

*‘Ερμαφροδίτου’ Όναρ*

I know that winged sprite  
Who flew from heaven—was it hell?—  
Into these bounds of light  
And music—yesternight—  
Had some new song to tell.

I saw a living soul  
Flame into mortal dress ;  
Whose glance—a fiery coal,  
Whose lips—a ruby bowl  
Whose wine was wickedness.

They were strange lips, I ween,  
Whereon no kiss might be,  
And teeth were sharp therein ;  
Ivory and white and keen,  
Tameless as hungering sea.

Strange body of my desire,  
Voluptuous, lithe, and wan ;  
For, on my eyes drawn nigher,  
My hot blood turns to fire,  
Seeing nor maid nor man.

Not maid, not man—the breast  
Like palaces of gold,  
Yet where my lips caressed,  
In the wild dove's wild nest  
A dove too soft to hold.

No dove that Hylas knew,  
No dove that Sappho kissed,  
Nor in wide Heaven there grew  
This child of stranger dew  
Than God's good spirit wist.

Yet his wings bare him high,  
Divine beyond control,  
And, like for love to die,  
I felt his arrow fly  
Within my very soul.

Ah Love! the ambiguous kiss,  
Not man's nor woman's touch,  
In that ecstatic bliss—  
Not hell's heat, as I wis,  
Had warmed us overmuch.

Ah! Love! how fierce that night!  
With what unsung desire

Thy lips and mouth were bright,  
In mine eye to give light,  
And fire to kindle fire.

Ah Love! nor king nor queen  
Of mine exhaustless flame,  
But comrade of my teen,  
Spouse of that epicene  
Incontinence of shame.

Twin Love! Soul's dual spouse,  
Dream-serpent of my life,  
Rose-garland of my brows  
Within that ivory house,  
Sex with itself at strife.

Were I a wanton stream,  
Thou mightest bathe in me,  
Yet in that happy dream  
Methought my heart did deem  
We mingled utterly.

O sexless! deathless! fair  
Beyond the world to me,  
Thy love-gift I will wear,  
Thy joys my soul shall share,  
Being made one with thee.

So, love, the days may keep  
My nameless love from me ;  
Yet over slumber's deep  
I will sail into sleep  
Thither to lie by thee,

Hold thee with arms that cleave  
Lock thee in limbs that leap,  
Chain thee with lips that leave  
Kisses of blood to weave  
Castles of hope in sleep.

Poppy! best flower whose bud  
Sends dreams to men that die,  
I drain thy drowsy flood  
That our impatient blood  
May mingle utterly.

So, Hermes, thou art wed,  
So, Aphrodite, mine,  
In one sweet spirit shed  
In one ambrosial bed,  
In one fair frame divine.

Like clouds in rain, like seas  
Exultant as they roll,

We mix in ecstacies,  
And, as breeze melts in breeze,  
    Thy soul becomes my soul.

I come to thee with tears,  
    Nameless immortal dove;  
Forget the fleet-foot years  
In the incarnate spheres  
    Of our mysterious Love.