesque creature wheezed. Its breasts were horribly swollen and hung down heavily on its chest, the nipples appearing to have been savagely chewed upon. Without warning, it grabbed his hand and shoved it into its slimy, clammy vagina. He withdrew his hand quickly from her stinking channel with a sick squelching sound and disgustedly shook thick, black worms from his palm and fingers. The beast howled with wicked glee and the others joined in, filling the night with maniacal, howling laughter. Terrified, Jacob turned to face Katherine.

"What's happening?"

"I am awakening, Jacob," she returned, moving slightly closer to him.

"You can't be like these...these things."

"I am now."

"How?"

"I struck one of them in the dark. When I went to see what I had run over, it attacked me. It did not destroy me as it should have because it heard others coming..."

Here she was interrupted by the male Ikaru that stood near her, "We do not like to be seen, unless it is of our own choosing."

"I died and now I am one of them."

"No," Jacob whispered as he shook his head violently, as if trying to dispel the awful vision before him.

"Yes," the male responded, drawing next to Katherine and placing a hand upon her shoulder, "she should have been torn in two but her attacker fled when it saw other humans approaching. As a result she has returned and she is one of us. We do not seek new members, but we shall not turn away that which becomes like us by accident. You should rejoice for her; she is eternal now."

"She's dead."

"No, she is reborn."

"You can join me, Jacob. That is why I called you here."

"What?"

"Come and be with me, forever."

"Never before has a mortal been given the choice of becoming one of us. All others have come to us accidentally or died. Which do you prefer?"

"Why give me a choice?"

"None have ever requested others be with them. Katherine resisted the Lethean waters of Hell, her soul knows no Nepenthe."

"Jacob, join me. Don't leave me alone for eternity."

"Choose man, your blood makes us restless. Be one of us or die, it matters little to me; we shall feed upon you either way. Katherine shall feed upon you either way."

Jacob watched in horror as Katherine's tongue snaked out and danced across her lips as she reached for him with trembling arms, "Stay with me, my love."

It was as he scrambled backwards to gain his life a few extra seconds that his hand went about his throat to shield it from the creatures' teeth and touched something cold and solid. He withdrew the pendant from beneath his shirt, drawing the gold chain out along with it. It was a miracle that he had not taken the necklace off when he had showered earlier; for if he had, he never would have thought to put it back on after the dream he had had.

"Go to Hell!"

The ones in front of him hissed venomously as they cowered before the crucifix. Jacob heard the growl behind him just in time to whirl and, tearing the chain from around his neck, thrust the piece of gold against the leering female monster's breast. It caterwauled as the emblem burned into its decaying flesh; black, pungent smoke rose from the crucifix as he withdrew it. Taking advantage of the creature's agony, he darted past her and out of the perimeter of their circle. He spotted a cross-shaped stone and scampered over to it; once there, he draped his arms over its sides so that he appeared to have been crucified. He could only pray that the monument would protect him. The male who seemed to be their leader cautiously approached him, his teeth bared in anger.

"You live tonight, human, but the sun will set again

tomorrow. We will be waiting for you. Nothing has ever escaped the Ikaru. We have eternity to hunt you."

"Go to Hell."

"Yes, we will for the day, but when the night falls again the world will be ours once more," as the creature started to leave it turned to face him one more time, "What you call Hell, we call Heaven. Perhaps we shall show you," and as it took flight hideous howls of demonic laughter filled the night.

He watched mesmerized as the creatures, including Katherine, transmogrified. Massive black wings erupted from their backs, as did a long, barbed tail from their buttocks. Their feet became hook-like claws and horns burst from their scalp as their ears elongated. The creatures' bodies turned black and shrunk to half their normal length as they took to the sky. The ensuing cacophony of leathery wings drowned out the leader's twisted screeches, and then Jacob was left alone in the silence of the graveyard. Wearily, he removed his arms from the cross and slowly made his way back to the car where he then turned the ignition and drove back home, weeping tears of relief, fear, and frustration. When he arrived home the light of dawn was just beginning to spread across the cool sky.

He poured himself a large glass of whiskey and took one of Katherine's Valium to calm his nerves and allow him to get some rest that would preferably be undisturbed by dreams. He took a black marker and drew large crosses

upon each of the doors and around all of the windows, and then he placed cloves of garlic before them as well. He felt the Valium and the liquor beginning to work on him and lay down, clutching his little gold crucifix tightly to his breast, and fell into a deep slumber.

In the darkness he could hear screaming - horrible, agonized wails of misery and suffering. The leader of the Ikaru appeared out of the blackness, a sardonic grin upon his lips.

"I told you that perhaps I would show you the world in which our souls must dwell whilst our bodies sleep in the mud of yours. Few humans have ever seen the glories you are about to witness. Welcome to Hell."

Its satanic laughter filled the dark and abruptly all that Jacob could feel was a swirling, falling sensation in the dizzying, lightless gulfs, and then for the briefest moment there was nothing. Then, just as suddenly, the creeping chaos of the netherworld engulfed him in its unctuous, tenebrous grasp.

The winds of the maelstrom caressed his soul as he drifted upon the dark wings of nightmare. The blackness became his constant and sole companion in the forgotten wasteland of madness; and his soul became as cold and impassionate as the emptiness around him. Far below, or was it above, he heard dissonant wails and cries of unholy anguish echoing into the swirling, sulfurous mists upon which he rode. He was lost and lonely, though he knew

instinctively that he was not alone. The darkness itself seemed alive and he could feel its hatred and evil resounding through his soul. Hideous laughter thundered in the Abyss, low and wicked, a demon's laugh.

He soared over a barren, desolate landscape of parched mud upon which malignant beings slithered restlessly. They were deformed beyond belief, having worm-like, black bodies with bird-like heads complete with sharp beaks that they used to attack one another. Horns protruded from the raw, hairless flesh of their scalps and monstrous, membranous wings fanned out from their slimy bodies. Blood from the savage wounds they inflicted upon each other flowed thickly over the hot, dry mud; yet none of them fell dead of their wounds. Their agony was eternal.

Jacob's tortured soul drifted past these creatures and he soon came upon a vast dune in the center of a wind-swept desert. On top of the shifting island of sand stood a being whose abnormalities made the previous slithering things appear normal. The being gleamed ethereally in the wan light, its pale yellow eyes gazing out with madness upon eternity. Vast wings composed of living serpents stretched out behind it and slimy brown tentacles upon which it stood undulating hung from its abdomen. Bat-like ears and six curved, orange horns framed a triangular face with a pug nose and canine jaws that ended in pincers on the top portion and long, curving fangs that dripped a thick, milky slime on the lower half. Maggots writhed

upon its rotten gums and black tongue. Roaches raced along its chest, playing amongst its fleshless ribs. Ants moved furiously through its cavernous, bloated intestines, which had ruptured and poured through its thin veil of translucent skin. All about it were the leprous, naked bodies of the Damned, engaged in agonizing acts of copulation.

In the blackness that suddenly engulfed him again, a vast hole of abyssmal depth opened, emitting a deep ultraviolet light and pouring forth rings of noxious grey smoke. In the regions beyond the sphere he could distantly hear the polyrythmical pounding of drums being beaten wildly and accompanied by discordant, cacophonous screams. Then a deafening buzzing rent the air and he was besieged by hordes of flies and locusts that erupted from the sphere. Abruptly, crackling bolts of electric blue fire lashed out at him from the gaping wound in the dark. The flames' icy touches seared his soul and froze the tiny winged creatures. He then found himself crossing over the ring's threshold and into the deepest, most unholy pits of Hell.

Jacob sailed over a lake whose waters roiled chaotically and burned eternally with crimson flames. Boiling blood poured from black clouds that were as lacerations in the fabric of hope and dreams, to drench a multitude of black-robed figures that drifted just above the fiery surface of the water, crying incessantly. As Jacob passed them, he saw some of their faces and his soul recoiled with the shock of what he saw. The flesh of their faces was ancient

and yellow and covered with what he believed at first to be wrinkles, but as he peered closer he saw that they were really names that had been carved into the skin. Between their eyes was a black inverted cross that had been driven into the skin, and upon each of their foreheads was written a single word - inquisitor. As they moaned sickly, large green worms oozed from their mouths and burrowed down beneath their robes which undulated with the hideous life that squirmed and fed upon the flesh underneath. Then, beyond the lake, he saw, across a corpse-strewn necropolis of open tombs, a cyclopean structure of black stone from whose frozen walls emanated yellowish smoke and screams of eternal torment. Floating above the massive dark tower was a gigantic, withered rose, the petals of which were composed of the writhing, ruptured bodies of the damned who all bore the symbol of the swastika burned into their foreheads. Their flesh had melted in places so that they had fused to one another and no amount of struggling could tear them free of each other. The stem of the flower was made of the compressed, though still living, forms of other people through which, at various irregular points, massive bone spikes had been driven to form thorns. In the center of the slowly revolving flower was a swirling light that was alternately blue, green, and red, but as he drew closer it became blacker than even the gulfs between stars must be. As he felt his soul turn to ice and slowly begin to wither the very fabric of the Abyss began to quake as

waves of thunder poured forth from the wall of blackness in the center of the hellish rose. And as he was hurled, screaming, upwards and out of the depths of Hell the thunder became a word, "Paradise!"

Jacob was still screaming even when he abruptly awoke from his tortured dream of Hell. The bed was icy and wet where he had perspired and urinated on the sheets while asleep. He wailed pitifully as he scrambled out of the filthy, stinking bed and crawled over to the window where he opened the blinds with trembling hands. The sunlight was soft and fading in the afternoon sky, and with intensifying fear he realized that night would soon be falling. He checked the clock and saw with petrified alarm that it was five minutes before four, leaving him no more than a couple of hours before the world would once again belong to the Ikaru.

He had to find a way to free Katherine from the realms he had just seen. Her soul did not belong in a world of agony and endless torment and her body, tainted by the touch of unholy monsters, should not rise and drink the blood of the living as the Ikaru did. She had called out to him from Hell, pleading for him, and he would save her soul so that she could find her true resting place in eternity. He would do anything in his power to have her back, but he would not sacrifice both of their souls to an eternal life in Hell to do so. It was then, as he knelt by the window, watching the day slowly begin to fade away,

that he thought of a plan that might end the horror that had descended upon them and set Katherine's soul free. Fighting against the despair and revulsion that welled up within him, he rose and, donning a jacket, left the sanctuary of his home for the chapel in town.

Jacob arrived back home at ten minutes of six and hurriedly went to work preparing for the creatures' coming. He had made a confession at the church and then, after doing penance briefly, had asked the priest to bless him. Jacob had thanked the man and, after saying a brief prayer as he knelt before the cross, he had left the church and its bewildered priest behind; a small bottle of holy water in his coat pocket. He stepped out onto the front porch of the house at exactly six o' clock as the last rays of the sun departed from the sky. Walking out into the center of the lawn, he stood there silently, holding his little gold crucifix in his left hand and the empty vial that had contained the holy water in his right hand, as he waited for them to come. Tossing aside the empty bottle, he heard the beating of many wings approaching above the moans of the sighing wind and knew that they were coming for him.

"Katherine!" he screamed at the dark sky, and instantly the yard was filled with the leather-winged creatures.

After they had mutated back to their normal state, the leader stepped out from the amassed throng and glared at him coldly. Katherine came and stood behind the creature and Jacob was astonished by how much she had changed in

one day. Her skin had turned a dark olive color like that of the others and a great many of the scars that had covered her body had vanished. The red fire in the center of her eyes also seemed to burn a bit brighter than it had the previous night.

"Have you made your choice, human?" the leader asked.

With reluctance Jacob spoke, part of him wanting to turn around and try fleeing to the sanctuary of the house, "Yes."

"What is your decision?"

"I will join you."

The beast sighed, displaying black fangs that glistened in the dark. Katherine smiled, revealing her own gleaming teeth and evident hunger; however, in her expression there also seemed to be something more, something the others lacked - sadness. The leader moved towards him, clicking its teeth audibly in anticipation of the bloodletting to come.

"It will hurt only briefly. Welcome to eternity."

"No!" Jacob screamed, placing the crucifix between them. "Katherine has to be the first."

The creature hissed and made threatening movements with its claws but did not actually come any closer.

"I must be the first."

"Katherine."

The leader hissed once more and then stepped back as Katherine came forward, desire and hunger burning in her

eyes. Jacob tossed the small crucifix at the leader, who leapt backwards away from the holy object, growling. Katherine placed her cold, lithe arms about him and he, placing his left hand upon the back of her head and his right hand on her icy back, drew her mouth to his warm throat. He winced, a hiss of intense pain escaping his lips, as her fangs pierced his flesh and sliced across his throat, making a razor-like incision. His hot, fresh blood sprayed out in thick, wet jets into her open mouth and splashed across her beautiful face.

Her sudden hideous screams of agony surprised him even in the euphoric pre-death state he was slipping into as his blood cascaded across both of their bodies. He held her to him as tightly as he could, watching in horror as her face began to melt and her throat burst open with numerous smoking sores. The holy water he had drunk had purified his blood, making it lethal to the Ikaru, but it was not the Ikaru in general that he wished to destroy, only Katherine. The others deserved their endless torment and nocturnal existence; Katherine deserved the peace that Heaven would bring to her troubled soul now that it had been set free. He looked once more into her burning eyes and in them he saw both sadness and happiness, despite the pain her body was experiencing. With a scream of triumph, Jacob took one of his hands from around her and, placing his fingers inside the wound she had made in his throat, tore himself open savagely. Katherine's entire

body burst into flames as blood geysered from his open neck and rained down upon the cold ground. The Ikaru took to the sky, screaming with rage, just as the burning bodies exploded in a shower of blood, bone and fire, scattering their mingled ashes to the howling winds. Jacob and Katherine entered eternity as one, leaving the burning, bloodstained lawn behind even as their ashes came to rest upon the cold, wet earth.

Wardance

Across seven seas
And in seven worlds

WAR

Thunder is forever
And fire is our god

WAR

Where there is rage
Where there is hate

WAR

Where there is fear
Where there is envy

WAR

For what is blood if not to spill
For what are weapons if not to kill
For what is life if not to take
For what is the earth if not to rape

WAR

No turning back
The sky has gone black
Bodies are burning
Missles are falling
Children are crying
Women are dying
Blood like rain
What will we gain

WAR

I am eternal
In the souls of men
I have seen the first
I shall see the last
I am made supreme
By doctrines of hate, ignorance, and fear
There is no escape
There is no salvation
I am lord and master over all that I see
And you - all life - are only part of MY machine

WAR

Watercolour #1

You are my brother
Let us walk the streets together
Leaving light in our wake.

You are my sister
The blood of Eve runs strong in both of our veins
We are only different versions of the same.

Look into the eyes of a little child
And you will see only your reflection
No horror or shame
No hate or rage
These things are taught not innate.

I can feel the rivers
Flowing within me
Their depths are immeasurable
Giving birth to innumerable tributaries
Day after day
Night after night.

We are all children of the same god
Known by many names
Wearing many faces
Reaching out for us all.

Tear down the sable walls that blind us all
To the beauty within one another's souls
Open your eyes.

You are my brother...
You are my sister...
We are one
And all the same
Despite the eye of the beholder
We know no color.

Watercolour #2

Stones fall like rain across
The bloody face of the earth.

Prejudice
and
Judgment

Desire
and
Hatred

silence hovers
like sleep
so
d
e
e
p

We are adrift on tumultuous seas
Left alone to face the tides of fear
Washed by sins from lightless depths
Plagued by common fates and winter storms
We sail on towards a blackened horizon
Yet still we hate each other for the color of our skin
Or for doctrines that rise as fortresses drenched in blood
From the sable realms of madness within us all.

Look inside:

(doyouremember)

The rattle of chains
The sting of whips
The pain of birth (withnofuture)
Still the bitter taste lingers on.

"Mistah Kurtz - he dead."

Now,
Take my hand
Walk with me into the wind
A distant storm beyond the silence
A rage of light that calls us all
Out from the arms of the night.

Let the blood mix like the waters of the ocean.
No more,

"Swing, boy, from my tree!"
Or fire upon the plains.
This is our testament
Whispered upon the shifting sands of the Promised Land.
No more,
Separation of the fingers from the hand.

No more,
Mark of Cain.

Mirrors, casting reflections in the evening sky
Dancing together
You and I
Out! Out! Out!
Into the warmth of the surging tide
Where the thunder of our myriad voices rises like foam
In the wake of the waves
Where Paradise is no longer lost, but found
Glimmering in the bright eyes of our children
Who reach out across the dark face of the waters to join
hands and wish, as one, upon a falling star...
Tonight.

We are fire
Never consumed
Though we burn forever
As one.

Weapon

Will you bleed?
If I cut you, will you rain down on me?

Sharp as light
(and shining bright)

I cast shadows
(in the night)

Take me,
Taste me,
Lick ...
the blood from my blade.

(It's yours, take it and drink it.)

If you love me,
You will take the blade
And drive it into me,
(Drive it deep inside of me.)

It feels so good,
(twisting in my back)

Cut me again and again and again ...
('til I can bleed no more)

The blade,
your weapon,
use it, darling
Make me your slave,
your bloody whore.

I will bleed.
If you cut me, I will rain down on you.

When Night Falls

When night falls
And the wings of madness thunder restlessly in the sky
I know that you will be there to hold me
Trembling in silent frozen halls
And lead me to hidden realms
Where on wings of fire we may fly
Forever free from the tyranny of the dark
Where all our dreams rage in seas of flame
And love burns away the night
With its eternally glowing spark
Freed from nocturnal fear
To descry at last from afar the hollow walls of twilight
And we become as one
A single tear
In an ocean of glorious light
Burning like a star
Forever in the night

Whispers

...and so here we stand
with only our shattered memories
to remind us of our dreams
how once so long ago
we would walk hand in hand
beneath the moonlight
and the summer stars
our hearts whispering in synchronicity
and our voices drifting like snow
we would lie next to each other
by the seashore in the dead of night
dreaming of a world far away
where the sun never shone
to disrupt the romance of the dark
now we are left with nothing
save the shattered memories
of what could have been
and so here we stand...

Wings

In sunlight I see you
With outstretched wings
Soaring amidst the heavens
And with joy my heart sings.
I stand alone in the shadows
Tears filling my eyes
The shadows retreating from your beauty
As you gracefully lift me up to your skies.
My heart races with happiness
And my soul cries with passion
Eternal love casting out the sadness
As we soar on the wings of compassion.
I want to ride the skies eternally
Until all of time stands still
With you in my heart and
As one with my soul
Together forever
We will...
Fly.

With All My Love, from Hell

For beauty and warmth my soul doth yearn
I, a creature of darkness, in search of light
In blackened depths of anguish I must burn
Love and purity forever hidden from my sight.
The wells of Hell are the sadness in my eyes
My body is young yet my mind is far too old
Look into my eyes where the heart of madness lies
Life in my Inferno is eternally empty and cold.
The grave is drear and damp
All the Abyss is before my eyes
I long for love and grace
But all that I touch dies.
The charnel depths beckon me from the earth
I will wait for you my darling eternally by these
Stygian shores
Time will bring you to me with death's rebirth
Where my eyes drip blood for tears in endless downpours.

Without Prayer

Without prayer,
We sail on towards seas of fire.

Without prayer,
We soar on the wings of fury.

When I fall, will anyone be there to catch me?
When you cry out in desperation, will there be anyone left
to answer your screams?
I have seen the signs - such ominous omens - and all my
bones doth shake with the knowledge of what is to come.
I have sought the dark places of the earth in the hopes
that I might immerse myself in stagnant streams of
forgetfulness, and let it all ebb away.

Where can salvation be found?
Where can we find sanctuary?
Who will hold us in the night?
Where can we hide?
In a world,
without prayer.

Silence speaks louder than words when there is nothing
left to say.
Walls of sound that rise and rise but never burst in a
world gone suddenly deaf with its own suffering cries.
Darkness awaits us all on the other side of the night.
And the light at the end of the end of the tunnel is just
the crimson glare of the dark, and of the madness that
is bleating sickly in the shadows.

Without prayer,
I lay me down to sleep forever.

Without prayer,
We all must drive the nails into our cross.

So let it be written,
So let it be done.

Without prayer,
We sail on towards annihilation.

With Silence in my Heart

Oremus:

With Silence in my heart these words are becoming the image of my soul. I cannot make you understand because it is beyond even my comprehension. I would show you the image but I cannot see it myself for I have torn out my eyes. They have been cast aside like so much useless dust to watch the shadows that encroach upon me as I wait for night to fall. I can tell you only of my world and the sensations that have assaulted me as I sat alone in my room, the dark tomb of my soul, and waited for madness to come to me and take me in its tenebrous, wet arms. This is my testament that you read and must decipher though you do not know me and could never understand me. My identity is as unimportant to you and the meaning of these words as it was to myself. It is imperative, however, that you strive to understand and unravel the puzzle because it is the labyrinth of your own mind and in its dark mirrors you may find reflections of your soul staring back at you. Seek me and I shall find you.

I want to fly where the clowns, all porcelain and white, laugh with tears in their eyes. They can teach me to sing where I have only known how to scream. They can teach me to bleed but I will have to use a rusty, dull blade to carve out my wounds.

When there is no more animation and all my kindred are frozen in ice, the clowns will come to me, laughing with tears in their eyes and still the screaming will continue, transformed into song; a tragic serenade whispered to the bloody stars. Why must the winter sun be so cold upon my flesh?

I once loved a woman, she was beautiful and kind. I saw the image of her innocence shining within and was compelled to corrupt it. Twisting and writhing within her mind I painted her windows black and drew her into my arms by the roar of the ocean. We dove down into the cold, briny depths of the sea and spoke softly to one another as we waited for Leviathan, the mnemonic hunter of man's subconscious - his river of belief - to come and devour us that we might see the belly of the beast from within. Once again, before I am lost completely I want to fly where Kubla Khan saw the holy river of Alph cascading down into lightless realms. I know that she is waiting there for me with eyes of fire and a silken gown the purest shade of blue.

I am finding my way through the corridors of my soul. Alone, in silence, I am searching for the key that will open the doorway I seek to find; it lurks within us all my friend. The Owls are screaming in the Crowns of the Trees but I must become deaf to their execrations and howl back in joy my own rapturous ululations. There is a ring of fire burning bright atop the Mountain I make for myself. I am part of the Darkness that is part of the Light that is itself part of the Darkness that is also a part of me and I am a part of you.

Why do we seek God so voraciously when our own bodies are His temples? He dwells within us all, does He not? We are all the icons we need, you and I. What is it that whispers to me in my dreams and what is it that I am told? This is the key and this Silence that haunts my memories, my very life, is its image. Seek me and I shall find you.

You will know me because I will be you and you will be me and we will be part of the secret that lies beyond the door. I have given you the key. Open the door.

With Silence in my heart, I cross the threshold. I can see though mine eyes are closed.

Amen.

Wormwood

The thunder
Of

S I L E N C E

Deafens me
When September comes creeping
With its august masque
And rain
Falls
Upon the dark face of the earth
In the cold of the night
With wind whistling
Through my dreams
And my thoughts turning
To nightmare
Spinning
A whirlpool of stars
In the darkness of space
The blank whiteness of falling snow
And the deep blue of the sea
Vague
Dim outline of horror
The poison of eternity
Driving hooks into my soul
In that interior emptiness
The isolation of glass
And the heat of reflection
If only to remember
The fear of what is to come
The red stigma
Of life
Captured in death
Upon the endless shore
Eroding in time's trembling wake
A final tear
To water Heaven's eye
To serve
Even in exile
And screaming abjuration
To fall
And sail forever
Until fire
Rages no more
Whispered in desolation
In the bloodstained halls
Of Elsinore
Spinning
In the icy waters
Of the hoary deep
Yea; e'en within my soul.

Alpha

Call me Adam Eveson. This is my testament: all that I have seen and all that I have felt. What follows is my story, but it is also your story. It is the story of all life. Forever and ever. Open your mind and you will find the key to understanding. This is the doorway, enter, for the time is short and coming fast. Take my hand and walk with me now into the sea of eternity:

"Now I lay me down to sleep
I pray the Lord my soul to keep
If I should die before I wake (sleep)
die I pray the Lord (sleep)
die my soul (sleep)
die soul to
die take (sleep)
Amen."

"I love you," mother would say (I love you), as she kissed (I love you) me goodnight. Sleptight goodnight goodnight (I love you).

In the still of the night I would wake with thunder echoing in my troubled mind and images of gently rolling hills and sprawling plains of haunting blue, spinning spinning 'round and 'round in my memories. Up and down, rising and falling, slowly and gently, I would drift as I lay in the darkness with the silent world surrounding me: I was always so small before its titanic majesty. I would lay in the dark, trembling from the visions of the night, afraid to move; the cyclopean presences about me were so horribly terrifying; yet I was in awe of them as well. Then the melting pink lights would emerge from the shadows, coming at last to comfort me. They had an amorphous being that continuously flowed over and about itself; however, their essence was never diminished because of the incessant, unctuous movement. They would come to my bedside and whisper occultic secrets into my childish ears. At peace, I always remained silent as they explored me, though I burned beneath their fluid caresses. The walls of the room would gradually distort, curving outwards until I was ensconced in a spherical representation of my dark and soothing room...

My nightmare
My coffin
What strange dreams
I would wake from

transformed
within
forever

My chambre ardente
My sepulchre

to sleep
to die

Longing
Awaiting

... no doors, no windows, no light, no sound, no movement,
no darkness, no thought, no emotion, no fear, no love,
no hope, no desire, no warmth, no cold...

no exit
no exit
no exit
no exit
no
escape
nothing.

When I awoke a few years later, I discovered that this distortion had transformed all that was familiar to me and inverted my precarious vision. Screaming, I broke the numbing silence that hovered over my mind; yet I did not divulge the secrets that I possessed: I only buried them deeper...

repress repress
repress repress

... in the dark waters of my subconscious. The shadow had risen and covered my tearstained eyes. O how my heart would thunder (out on the tiles) as I struggled to rise from the cold bed, and O how my vision would swim and blur as I looked over the side of the bed and saw that in the night the world had flown away, and in its place was the emptiness of space - the frozen wastes lying between stars and forever hidden from the light.

And the Spirit of God
Moved upon the dark face of the waters.

subtle shades
and
shifting hues
of
darkness

When the stranger entered my room there was only silence as a furious storm raged relentlessly outside my cold windows. His suit glistened in the electric blue light rising from the undulating shadows, and when he removed his shades the world was filled with swirling lights of every imaginable shade and depth of color.

O strange traveller,
Where have you been?
What have you seen?

Where are you going?
 Why have you come?
 When will you return?
 When will the silence end?
 And from what strange land do you come?

Thoughts, visions, images, racing blindly on toward
 epiphany; coming to myself I find that I am the key and
 I have all the answers within my soul. Words drift like
 blue snow from his lips and fall upon me to blister my
 chilled flesh.

touch me
 whispers

Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto
 the Lord: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

Comes the blind Fury with bloodstained wings
 Cutting, cutting, cutting away the threads of my memory
 And bringing sweet Lethean water for my parched lips
 Making me forget for awhile
 Such bitter, black water
 Solidifying and becoming brittle.

When he left, I heard the sound of breaking glass from
 somewhere far away in time.

Time passed by in a haze until I saw the fire in the
 sky. It was spinning, spinning and singing, calling out
 to me. As I watched, it swirled and mutated, casting color-
 ful shadows through the forests of the night. As I sat
 there beneath the sighing trees, feathers fell like soft
 rain upon the cool grass and I heard the thunderous beating
 of many wings. Owls, white and pure, filled the glowing
 sky and soothed my burning heart with their whispered cries.
 The forgotten words came screaming from my parched lips,
 "The time is coming!"

As I sat alone and in silence in the chapel of the
 forest, taking sacraments within the temple of my soul,
 a great hall with mirrors on either side and the ocean
 flowing above and below it, opened up before me. I rose
 and entered it, my prayers drifting away, drifting away,
 drifting away...

Holy, holy, holy
 God of power and [light]
 Heaven and Earth are full of your glory...
 Blessed be the meek,
 For they shall inherit the [stars].
 Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus
 Forever, without end.
 Welcome eternity.

For I am Alpha and Omega,
The first and the last.
Amen.

Time does not exist. It never did. It never will.
Time does not heal. No time to kill. No time for love.
Time will not ebb away. Time will not end. Time never
began. Time will not fade. Time does not bend. Time
time time time time time time, tick-tock:tock-tick, time
time time time time time time time time.

Forget, for now.

I must remember!

Forget, for now.

I must remember!

When I began to write, the memories and the secrets
began to flow back to me from out of the blackened depths
of my subconscious. Slowly and so slowly. The words became
fire and I was consumed by their raging, passionate flames.
My pen drew its ink from the deep, dark well of my heart
and, like a black spider, I spun a strange and beautiful
web for all to entangle themselves in. The songs I sang
transcended human experience and entreated all to find
the reflections of themselves that I had placed between
the lines. Where did such dark visions come from?

When I thought of the past, I remembered a world filled
with flashing lights and beating wings, whispers in hazy
darkness and secrets forced behind mnemonic walls of cold,
obsidian stone. (open your eyes) The world that I saw
in my mind's eye moved in slow-motion and shimmered with
crystals of pink and blue. (open your eyes) A chimeric
reflection of what we know as reality. (open your eyes)
Towers of blackness riddled with keys of silver light.
(open your eyes) As I sat in my room, my comforting tomb,
alone and in silence, they eventually came back to me,
singing a desolate hymn in the dead of night. And the
music played on and on and on as the heart of darkness
opened wide to receive me.

"The horror! The horror!"

Let all the sacred rivers flow back unto their source.

The melting pink lights fell from the shadows and came
to me. In the distance I could hear a multitude of beating
wings. As I looked down at my silent, still body I saw
that it was covered with soft, white feathers. I floated
far away and swam in soothing, blue waters. I floated
far away and swam in cold, dark waters. I floated far

away and felt the unholy pain of penetration. Mist and fog, dark and light, pleasure and pain, Heaven and Hell. In the eternal darkness of space, I saw the abyss staring back at me and into my soul. When I awoke, I gazed with wonder at the clock:



eleven:eleven
twelve:twelve



The shadow had risen and covered my tearstained eyes.

When deep sleep fell upon me and the Sandman came to me once again, I let myself drift away in his somnolent gaze. Though I was afraid, I was at peace as I drifted down upon gentle wings into the valley of the shadow of death. My only concrete thought, "I am unbound." The world about me became clastic as I transformed into a wave of electric blue light, streaming down down down into a bottomless sea of cool, blue water. How it warmed my soul. In the flow of the water's soft currents, I saw images of all those that I had known rippling away with the coming tide: past friends, past loves, family, myself, and all that I have ever known or will know. I wept tears of silver light beneath the waves.

As I lay submerged, feeling the water wash over my shapeless form, all the denizens of the deep came to me with sorrowful joy in their eyes. They were followed by all the creatures of the earth and air. I blessed them all; and they in turn blessed my flowing soul.

Let all the sacred rivers flow back unto their source.

I became flesh once more as I rose from the waters of the eternal deep. Mist and hazy light enshrouded me as I stood in silence, gazing out and down upon a world of vivid color and shimmering light.

Golden spheres of eternal fire
Encircling a tenebrous valley filled with gently swaying
verde life
Crimson lakes and electric blue skies
Clouds of melting pink light
And the thunder of cyclopean wings beating
Echoed by the soft flutter of many wings beating
Far below flutter beating
flutter beating
flutter thunder beating
flutter beating
flutter beating
flutter
flutterthunderbeating
foreverandever

Madness?

or
Transcendence?

Doors thundering shut.

"Are you not ready to go home?"

go
are you not you home ready
home ready to go
home home home
home homehomehomehomehomehomehomehome
youyou ready to go home
you you
you
???????

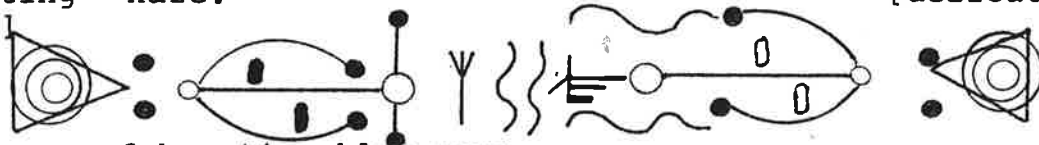
The melting pink lights were before me

Eternally decaying

Yet never consumed

My soul had become liquid fire beneath the fury of beating
wings and drifting silver lights (shapes?) lost in the
shifting haze. [delicate

sylyphs]



The caress of haunting blue eyes
Washed over my soul.

With silence echoing in my heart
And the smell of salt in my nostrils
I raised my eyes to the starlit sky.

DREAM

A fireball screamed across the darkness
And in its red, silvery wake I saw that the blue field
Was filled with people
Eyes turned to the heavens
Crying.

My soul poured forth in a relentless effusion as the world
began to distort in an unctuous motion. I shut my eyes
against the swirling chaos that rushed forward to greet
me with numbing arms.

When I opened my eyes, I was seated opposite of two
beautiful women. They spoke to one another, but no sound
reached my ears. Both were blonde and young with beautiful
bodies. I could not move. I could not speak. I could
only sit and watch them as they conversed freely with each
other. Feathers, long and white, drifted down from the
twilight above us. After some time I was able to look

up, and I beheld a pair of cyclopean black eyes, ringed with gold fire, high up in the darkness, observing us. The room about me was chill and sterile with a powerful medicinal smell that covered any other scents that might have been present. A harsh, electric blue light radiated across the room from some obscure source, bathing everything in its ghostly glow. The women abruptly ceased talking and turned to face me for the first time: their eyes were the color of emeralds and I could feel my soul drowning in their jealous depths; their faces were soft and flawless, accentuated by full lips and sharp noses; their hair fell in long, flowing curls over their naked shoulders and I could see their breasts rising and falling gently beneath the silver gowns they wore. Together, they placed their long, lithe fingers upon the crystal pyramid that sat between us on top of the crystal table we were seated at. Then they spoke in unison with a voice of the sweetest, softest music,

"They meet with darkness in the daytime,
And grope in the noonday as in the night.
Remember, that thy life is wind...
For we are but of yesterday, and know
nothing, because our days upon earth
are a shadow.
ALIF lam mim ra'"

Then, as one, they began to scream - a single high and piercing wail beyond the limits of the human body. The thunder of gigantic wings echoing in my mind, I turned from the figures, floating in the mist around me, with tears in my eyes.

"Are you not ready to go home?"

I awoke from deep sleep trembling from the visions of the night; the eternal thunder of massive doors slamming shut, glass breaking, and fluttering wings echoing echoing...

My life became one of doubt over my sanity. Were these images that rose unbidden in my mind during the light of day memories of actual events or occultic, visionary dreams? I tried to work this dilemma out through my poems and my stories, but the truth always eluded me. Every day of my life I was haunted by these thoughts and images. Scenes of alien worlds and protean lights that whispered to me in the dark of night, and the growing certainty that these things were actual memories, tormented me constantly. I felt as though I possessed knowledge of secret things which were slowly being revealed to me through my unconscious mind when I would write. Images of white owls, wings, blue lights, black eyes without a face, and verdant valleys ringed with golden fire took form upon the blank

pages that I struggled with. The impressions that kept recurring in my mind were both terrifying and soothing: I remembered the same dichotomy of emotions always being present during the original occurrences of these experiences as well. Those that I told of my beliefs were for the most part openly skeptical, though some did believe me, and those who read what I wrote saw only abstraction in my work. Perhaps it was abstraction, but perhaps that is the only way to describe in human terms that which is beyond full comprehension and outside the realm of human experience. It was always with trepidation that I lay down at night to sleep. In my heart I was afraid, but I was also hopeful, that the absence of light and the coming of sleep would bring umbrageous life from out of the darkness once more. The experiences had come to an end with that final mind bending episode in the sterile, blue room with the two women and the pyramid; the final words of some hidden creature echoing in my mind as I had awoken and haunting me ever since, "Are you not ready to go home?" The most disturbing facet of all these experiences was the inability to assign any logical sequence or length of time to any of them. The events associated with each separate experience all seemed to happen at once in a spherical motion, that is, with no beginning nor ending.

During all of this I met and fell in love with a woman named Nicole Mercer. She was beautiful and a year older than I. She had long and curly chestnut hair, radiant blue eyes, fair and unblemished skin, and a voluptuous body. When I told her of the shadow upon my mind and soul she accepted it without question and helped me along as I wandered through the dark forests of my life and mind in search of the truth. We came to the conclusion that my memories were of real events and guided visions rather than fantasies or simple dreams. This conclusion was made based on the fact that on the same night I merged with the blue water and listened to the two women in the blue room with the crystal pyramid, she also "dreamed" of being one with the deep, blue water and said that the denizens of the ocean had come to her with sorrowful joy in their eyes and she had blessed them all. Further support for our conclusion as to the nature of these experiences, combined with the knowledge that not all of my experiences had occurred while sleeping or preparing for sleep, was the subsequent discovery that others in both of our families had experienced similar haunting and alien events in their lives.

My mother had seen the white owls watching her, both in darkness and in light. She had seen the night sky hovered by glorious, shifting lights and felt the cold flow of dark waters over her soul. Generations are born and generations die but all know the caress of eternity. All that has been, is, and will be: the circle never ends:

per omnia saecula saeculorem.

When I married Nicole the strange experiences had completely vanished from my life, but thoughts of them continued to haunt me day and night. I loved Nicole; she was my angel and always shall be. She led me down into temptation and out of my troubled sleep into salvation. We watched the night sky together, waiting for the return of the unknown, longing for the touch that comes in darkness and brings strange visions to the thoughts of men. To walk the night and sail beyond the sunset.

I never foresaw the darkness that was to come. As I drove through the morning mist I could still taste her upon my lips. I never saw the vehicle that came roaring out of the fog behind me until it was too late. The sound of breaking glass and metallic thunder filled the world and pain briefly tore through my body before I began to slip away. A crimson haze fell over my vision, and in slow-motion the darkness rushed forward to take me down beneath its bloody tide to greet my destiny.

I had only two thoughts before the silence consumed me,

NICOLE

I AM UNBOUND



The Forbidden Fury

dark depths
 coming
 calling
 N black L
 I thunderswelling I
 G fear G and
 H of H falling
 T the T floating
 unknown
 by the roaring of
 the ocean
 beatingwings
 swelling where
 of the darkriverrun
 streams wavesbreaking
 likethunder downanddownanddown
 can you echoing what
 HeAr Me what what
 did
 the say
 thunder
 eyesofbluefire
 hallofmirrors
 thunderswelling
 absu
 eternalseaofbluelight
 peromniaeaculasaeculorem
 outside inside
 within without
 CHAOS
 drifting
 flutterlikeafallingfeather ofatheryoulookjustlikeme
 ogoditssobeautiful and (your face)
 overthehillssandsofarawaybutfull
 of
 stars
 thunder
 W
 wingswhisperwhispering
 H
 beating
 E ARE
 shadowsfalling
 R
 todaytomorrowandtomorrowandtomorrow
 E
 YOU
 ocean waves drifting ebbing
 dyingtoriseup
 and
 bebornagain
 letitend awake

foreverandeveramen
 the walls
 are curving
 the womb
 is so warm
 and comforting
 i am shadow
 in the eternity
 of nightfall
 awaiting birth
 in deep black water
 in deep blue water
 as the melting pink lights
 come to me
 soothing me with whispers
 in darkness
 and gentle caresses
 out of dust
 out of darkness
 out of ashes
 out of light
 in the garden

THUNDER

the violence of the waves
 evermore
 the gates of life
 are open for me
 forevermore
 wide
 to the other side
 i
 am
 becoming
 i
 am
 emerging
 i
 am
 finding
 my way out of the dark and emerging into the light as i
 feel myself becoming more than human
 more than sentient
 i
 am
 eternal
 and
 i
 am
 unbound
 crying in the deadofnight as my soul is opened
 and
 shown the wheel of infinity spinning in the sky
 the all-seeing eye of God
 what has happened

where am i
 alone
 in silence
 in the forests of the night

and

womanwasborn

and

we became as one
 in the garden
 before
 the
 eye of God

created
 in
 THEIR
 image

whenoneisallandallisone
 birthdeathbeginningending
 alphaandomega
 death in life
 life in death
 withoutend

L
 I
 F
 E

dancing
 in
 the
 shadows
 beneath
 the
 swaying
 boughs
 of
 the
 trees
 goodandevil
 jade
 eyes
 the
 fruit
 of
 nightmare
 the
 nectar
 of
 the
 gods
 the
 passion
 of
 the
 damned

K
 N
 O
 W
 L
 E
 D
 G
 E

no
 Nepenthe
 for
 the

Who takes away
 The sins of the world
 Have mercy on us
 And forgive us our trespasses
 And lead us not into temptation but
 Deliver us from evil
 Amen

as
 the
 mirrors
 shatter
 as above
 so below
 and
 i
 awake
 in
 chaos
 born
 into
 and
 out
 of
 darkness
 in
 search
 of
 the
 light
 Nicole
 i
 am
 unbound
 as
 i
 fall
 into
 the
 blue
 abyss
 before
 my
 eyes
 and
 the
 mist
 is
 alive
 with
 delicate
 drifting
 figures
 telling
 me

ancient
 secrets
 and
 once
 forbidden
 knowledge
 and
 opening
 the
 doorways
 of
 my
 mind
 so
 that
 at
 long
 last
 i
 shall
 see
 and
 understand
 what
 i
 have
 been
 unable
 to
 remember
 a fury
 that drives
 me on and on
 deeper and deeper
 into the seething
 whirlpool of infinity
 the electric blue ocean
 of
 eternity
 the
 eye of God
 the womb of creation
 and
 the
 dark valley
 of the
 shadow of death

I am ready to go home
 Welcome eternity



The Garden

I was falling. Falling like a feather through the emptiness and the silence. Life is. In the distance, I could see a soft white light that grew brighter the closer I drifted to it. Haunting my eyes. And then I was standing before a white door, surrounded by blackness and silence. With trembling hands, I caressed its cold, stone surface, tracing my fingers along the bizarre intaglios and bas-reliefs that adorned its surface. Birth is. At my touch, the door began to whisper in a multitude of voices simultaneously. I could not make out any of the words spoken, but the very sounds it produced gave me courage and soothed my fears. All the sacred rivers. I placed my fingers in the groove of its handle and slowly pulled the white door open. The myriad tongues of man. Life is. Trumpets issued forth from all corners of the darkness. Birth is.

There was a membrane of sticky, resilient flesh on the other side of the door, obscuring whatever lay beyond. I pushed at it but it did not yield and I drew back my hands, astonished at its wet heat. From the other side of the membrane, I could hear what sounded like rushing water. Pushing with all my strength, I tried desperately to break through the dripping piece of flesh. Life is. I fought and fought, trying to tear open the membrane until, suddenly and with a piercing shriek, it gave way. Blood, hot and thick, splashed over me as I fell through the opening and into the roiling ocean beyond. Birth is. Immediately, I was borne below the violent waves as the undertow pulled me down like lead to the bottom of the sea. I came to rest upon the ocean floor and lay there in the wet, numbing twilight silence, watching the sand drift over me and feeling the cold blue weight of the world pressing down upon me. All the sacred rivers. Life is. All the denizens of the deep gathered about me in silence and I blessed them each and every one without a single word falling from my lips.

Tears of silver light floated up from my eyes as I heard voices rise far off in the dim, dark distance, chanting loudly in prayer.

"Accipte, et manducate ex hoc omnes:
 Hoc est enim Corpus meum.
 Accipte, et bibite ex eo omnes:
 Hic est enim Calix Sanguinis mei,
 Novi et Aeterni Testamenti, Mysterium fidei,
 Qui pro vobis et pro multis effundetur
 In remissionem peccatorum.
 Haec quotiescumque feceritis,
 In mei memoriam facietis.
 Panem sanctum vitae aeternae

Et Calicem salutis perpetuae.
 Sanctum Sacrificium,
 Immaculatam Hostiam.
 Per ipsum, et cum ipso, et in ipso
 In unitate Spiritus Sancti.
 Omnis honor et gloria
 Per omnia saecula saeculorum.
 Amen."

In the eternal blue above me, I could see a ring of golden fire burning brightly, with seven gigantic blueish-grey eyes floating within its circumference, looking down upon me. I rose against the weight of the world and knealt on the ocean floor, praying in the liquid twilight to my saviour. When I closed my eyes, I could feel the caress of soft wings wash over me. Life is. Birth is. Death is. A ring of fire. A golden sphere. Neverending. When I opened my eyes the circle had vanished and a woman robed in seaweed stood before me. Eyes of cold blue fire. Icy light poured out of her eyes and froze me so that I could not move but watch in horror as she raised a shimmering sword high above her. Rays of orange and red light streamed out in all directions from its sharp, shiny point. The woman screamed, high and loud, blood oozing from her lips, as she brought the blade swiftly down and into my open mouth. I felt no pain as it pierced me. The sword began to spin of its volition in my mouth; and, as the woman drifted away into the darkness, the sword began to sing to me. A soft lullabye that gently rocked me to sleep as I collapsed upon the ocean floor.

For I am Alpha and Omega.
 The first and the last.
 The beginning and the end.

In my waking sleep, I drifted through the waves and out of the ocean as the sword sang to me, spinning in my mouth. And then I awoke in the midst of a lush and warm garden with the sword gone and my body covered with damp seaweed.

Birth is.
 Life is.
 Death is.
 Birth is.

All the sacred rivers.

A sphere.

A ring of fire.

A white door.

A perfumed garden.

Pulling seaweed from my body, I rose and walked through the garden, relishing the feel of the cool, wet leaves of all the plants brushing against me. Abruptly, I entered a small clearing where two mermaids sat upon a large black rock overlooking a pool of glittering blue water, kissing each other deeply. They were mirror images, having no physical differences whatsoever that I could discern. Their skin was a golden color that matched the gold of their tails and of their luxuriant hair. Sensing my presence, they ceased kissing and turned to face me with eyes the color of diamonds. The wind rose suddenly and furiously, whipping their long golden hair wildly about them as they spoke in unison to me,

"Out of whose womb came the ice? and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it? The waters are hid as with a stone, and the face of the deep is frozen. Behold, he spreadeth his light upon it, and covereth the bottom of the sea. Who knoweth leviathan? Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook? or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down? Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons? or his head with fish spears? Will the unicorn be willing to serve thee, or abide by thy crib? Behold, the sun shining and the moon walking in brightness. When I looked for good, then evil came unto me: and when I waited for light, there came darkness. I fear not. For I am a sister to dragons and a companion to owls. Dost thou tremble in fear from the visions of the night?
Oiduah quonne oopre"

Then, as one, they leapt, hand in hand, into the pool and disappeared from my sight. I went to the black rock and lay down upon its cool, wet surface as the wind died out. The sky above me was a soft celadon blue unblemished by a single cloud. As I stared up and into its vastness a flock of seagulls passed by, heading towards the sea I had only just left behind. With the scent of the mermaids lingering in my nostrils, I began to drift away, drift away, drift away, drift away, drift away...

Only to wake and find myself in a world of electric blue light and mist, floating in mid-air. There were shapes drifting around me in the mist; I could catch glimpses of them, but never clearly enough to form a concrete impression of their appearance. The terror and awe I had felt so long ago as a child when the storms would come

rose up violently within me again.

- Do not be afraid.
- We will not harm you.

Their voices were disembodied and all rising simultaneously with the same words at different pitches.

- You have been chosen.
- We have so much to show you.

"Where am I?"

- Asleep.
- We are in your dreams.
- As we have always been.
- Asleep and dreaming.

"I can see. I can hear. I can feel. I can smell. I can taste."

- You are asleep.
- Dreaming within a dream.
- Do not be afraid.
- You have been chosen.

"Who are you?"

- Eternity.
- Thunder.
- Water.
- Light.
- Shadow.
- Mist.
- Enigma.
- Secret.
- Forgotten.
- Forbidden.
- We are MYSTERY.
- We are DREAM.
- A white door.
- Mirrors.
- As Above, So Below.
- Owls.
- Dragons.
- Unicorns.
- Myth.
- Legend.
- And so much more.

"What's happening to me?"

- You are becoming.
- More than human.

- Transcending.
- A secret.
- The gate keeper.
- We have so much to show you.
- You have been chosen.
- Even before your birth.
- We came to you.
- We have always been with you.
- Guiding you.
- Before conception.
- This time.
- And before.
- Watching over you.
- The time is short.
- And coming fast.

"Leave me alone!" I cried helplessly, collapsing to my knees and placing my hands over my ears, but I could not shut them out. Their voices were everywhere and echoing in the misty light.

- Are you not ready to go home?
- Are you not ready to go home?
- You have been chosen.
- Chosen.
- To see.
- Always with you.
- Enigma.
- Vision.
- Home.
- Home.
- We are.
- DREAM.

I shut my eyes against the tears that rained across my vision as their voices thundered maddeningly in my mind. And then there followed...

S I L E N C E
louder
than
thunder
and

I opened my eyes to find myself kneeling before a burning bush. Never consumed by its own furious flames. Words of thunder fell like torrential rains from the sky and were captured by the branches of the bush to be hurled out at me as echoes in my mind and soul.

"Know Me when I call upon thee. For thy life is but wind and I am as a storm upon the face of the earth that drives thee forward. I burn; yet I am never consumed. Ye are but the ash of My breath. Even in thy dreams My

voice is the echo of silence. And ye are but granted visions for the eyes of all mankind, even though they shall never understand. For they are blind in the glare of the light. And their words are as babel. For their speech cannot be ordered by reason of darkness."

S I L E N C E

and
the
bush
turned
to
dust
upon
the
ground
and
I
placed
my
lips
to
the
earth
and
kissed
the
dust
where
the
bush
had
been

When I rose from the ground, I was once more in the garden. As I walked through the foliage I could hear all manner of creatures playing fitfully and unseen around me. Drawing closer to a clearing ahead of me, I heard people moaning and whispering softly. When I reached the clearing, I crouched down in the dense shrubbery and watched as a man and a woman rolled about in the wet grass, making love. Their dark skin glistened with sweat as they kissed and caressed one another in the heat of passion. The woman, who sat astride the man, cried out in ecstasy as he began to spasm beneath her. When it was over, they lay silently beside one another, sleeping. Being careful not to disturb them, I circled the clearing; only to find myself in another small clearing with two large trees bearing rose-colored fruit, standing before me. As I stood there, the woman from the other clearing emerged from the shadows behind the tree on my left. She leaned against the tree, her long black hair clinging wetly to her shoulders and hanging seductively over her breasts, and began to run her hands all over her body. Her eyes were jade fire, glowing in

the shade of the tree. Then the man from the other clearing emerged from the shadows behind the tree on my right. He leaned against the tree and began to run his hands all over his body as he watched his partner masturbate.

I heard hissing coming from above them and looked up to see a gigantic serpent, with skin the crimson colour of spilled blood, leaping wildly from limb to limb in the crown of the tree above the woman. I looked back down at the two people and saw that the woman had taken a fruit from the limb above her and that they were both tearing into it with their teeth. Blood splashed out of the ruptured flesh of the fruit and streamed thickly over their faces. The sun turned black and violent winds tore through the garden as the man tossed the sanguine fruit aside and threw the woman to the ground. They clawed and bit at one another feverishly as the man entered her. Above them, the basilisk writhed obscenely, vomiting yellow smoke from its mouth and screeching hideously. Its eyes changed colour, from orange to red to blue to green to silver, as the figures beneath it copulated more and more violently. Thunder tore through the garden and blood fell as rain from the angry black heavens. Screams of pain and curses and cries of agonized pleasure poured from the blood-soaked couple as I ran screaming from the clearing as fast as I could.

In the darkness I did not see the pool of water before me and fell into it, sinking down like lead into the briny violet depths of the sea. The mermaids came to me as I came to rest on the ocean floor. They hovered above me, embracing intimately, and whispered to me in unison,

"And God created man in his own image.
Male and female. One flesh. One soul.
Iaa yaah einn"

Then the mermaids disappeared into the darkness of the sea and I was left alone in the empty wet blackness. Above me, I could hear the thunder of many wings approaching and I shut my eyes against what was to come. Massive, burning wings wrapped around my shivering flesh and I could feel myself being borne up into the whirlpool of eternity. Into the heart of darkness and forever night.

- You have been chosen.

Revelation Unbound

At first there was only a blueish haze across the sky, streaked with smoky grey clouds, and as I watched the owls, so white and majestic, soaring overhead a woman's voice rose from the valley below me; and on some distant mountain high above the desert sands a man sat naked with his flute, singing to the stars. Then I was borne up into the hazy heavens on massive wings that flew me over cyclopean mountains, grassy plains, dark forests, scorching deserts, deep seas, and burning ice. There were no cities blighting the surface of the world beneath my gaze and I saw that it was good. The woman's soft and sweet voice rose higher and higher as the flutist blew madly on his instrument. I looked closely at his old and wrinkled face to see blood streaming from his sightless white eyes and pouring down over his cheeks even as he continued his impassioned song. The rock burned his naked, tanned skin but he was oblivious to the pain and heat of the desert sun. In the valley far away, the woman, middle-aged but still pretty, whirled 'round and 'round as she sang to the heavens. Her silken, pink veils fluttered wildly about her twisting body in the gentle summer breeze.

I drew the sword from the stone
 I felt no fear as it protruded from my mouth
 Though it spun about with a life of its own
 Both edges glistened bluely in the dying light of the sun
 I raised it up to the sky and saw a lamb lying amongst
 the clouds
 The lamb smiled at me and vanished, leaving me alone with
 the sword.

The priests had gathered before the altar and were kneeling in prayer beneath the crucifix in the church. A dove flew past me and passed through the ghostly light of the fading sun as it streamed through a small glassless window. The bird fell dead at my feet and I could hear the thunder of wings outside as the owls fled hastily from the thorny crowns of the trees where they had sat laughing at the prayers echoing within the sacrosanct walls of the church.

There are two sets of owls
 This is the mystery of the Dream.

It was something that I had felt before - one set holy and one set evil - but never so strongly as at that moment. I clutched my rosary tight to my naked breast as I walked over the hills and far away. Its cool blue beads lay comfortingly against my sweaty flesh and I began to cry as I looked down into the valley below me. The singing woman had grown silent and was dancing alone in the rain that fell upon the misty valley. Her veils spun wildly

about her and I saw that with each turn she aged a year. When at last her skeleton crumbled to dust before my eyes I leapt into the hazy sky and screamed at the clouds hovering above me.

There were massive gates inlaid with gigantic pearls and glistening with diamonds in the largest of all the clouds. I heard trumpets issuing forth from all corners of the Earth and beheld that the gates were opening. In the hallway before me there was a soft and warm blue light radiating off of the golden walls and at the end of the hall, in a huge roofless foyer stood a man robed in gowns of purple and white. He held an open book in His hands and blood dripped thickly from its yellowed pages. He smiled at me as I looked into His eyes, the eyes from which the soothing blue light streamed.

"Have no fear," a voice as of many waters said, speaking directly into my mind.

"Father."

"My son."

Tears fell from my eyes and drifted down as pink light into the clouds below.

"Close your eyes, child."

I obeyed and as I did cool water enshrouded me in its wet and matronly embrace. Slowly, I opened my eyes against the pressure as I sank down like lead into the sea. Mermaids undulated seductively all about me, caressing my flesh with the soft scales of their tails and rubbing their pointy nipples against my face. Together, we swam down to the sandy bottom of the ocean where they took me by the hands and led me trembling towards a palace made of coral and basalt and ringed with spheres of blue and silver lights.

I entered a room lit by blue and green strobe lights where people danced hypnotically to the sweet singing of the mermaids and the gentle drumming of giant frogs. A woman dressed only in netting came over to me and I ran my hands through her long chestnut tresses, gently pulling seaweed from them as we swayed across the floor. She caressed me as we danced and I kissed her deeply, tasting salt upon her cool lips. I gazed deeply into her icy blue eyes and felt certain that I knew her, but could not remember her name. She placed a finger against my lips and told me that it was unimportant. I held her tightly to my breast just as I had the rosary beads and watched the old man by the door, an albatross around his neck, entreating the dancers to listen to his tale. Through

the clear glass floor, we watched the people beneath us writhing ecstatically across each other as they clambered in orgiastic fervor from one body to another.

Orgasmic cries erupted from their twisting bodies
 Eve pulled the cool fruit from the branch of the Tree.
 Semen splashed upon soft wet skin like foamy waves against
 the sandy shore
 The Serpent hissed in the thorny crown of the Tree.
 Bodies of all shapes, ages, and colors intertwined, heedless
 of sex or any barriers
 Adam took the fruit and ate of it.
 There was a knocking at the ballroom door
 And lo there was shame in the Garden.
 The door flew open and the room was bathed in a silvery
 light
 Hand in hand, they left the Garden with tears in their
 eyes.
 Even as the orgiasts stopped to stare...

A nun moved silently into the room, her habit casting grotesque shadows in the peculiar flashing light of the dance hall. She took me by the hand and drew me reluctantly from my partner. As the nun dragged me away, I remembered the woman's name.

"Nicole!" I cried back in despair, but she was already walking away, crying.

How could I have forgotten? Still the band played on and the nun spoke only three words to me as we left the palace behind.

"Atlantis is sinking."

Then I was before the Being at the end of the golden hall again.

"Father," I whispered, questioningly.

"The time is short and coming fast," a voice as of thunder said, speaking directly into my mind. And then He was gone.

I saw a city with massive stone pillars and broken pink rocks laying everywhere. The sky had turned a deep violet color and icy, black water fell upon the city in a single cataract that poured down from a cyclopean fissure in the fabric of the sky. Dark orange and red lights flashed angrily deep within the rupture. A sickening coppery smell permeated the air and I saw that the water had transformed into blood, spilling a crimson rain upon the dying city. In the streets, people prayed silently as they waited to die. I shut my eyes against the horror

and wept uncontrollably.

I opened my eyes and saw that Atlantis was gone and that I stood alone in a cool, dim forest. I slowly made my way through the dense undergrowth and soon came to a hilltop overlooking a stream of crystal-clear water into which a small waterfall emptied. The woman from the dance hall beneath the sea stood naked before the cascading water, bathing herself.

"Nicole," I whispered.

She ran her hands over her breasts and caressed her erect nipples for a moment before sliding her soft hands down her body and between her creamy thighs. Somewhere far off in the distance, a woman's voice rose higher and higher as she sang of unrequited love and tragic endings to heroic lives. Nicole lay back in the water, masturbating, slowly and gently, as cool ripples of water washed over her body.

A horse cried out in pain from the other side of the stream and I looked up to see a woman sitting naked upon a hydra. The beast had the body of a scarlet reptile and seven heads, each of a different creature: a pale horse, a snake, a lion, an owl, a jackal, a man, and a bank of machinery in the shape of a goat's head. The woman and her beast hovered over the waterfall, and I looked down to see that Nicole had vanished. The woman had long, raven hair that flowed over her dark skin unctuously, and green eyes the color of dark emeralds. She held a golden cup in her hands which she tipped to her lips as I watched. Semen and blood splashed thickly across her face and into her open mouth. When the cup was emptied she smiled radiantly at the filthiness of the spectacle. She fixed her gaze upon me and in the distance I could hear the thunder of dripping, black wings as she spoke to me.

"MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER
OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."

I saw the great city being born from the darkness in my mind's eye and finally understood the secret of the Mystery. She and her beast became an owl in the blink of an eye and took flight, leaving me alone and screaming as the sun went black and the moon turned to blood. Horses were approaching by the thousands; I could hear their hooves beating against the black earth as I once again found myself in the great and mysterious city, which now lay in ruins. As I stood in silence amongst the panicked masses flooding the dirty streets, the words of my Father returned to me: "The time is short and coming fast."

I beheld an army, clad in black and bearing the Mark of the Beast, enter the city and attack the people mercilessly. Smoke filled the night sky and fire scorched the earth as blood flowed through the streets like a great flood. Bodies lay twisted and dying on every corner, and women and children alike were thrown down and raped in the middle of the sanguinary streets by the dark soldiers. People tore blindly at one another as they fought to open the massive doors of a great temple, but the doors had been sealed forever from within. Unholy screams of pleasure and pain emanated from inside the bloodstained walls, and prayers chanted to a nameless dark god in a forgotten tongue echoed through the night. I heard the wails of infants cut unnaturally short, followed by hideous ululations from lecherous worshipers, and ran shrieking from the temple doors. At the edge of the city, I saw Jesus Christ impaled upon the cross, writhing in pain and praying to His father, our Father. Tears of silver light poured from His lambent blue eyes; and He smiled down at me, though His mouth was filled with blood. In the smoky sky, hundreds of owls circled the scene restlessly.

The wall of light burns away the stars; and
My Hiroshima mon amour you were never so bright as the
nuclear fire which burns tonight.
The Earth was torn asunder and when the mushroom had been
eaten away
Winter came calling and took all of their breath away.

From the frozen sea, cleansed by the heat of radiation, I saw a great beast arise, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten spinning crowns of golden light; and upon his heads was written the name of final blasphemy which is unspeakable by the mouths of men. Then my Father opened the Gates of Heaven for me, and I saw that He too had a name written upon His brow, and it was also unspeakable by the mouths of men, and even by the beast to whom its utterance would bring madness and pain. I gazed into the eyes of my Saviour and saw in their fierce blue depths the darkness of primal space.

In the blackness of the void there was a rapturous mass being sung by an invisible choir whose beating wings soothed my troubled and weary soul. Then in the darkness there came a transformation:

"Let there be light."

...and an apocalyptic explosion ensued which left a seething whirlpool of pure blue light, with silver and gold incandescence radiating from its focus, in its wake.

And the light drove the darkness before it
As God drove the Enemy from the warmth of Heaven.

Crowns of light and
A two-edged sword spinning and singing for eternity
Eyes of bluest fire
And hair the color of snow
With seven stars and seven golden candlesticks
The Lamb laying slain but alive with seven horns and seven
eyes
Seven lamps of fire for the seven spirits of God
Father, You have come at last.

There was a pit far below me on the burning, blackened world I had left behind. From within the pit came the hideous screams of the Damned facing final judgment and the Second Death which scorched their dark souls. The Book of Life sprayed blood across the face of the Earth and all death and Hell was cast into the ocean of fire that the world became.

Brilliant silver light flooded my vision and I closed my eyes against the blinding glare, but it burned through my lids and streamed into my mind. Gradually, the light faded and I was able to once again open my eyes. I stood alone in the hall of mirrors which had haunted my dreams all my life and again I felt so small before its cyclopean majesty. I cried as I watched the deep blue waters of the ocean flowing above and below me. The mirrors resonated softly in the dim light of the hallway as I walked toward infinity. Without warning, the hallway terminated in a flash of blue and silver light and I fell to my knees in awe as I saw what lay beyond those lights at long last. I saw a massive double-helix spinning for eternitiy within a sphere of silver and golden light. It was so blue. The all-seeing eye of God. I looked around and saw all of the things that had haunted me for so long waiting patiently beneath the helix. The melting pink lights and the owls were gathered before me, and at last I felt no fear. A small, trembling hand held my own tightly and I turned to see Nicole standing beside me, robed in a silken gown of silver light. Far behind me, I heard the mirrors begin to shatter and before darkness took me I heard the helix speak - the voice (as of many waters and the roar of thunder) of God - and I felt my own voice rise joyfully within me.

"I am ready to go home."

Nicole kissed me softly and then vanished into mist, her final words echoing in my mind.

"Remember."

Darkness took me, and in that silent emptiness I found the Dream waiting for me. I awoke from deep sleep, whispering, "The time is coming."



