

## THE GARDEN OF JANUS

*To V. B. Neuburg*

### I

THE cloud my bed is tinged with blood and foam.  
The vault yet blazes with the sun  
Writhing above the West, brave hippodrome  
Whose gladiators shock and shun  
As the blue night devours them, crested comb  
Of sleep's dead sea  
That eats the shores of life, rings round eternity!

### II

So, he is gone whose giant sword shed flame  
Into my bowels; my blood's bewitched;  
My brain's afloat with ecstasy of shame.  
That tearing pain is gone, enriched  
By his life-spasm; but he being gone, the same  
Myself is gone  
Sucked by the dragon down below death's horizon.

### III

I woke from this. I lay upon the lawn;  
They had thrown roses on the moss  
With all their thorns; we came there at the dawn,  
My lord and I; God sailed across  
The sky in 's galleon of amber, drawn  
By singing winds  
While we wove garlands of the flowers of our minds.

### IV

All day my lover deigned to murder me,  
Linking his kisses in a chain  
About my neck; demon-embroidery!

Bruises like far-off mountains stain  
The valley of my body of ivory!  
Then last came sleep.  
I wake, and he is gone; what should I do but weep?

V

Nay, for I wept enough—more sacred tears!—  
When first he pinned me, gripped  
My flesh, and as a stallion that rears  
Sprang, hero-thewed and satyr-lipped;  
Crushed, as a grape between his teeth, my fears;  
Sucked out my life  
And stamped me with the shame, the monstrous word of  
wife.

VI

I will not weep; nay, I will follow him.  
Perchance he is not far,  
Bathing his limbs in some delicious dim  
Depth, where the evening star  
May kiss his mouth, or by the black sky's rim  
He makes his prayer  
To the great serpent that is coiled in rapture there.

VII

I rose to seek him. First my footsteps faint  
Pressed the starred moss; but soon  
I wandered, like some sweet sequestered saint,  
Into the wood, my mind. The moon  
Was staggered by the trees; with fierce constraint  
Hardly one ray  
Pierced to the ragged earth about their roots that lay.

## VIII

I wandered, crying on my Lord. I wandered  
Eagerly seeking everywhere.  
The stores of life that on my lips he squandered  
Grew into shrill cries of despair,  
Until the dryads frightened and dumfounded  
Fled into space—  
Like to a demon-king's was grown my maiden face!

## IX

At last I came unto the well, my soul.  
In that still glass, I saw no sign  
Of him, and yet—what visions there uproll  
To cloud that mirror-soul of mine?  
Above my head there screams a flying scroll  
Whose word burnt through  
My being as when stars drop in black disastrous dew.

## X

For in that scroll was written how the globe  
Of space became; of how the light  
Broke in that space and wrapped it in a robe  
Of glory; of how One most white  
Withdrew that Whole, and hid it in the lobe  
Of his right Ear,  
So that the Universe one dewdrop did appear.

## XI

Yea! and the end revealed a word, a spell,  
An incantation, a device  
Whereby the Eye of the Most Terrible  
Wakes from Its wilderness of ice  
To flame, whereby the very core of hell  
Bursts from its rind,  
Sweeping the world away into the blank of mind.

XII

So then I saw my fault; I plunged within  
The well, and brake the images  
That I had made, as I must make—Men spin  
The webs that snare them—while the knees  
Bend to the tyrant God, or unto Sin  
The lecher sunder!  
Ah! came that undulant light from over or from under?

XIII

It matters not. Come, change! Come, woe! Come,  
mask!  
Drive Light, Life, Love into the deep!  
In vain we labour at the loathsome task  
Not knowing if we wake or sleep;  
But in the end we lift the plumèd casque  
Of the dead warrior;  
Find no chaste corpse therein, but a soft-smiling whore.

XIV

Then I returned into myself, and took  
All in my arms, God's universe:  
Crushed its black juice out, while His anger shook  
His dumbness pregnant with a curse.  
I made me ink, and in a little book  
I wrote one word  
That God himself, the adder of Thought, had never heard.

XV

It detonated. Nature, God, mankind  
Like sulphur, nitre, charcoal, once  
Blended, in one annihilation blind  
Were rent into a myriad of suns.  
Yea! all the mighty fabric of a Mind  
Stood in the abyss,  
Belching a Law for *That* more awful than for *This*.

## XVI

Vain was the toil. So then I left the wood  
And came unto the still black sea,  
That oily monster of beatitude!  
(Hath *Thee* for *Me*, and *Me* for *Thee*!)  
There as I stood, a mask of solitude  
Hiding a face  
Wried as a satyr's, rolled that ocean into space.

## VII

Then did I build an altar on the shore  
Of oyster-shells, and ringed it round  
With star-fish. Thither a green flame I bore  
Of phosphor foam, and strewed the ground  
With dew-drops, children of my wand, whose core  
Was trembling steel  
Electric that made spin the universal Wheel.

## XVIII

With that a goat came running from the cave  
That lurked below the tall white cliff.  
Thy name! cried I. The answer that he gave  
Was but one tempest-whisper—"If!"  
Ah, then! his tongue to his black palate clave;  
For on Soul's curtain  
Is written this one certainty that naught is certain!

## XIX

So then I caught that goat up in a kiss,  
And cried Io Pan! Io Pan! Io Pan!  
Then all this body's wealth of ambergris  
(Narcissus-scented flesh of man!)  
I burnt before him in the sacrifice;  
For he was sure—  
Being the Doubt of Things, the one thing to endure!

XX

Wherefore, when madness took him at the end,  
He, doubt-goat, slew the goat of doubt ;  
And that which inward did for ever tend  
Came at the last to have come out ;  
And I who had the World and God to friend  
Found all three foes !  
Drowned in that sea of changes, vacancies, and woes !

XXI

Yet all that Sea was swallowed up therein ;  
So they were not, and it was not.  
As who should sweat his soul out through the skin  
And find (sad fool !) he had begot  
All that without him that he had left in  
And in himself  
All he had taken out thereof, a mocking elf !

XXII

But now that all was gone, great Pan appeared.  
Him then I strove to woo, to win  
Kissing his curled lips, playing with his beard,  
Setting his brain a-shake, a-spin,  
By that strong wand, and muttering of the weird  
That only I  
Knew of all souls alive or dead beneath the sky.

XXIII

So still I conquered, and the vision passed.  
Yet still was beaten for I knew  
Myself was He, Himself, the first and last ;  
And as an unicorn drinks dew  
From under oak-leaves, so my strength was cast  
Into the mire ;  
For all I did was dream, and all I dreamt desire.

XXIV

More ; in this journey I had clean forgotten  
The quest, my lover. But the tomb  
Of all these thoughts, the rancid and the rotten  
Proved in the end to be my womb  
Wherein my Lord and lover had begotten  
A little child  
To drive me, laughing lion, into the wanton wild !

XXV

This child hath not one hair upon his head,  
But he hath wings instead of ears.  
No eyes hath he, but all his light is shed  
Within him on the ordered spheres  
Of nature that he hideth ; and in stead  
Of mouth he hath  
One minute point of jet ; silence, the lightning path !

XXVI

Also his nostrils are shut up ; for he  
Hath not the need of any breath ;  
Nor can the curtain of eternity  
Cover that head with life or death  
So all his body, a slim almond tree,  
Knoweth nor bough  
Nor branch nor twig nor bud, from never until now.

XXVII

This thought I bred within my bowels, I am.  
I am in him, as he in me ;  
And like a satyr ravishing a lamb  
So either seems, or as the sea  
Swallows the whale that swallows it, the ram  
Beats its own head  
Upon the city walls, that fall as it falls dead.

## XXVIII

Come, let me back unto the liliated lawn!  
Pile me the roses and the thorns  
Upon this bed from which he hath withdrawn!  
He may return. A million morns  
May follow that first dire dæmonic dawn  
When he did split  
My spirit with his lightnings and enveloped it!

## XXIX

So I am stretched out naked to the knife,  
My whole soul twitching with the stress  
Of the expected yet surprising strife,  
A martyrdom of blessedness.  
Though Death came, I could kiss him into life;  
Though Life came, I  
Could kiss him into death, and yet nor live nor die!

## XXX

Yet I that am the babe, the sire, the dam,  
Am also none of these at all;  
For now that cosmic chaos of I AM  
Bursts like a bubble. Mystical  
The night comes down, a soaring wedge of flame  
Woven therein  
To be a sign to them who yet have never been.

## XXXI

The universe I measured with my rod.  
The blacks were balanced with the whites;  
Satan dropped down even as up soared God;  
Whores prayed and danced with anchorites.  
So in my book the even matched the odd:  
No word I wrote  
Therein, but sealed it with the signet of the goat.



XXXII

This also I seal up. Read thou herein  
Whose eyes are blind! Thou may'st behold  
Within the wheel (that alway seems to spin  
All ways) a point of static gold.  
Then may'st thou out therewith, and fit it in  
That extreme sphere  
Whose boundless farness makes it infinitely near.