

## THE POET AND HIS MUSE

*To L. K—*

Two years I strove with all my store of spice  
To lure the victim to the sacrifice.

I tempted him with garlands and with dances,  
With every virtue and with every vice,

With girls that twisted all his maiden fancies  
Into a spasm of lust; with necromancies

Wherein he knew the utmost God to be  
No more than the plain torsion of his trances.

Maugre device and stratagem, I see  
How all his virgin soul revolts from me,

Knowing me for the ancient whore that sits  
Crowned and triumphant through eternity:

Nor, though my beauty dazzled all his wits,  
Could he conceive that frailest fairy flits

Across the abyss of mine imagining.  
So I came back from all my snares and pits,  
Crowned him with roses, called him lord and king.

Then the poor fool fell on me, stammering  
Pale phrases of his mortal love, a thing

Almost too petty for my star of lust  
To attract within her orbit: still I swing

My godhead over his domain of dust,  
And make some foetus . . . at the least, I trust!

And in my womb I hide it, all his all  
Made mine with one swift suction, one slow thrust

Maniacal, murderous, musical, magical!  
So then I would not have him for my thrall,  
    So I despised the thing I had devoured!  
And therefore, as I squat upon this ball

That spins and knows not, I shall spew the coward  
Out from the bliss wherein he is embowered,  
    A stain of senseless sex upon the sod,  
And live my life, the honeyed and the flowered,

As ever. . . . Shall the even match the odd?  
His immortality worth my period?  
    Nay! He is but the seed on whom I showered  
My rain, the dear mortality of God!