

# THE BLIND PROPHET

A BALLET

BY

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# THE BLIND PROPHET

## A BALLET

*The scene is an ancient Egyptian temple, supported by two mighty pillars. Two rows of marble seats form a semi-circle, cut by a gap covered by a veil in the East. On the upper seats are the musicians, flutes and violins ; on the lower are singers and dancers. There are doors also at the North and South.*

*The Prophet.* Lead me to the holy place!  
Trace the circle widdershins!  
Light the incense! Set the pace  
To the flutes and violins!

*The Musicians.* Kill! kill! Life is shrill!  
Still! Still! word and will!  
Flame! flame! speak the name!  
Trill! trill! Thrill! thrill!  
I acclaim the shame!  
I have heard the word!  
Fulfil the will!

*The Prophet.* Bid the virgins veil the bride!  
Lead her forth, a shower of spray,

## THE EQUINOX

A flower of foam upon the tide,  
A fleece of cloud upon the day!

So my sightless eyes may see  
In the transcendental trance  
The virgin of eternity  
Lead the demi-gods to dance.

Has the Tree of Life its root  
In the soul or in the skin?  
Is it God, or is it brute,  
That comes mystically in  
For the doves within the flute,  
The eagles on the violin?

Ah! The perfume's coiling tresses  
Curl like veils upon the limbs  
Of the dancer that caresses  
With her flying feet the hymns  
That flow and ripple in the air,  
Bathing all the doves of prayer!

*The Musicians.* Linger, low, fingering slow,  
The tingling bows of the violins go.  
Trembling, twittering, dissembling,  
The lips of the flute-players wander  
Over the stops, fiercer and fonder  
Than scorpions that writhe and curl  
In the fiery breast of an Arab girl!

[*The dancers issue from beyond the veil.*]

## THE BLIND PROPHET

*The Prophet.* Sway like the lilies, gentle girls !  
Like lilies glimmer !  
Furl yourselves as the lily furls  
Its radiance dimmer !  
Curl as the lily-petal curls,  
Subtler and slimmer !

Unfold your ranks and waft yourselves apart,  
That I may guess what pearl is at the heart,  
What dew-drop glistens on the crown gold-wrought  
Within the chalice of your coiled cohort !

*The Musicians.* The flutes coo.  
It is the voice  
Of love in spring,  
At dawn, in dew ;  
And piercing through  
Those low loves that rejoice,  
Wails in the violin that supreme string  
Of passion, that is more akin  
To death than love, that shrieking sin  
Whose teeth tear passion's tortured skin  
And drink love's blood, and rage within  
Black bowels of lust to win, to win  
Some crown of thorns incarnadine,  
Some cross whereof to fashion  
Some newer, truer passion  
Than even the agony of the violin !

*The Prophet.* Yes ! like a careless breeze, the close caress  
Expands with a sob ; the virgins wheel ; there glows

## THE EQUINOX

In the midst a mystical rose!

[*The dancers unfold, and their Queen appears.*]

O musical ministress  
Of the dancing violin!  
In an emerald spangled skin,  
Hooded with harvest hair  
Close-coiled, her serpent eyes  
Hold ineffable sorceries!  
Slender, and full, and straight is she  
As an almond tree  
Blest by an hermit! Her serpent eyes  
Hold ineffable sorceries!  
Slow she sways; her white arms ripple  
From rosy finger to rosy nipple,  
Ripple and flow like the melody  
Of the flutes and the violins.  
And! I see! I see—she smiles on me  
The heart of a million sins,  
Each keener than death! Her serpent eyes  
Hold ineffable sorceries.

*The Musicians.* Hush! Hush! the young feet flush,  
The marble's ablush.  
The music moves trilling,  
Like wolves at the killing,  
Moaning and shrilling,  
And clear as the throb in the throat of a thrush!  
Rustling they sway  
Like a forest of rush  
In the storm, and away!

## THE BLIND PROPHET

Away! Blow the blossoms  
Of virgin bosoms  
On the sob of the wind  
Of the violins,  
That bind and unbind  
Their scarlet sins  
On the brows of the world.  
Hush! they are curled  
In the rapture of reaping  
The flowers that unfurled  
When the gardeners were sleeping  
In the breeze-swayed bowers  
Of the Lord of the flowers!  
Hush! Hush! the young feet flush  
The marble! The temple's ablaze and ablush.  
Hush! Hush! softer crush  
The grape on the palate, the flower on the blossom,  
The dream on the sleeper, the bride on the bosom!

*The Prophet.* Will she not deign, being drawn  
Into the blush of dawn,  
To yield the promise, to unveil  
The Lady of bliss and bale?

I am old and blind; my vision  
Hath the seer in derision.  
I would set my lips between  
Those rose-tipped moons, just there  
Where the deciduous green  
Leaves the pearly rapture bare,

## THE EQUINOX

With its blue veins like rivulets  
Jewelled with gentians and violets,  
Wandering through fields of corn,  
Under the first kiss of the morn  
    In still and shimmering air!

*The Queen of the Dancers.* No! No! the weird is woe.  
The law is this, most surely this!  
That who hath seen may never kiss.  
The soul is at war with the flesh and the mind.  
Life is dumb, and love is blind.

*The Prophet.* I am the Prophet of the Gods.  
I have put these eyes out to attain  
To the crown of the pallid periods  
That pulse in the Almighty brain!  
I have striven all my life for this;  
That I might see, and still might kiss!

*The Musicians.* Vain! Vain! Time is sane.  
Fain! Fain! Space is plain.  
Time passes once, and is not found.  
Space divides once, not heals the wound.  
Knell! Knell! the shattered shell  
That could not break the Word of Hell.  
Whirl! Whirl! the wanton girl  
(Curve, and coil, and close, and curl!)  
Slips the grip as the swallow avoids  
The leaps of the dog; or the moon, that sails  
Abeam to God's invisible gales,  
The clumsy caress of the asteroids!  
Love her in memory, love her in dream,

## THE BLIND PROPHET

Love her in hope, or love her in faith ;  
But all these loves are loves that seem ;  
The worst is a ghoul, the best is a wraith ;  
For to birth  
On the earth  
There is no power under, within, or above,  
That can give thee love in truth and love.

*The Prophet.* Yet will I strive !  
    There is nothing but this  
While I am alive  
    But the dancer's kiss.  
If I fail in that  
    Let the temple be broken,  
The pillars fall flat,  
    The word be unspoken,  
The lights be extinct,  
    The music be dumb,  
The circle unlinked,  
    The acolytes numb,  
The altar defiled,  
    The sacrament trod  
Under foot by the wild  
    Despisers of God !

*The Musicians.* No! No! Life is woe.  
Thou dost not know  
How ineffably great  
Is the weight of Fate.  
Uncreate!  
Ultimate!



## THE EQUINOX

Born of Hate !  
Brother of Woe !  
Despair its mate !  
Thou dost not know  
How giant great  
Is the grasp of Fate.

*The Dancers.* Vainly pursuing  
Impossible things,  
The swamp-adder wooing  
The lark with her wings !

*The Queen of the Dancers.* See how I glide—  
Canst thou not hold me ?  
In thine arms, at thy side—  
Why not enfold me ?

Wisdom, awaken !  
Never, oh never,  
By wile or endeavour  
Am I to be taken.

Will a wish or a word  
Charm the hawk from the air ?  
And am I a bird  
To be caught in a snare ?

Will a word or a wish  
Bring the trout from the brook ?  
And am I a fish  
To snap at an hook ?

*The Prophet.* Ye led me to the holy place.  
All ye have mocked me to my face.

## THE BLIND PROPHET

Now ends the age of living breath ;  
I am sworn henchman unto death.  
Lead me to the obelisks  
That support the holy Disks !  
I am here ; my grasp is firm,  
We are come unto the term.  
Temple, dancers, girls, musicians,  
Augurs, acolytes, magicians—  
Ruin, ruin whelm us all !  
Fall !

*[He pulls down the pillars ; but the temple  
was not supported on them as in his  
blindness he supposed ; and he is himself  
his only victim.]*

*The Dancers.* Twine ! twine ! rose and vine.  
Whirl ! whirl ! boy and girl.  
Mine ! mine ! maid divine.  
Curl ! curl ! peach and pearl.  
Twist ! twist ! the towering trances  
Are not sun-kissed  
Like our delicate dances.  
Expanses  
Of fancies,  
The turn of the ankle ! the wave of the wrist  
Enhances  
Romances !  
Twine ! twine ! tread me a measure !  
The dotard is dead that disturbed our pleasure  
With his doubt  
About

## THE EQUINOX

Souls and skins,  
And the quickened shoots  
Of pain that he tore  
From the heart's core  
Of the dreadful flutes  
And the terrible violins.  
Joy! joy! girl and boy!  
He is dead! let us laugh! let us dance! let us love!  
Leave the corpse there as it lies! we shall measure  
A new true dance around and above,  
And taste of the treasure,  
The torrent of pleasure!  
Curl! curl! peach and pearl!  
Mine! mine! maid divine!  
Whirl! whirl! boy and girl!  
Twine! twine! rose and vine.

*The Musicians.* Hush! hush! the young feet flush,  
The marble's ablush,  
The music moves trilling—  
Like wolves at the killing,  
Moaning and shrilling,  
And clear as the throb in the throat of a thrush!  
Rustling they sway  
Like a forest of rush  
In the storm, and away!  
Away! blow the blossoms  
Of virgin bosoms  
On the sob of the wind  
Of the violins

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That bind and unbind  
Their scarlet sins  
On the brows of the world.  
Hush! they are curled  
In the rapture of reaping  
The flowers that unfurled  
When the gardeners were sleeping  
In the breeze-swayed bowers  
Of the Lord of the Flowers!  
Hush! Hush! the young feet flush  
The marble. The temple's ablaze and ablush.  
Hush! hush! softer crush  
The grape on the palate, the bloom on the blossom,  
The dream on the sleeper, the bride on the bosom!  
*The Queen of the Dancers, in her prime pose.*  
*(Spoken without inflection or emphasis.)*  
Now do you understand the tragedy of life?

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**THE EQUINOX**

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