

THE SPHINX
To "*The Sphinx*"

BENEATH the cruel splendid Sphinx
My soul lies supine still, and drinks
Damnation from the emerald eyes,
Death from the painted mouth that dies
As, drunk on life, she sucks it in!
O crimson masterpiece of sin,
The mouth that maddens me and slays
My youth in many molten ways!
All her adulterous ardours wake
The god, the tiger, and the snake.
I yield; her soft, her strenuous breath
Fills me and feeds my soul on death.

O Sphinx, more sacred than the stars!
O beast! O God! thy passion chars
This life. Beneath thy claws I writhe.
For like a lion thou art lithe
And like a bull exceeding strong.
Thine eagle's scream beats down my song.
Ah slay me, slay me now! Have done! . . .
The torture is but half begun.