

LILITH
To L. K—

THE stench of the gross goat is in my nostrils instead of
the perfume of Artemis.

I plucked the Virgin by his broidered chlamys . . . who
could have guessed that hairy horror hidden?

I have got gall to be my drink, who mingled my wine with
myrrh and musk and ambergris.

I made my bed of silk and furs; and waking found I had
swooned to sleep upon the midden.

Ah! Were those virgin lips of thine polluted with some
rank savour of Sabbatic lust?

What spell turned thee, the maiden, to a monkey jibbering
anitphonal blasphemies.

To those chaste chants I wooed thee by, the moment that
touching thee, my fruit dissolved to dust,

Fair-seeming Sodom-apple! Yet thy kisses smote all my
spine to shuddering ecstasies!

So strode the fool upon the mountain ridges, crying: One
step, and I attain the crest!

Lo! The loose cornice tricks him, and he tumbles, a
mangled nothing, to the glacier.

So the nun cries: One effort and I conquer; I pass the
gate, I win the appointed rest!

And passing it discovers the foul body of Sin that waits to
set his teeth in her.

So in my dreams, escaping from a monster, I turn one
corner; "there is refuge—there!"

Nay, there he lurked who never had pursued me . . . 'twas I
who chased him to his proper holt.

Then, O thou vile adorable, my lover, my master, catch me
backward by the hair!
Fasten thy fangs upon my mouth's gasped anguish, and
split my dream-clouds with thy thunderbolt!

Though thou be God or Satan, do thou master my death-
pang with thy life-pang, and possess
All that I am with all thou art, my Vampire, my Siren that
I thought a nightingale!
Abase me! Spit on me! Scourge me! Murder me! Take
thy wolf's meal of my loveliness!
Give me the reek of thy foul breath, and show me the
leper's face behind the shining veil!

Yea! Though I sink through measureless abysses, I trace
the incommensurable curve.
Thy foursquare wedge that rages in my circle shall match it
at the infinite period.
Polluted body, violated spirit, corrupted soul, stunned brain
and tortured nerve:—
These merge into thy bloody maw, Echidna, that shall
emerge the lone white flame of God.