

Ulalume—A Ballad

The skies they were ashen and sober;
 The leaves they were crispéd and sere—
 The leaves they were withering and sere:
 It was night, in the lonesome October
 Of my most immemorial year:
 It was hard by the dim lake of Auber,
 In the misty mid region of Weir:—
 It was down by the dank tarn of Auber,
 In the ghoulish-woodland of Weir.

Here once, through an alley Titanic,
 Of cypress, I roamed with my Soul—
 Of cypress, with Psyche, my Soul.
 These were days when my heart was volcanic
 As the scoriac rivers that roll—
 As the lavas that restlessly roll
 Their sulphurous currents down Yaanek,
 In the ultimate climes of the Pole—
 That groan as they roll down Mount Yaanek,
 In the realms of the Boreal Pole.

Our talk had been serious and sober,
 But our thoughts they were palsied and sere—
 Our memories were treacherous and sere;
 For we knew not the month was October,
 And we marked not the night of the year—
 (Ah, night of all nights in the year!)
 We noted not the dim lake of Auber,
 (Though once we had journeyed down here)
 We remembered not the dank tarn of Auber,
 Nor the ghoulish-woodland of Weir.

And now, as the night was senescent,
 And star-dials pointed to morn—
 As the star-dials hinted of morn—
 At the end of our path a liquescent
 And nebulous lustre was born,
 Out of which a miraculous crescent

Arose with a duplicate horn—
 Astarte's bediamonded crescent,
 Distinct with its duplicate horn.

And I said—"She is warmer than Dian;
 She rolls through an ether of sighs—
 She revels in a region of sighs.
 She has seen that the tears are not dry on
 These cheeks where the worm never dies,
 And has come past the stars of the Lion,
 To point us the path to the skies—
 To the Lethean peace of the skies—
 Come up, in despite of the Lion,
 To shine on us with her bright eyes—
 Come up, through the lair of the Lion,
 With love in her luminous eyes."

But Psyche, uplifting her finger,
 Said—"Sadly this star I mistrust—
 Her pallor I strangely mistrust—
 Ah, hasten!—ah, let us not linger!
 Ah, fly!—let us fly!—for we must."
 In terror she spoke; letting sink her
 Wings till they trailed in the dust—
 In agony sobbed; letting sink her
 Plumes till they trailed in the dust—
 Till they sorrowfully trailed in the dust.

I replied—"This is nothing but dreaming.
 Let us on, by this tremulous light!
 Let us bathe in this crystalline light!
 Its Sibyllic splendor is beaming
 With Hope and in Beauty to-night—
 See!—it flickers up the sky through the night!
 Ah, we safely may trust to its gleaming
 And be sure it will lead us aright—
 We surely may trust to a gleaming
 That cannot but guide us aright
 Since it flickers up to Heaven through the night."

Thus I pacified Psyche and kissed her,
And tempted her out of her gloom—
And conquered her scruples and gloom;
And we passed to the end of the vista—
But were stopped by the door of a tomb—
By the door of a legended tomb:—
And I said—“What is written, sweet sister,
On the door of this legended tomb?”
She replied—“Ulalume—Ulalume!—
'T is the vault of thy lost Ulalume!”

Then my heart it grew ashen and sober
As the leaves that were crispéd and sere—
As the leaves that were withering and sere—
And I cried—“It was surely October,
On *this* very night of last year,
That I journeyed—I journeyed down here!—
That I brought a dread burden down here—
On this night, of all nights in the year,
Ah; what demon hath tempted me here?
Well I know, now, this dim lake of Auber—
This misty mid region of Weir:—
Well I know, now, this dank tarn of Auber—
This ghoulish-woodland of Weir.”

Said we, then—the two, then—“Ah, can it
Have been that the woodlandish ghouls—
The pitiful, the merciful ghouls,
To bar up our way and to ban it
From the secret that lies in these wolds—
From the thing that lies hidden in these wolds—
Have drawn up the spectre of a planet
From the limbo of lunary souls—
This sinfully scintillant planet
From the Hell of the planetary souls?”