

## A BIRTHDAY

*Aug. 10, 1911.*

FULL moon tonight; and six and twenty years  
Since my full moon first broke from angel spheres!  
A year of infinite love unwearying—  
No circling seasons, but perennial spring!  
A year of triumph trampling through defeat,  
The first made holy and the last made sweet  
By this same love; a year of wealth and woe,  
Joy, poverty, health, sickness—all one glow  
In the pure light that filled our firmament  
Of supreme silence and unbarred extent,  
Wherein one sacrament was ours, one Lord,  
One resurrection, one recurrent chord,  
One incarnation, one descending dove,  
All these being one, and that one being Love!

You sent your spirit into tunes; my soul  
Yearned in a thousand melodies to enscroll  
Its happiness: I left no flower unplucked  
That might have graced your garland. I induct  
Tragedy, comedy, farce, fable, song,  
Each longing a little, each a little long,  
But each aspiring only to express  
Your excellence and my unworthiness—  
Nay! but my worthiness, since I was sense  
And spirit too of that same excellence.

So thus we solved the earth's revolving riddle:  
I could write verse, and you could play the fiddle,  
While, as for love, the sun went through the signs,  
And not a star but told him how love twines  
A wreath for every decanate, degree,  
Minute and second, linked eternally  
In chains of flowers that never fading are,  
Each one as sempiternal as a star.

Let me go back to your last birthday. Then  
I was already your one man of men  
Appointed to complete you, and fulfil  
From everlasting the eternal will.  
We lay within the flood of crimson light  
In my own balcony that August night,  
And conjuring the aright and the averse  
Created yet another universe.

We worked together; dance and rite and spell  
Arousing heaven and constraining hell.  
We lived together; every hour of rest  
Was honied from your tiger-lily breast.  
We—oh what lingering doubt or fear betrayed  
My life to fate!—we parted. Was I afraid?  
I was afraid, afraid to live my love,  
Afraid you played the serpent, I the dove,  
Afraid of what I know not. I am glad  
Of all the shame and wretchedness I had,  
Since those six weeks have taught me not to doubt you,  
And also that I cannot live without you.

Then I came back to you; black treasons rear  
Their heads, blind hates, deaf agonies of fear,  
Cruelty, cowardice, falsehood, broken pledges,  
The temple soiled with senseless sacrileges,  
Sickness and poverty, a thousand evils,  
Concerted malice of a million devils;—  
You never swerved; your high-pooped galleon  
Went marvellously, majestically on  
Full-sailed, while every other braver bark  
Drove on the rocks, or foundered in the dark.

Then Easter, and the days of all delight!  
God's sun lit noontide and his moon midnight,  
While above all, true centre of our world,  
True source of light, our great love passion-pearled  
Gave all its life and splendour to the sea  
Above whose tides stood our stability.

Then sudden and fierce, no monitory moan,  
Smote the mad mischief of the great cyclone.  
How far below us all its fury rolled!  
How vainly sulphur tries to tarnish gold!  
We lived together: all its malice meant  
Nothing but freedom of a continent!

It was the forest and the river that knew  
The fact that one and one do not make two.  
We worked, we walked, we slept, we were at ease,  
We cried, we quarrelled; all the rocks and trees  
For twenty miles could tell how lovers played,  
And we could count a kiss for every glade.  
Worry, starvation, illness and distress?  
Each moment was a mine of happiness.

Then we grew tired of being country mice,  
Came up to Paris, lived our sacrifice  
There, giving holy berries to the moon,  
July's thanksgiving for the joys of June.

And you are gone away—and how shall I  
Make August sing the raptures of July?  
And you are gone away—what evil star  
Makes you so competent and popular?  
How have I raised this harpy-hag of Hell's  
Malice—that you are wanted somewhere else?  
I wish you were like me a man forbid,  
Banned, outcast, nice society well rid  
Of the pair of us—then who would interfere  
With us?—my darling, you would now be here!

But no! we must fight on, win through, succeed,  
Earn the grugged praise that never comes to meed,  
Lash dogs to kennel, trample snakes, put bit  
In the mule-mouths that have such need of it,  
Until the world there's so much to forgive in  
Becomes a little possible to live in.

God alone knows if battle or surrender  
Be the true courage; either has its splendour.  
But since we chose the first, God aid the right,  
And damn me if I fail you in the fight!  
God join again the ways that lie apart,  
And bless the love of loyal heart to heart!  
God keep us every hour in every thought,  
And bring the vessel of our love to port!

These are my birthday wishes. Dawn's at hand,  
And you're an exile in a lonely land.  
But what were magic if it could not give  
My thought enough vitality to live?  
Do not then dream this night has been a loss!  
All night I have hung, a god, upon the cross;  
All night I have offered incense at the shrine;  
All night you have been unutterably mine,  
Miner in the memory of the first wild hour  
When my rough grasp tore the unwilling flower  
From your closed garden, mine in every mood,  
In every tense, in every attitude,  
In every possibility, still mine  
While the sun's pomp and pageant, sign to sign,  
Stately proceeded, mine not only so  
In the glamour of memory and austral glow  
Of ardour, but by image of my brow  
Stronger than sense, you are even here and now  
Miner, utterly mine, my sister and my wife,  
Mother of my children, mistress of my life!

O wild swan winging through the morning mist!  
The thousand thousand kisses that we kissed,  
The infinite device our love devised  
If by some chance its truth might be surprised,  
Are these all past? Are these to come? Believe me,

There is no parting; they can never leave me.  
I have built you up into my heart and brain  
So fast that we can never part again.  
Why should I sing you these fantastic psalms  
When all the time I have you in my arms?  
Why? 'tis the murmur of our love that swells  
Earth's dithyrambs and ocean's oracles.

But this is dawn; my soul shall make its nest  
Where your sighs swing from rapture into rest  
Love's thurible, your tiger-lily breast.

ALEISTER CROWLEY.