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CINCTI
SERPENTE

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I

1. I am the Heart; and the Snake is entwined
About the invisible core of the mind.
Rise, O my snake! It is now is the hour
Of the hooded and holy ineffable flower.
Rise, O my snake, into brilliance of bloom
On the corpse of Osiris afloat in the tomb!
O heart of my mother, my sister, mine own,
Thou art given to Nile, to the terror Typhon!
Ah me! but the glory of ravening storm
Enswathes thee and wraps thee in frenzy of form.
Be still, O my soul! that the spell may dissolve
As the wands are upraised, and the æons revolve.
Behold! in my beauty how joyous Thou art,
O Snake that caresses the crown of mine heart!
Behold! we are one, and the tempest of years
Goes down to the dusk, and the Beetle appears.
O Beetle! the drone of Thy dolorous note
Be ever the trance of this tremulous throat!
I await the awaking! The summons on high
From the Lord Adonai, from the Lord Adonai!
2. Adonai spake unto V.V.V.V.V., saying: There must
ever be division in the word.
3. For the colours are many, but the light is one.

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4. Therefore thou writest that which is of mother of emerald, and of lapis-lazuli, and of turquoise, and of alexandrite.

5. Another writeth the words of topaz, and of deep amethyst, and of gray sapphire, and of deep sapphire with a tinge as of blood.

6. Therefore do ye fret yourselves because of this.

7. Be not contented with the image.

8. I who am the Image of an Image say this.

9. Debate not of the image, saying Beyond! Beyond!

One mounteth unto the Crown by the moon and by the Sun, and by the arrow, and by the Foundation, and by the dark home of the stars from the black earth.

10. Not otherwise may ye reach unto the Smooth Point.

11. Nor is it fitting for the cobbler to prate of the Royal matter. O cobbler! mend me this shoe, that I may walk. O king! if I be thy son, let us speak of the Embassy to the King thy Brother.

12. Then was there silence. Speech had done with us awhile.

There is a light so strenuous that it is not perceived as light.

13. Wolf's bane is not so sharp as steel; yet it pierceth the body more subtly.

14. Even as evil kisses corrupt the blood, so do my words devour the spirit of man.

15. I breathe, and there is infinite dis-ease in the spirit.

16. As an acid eats into steel, as a cancer that utterly corrupts the body; so am I unto the spirit of man.

17. I shall not rest until I have dissolved it all.

18. So also the light that is absorbed. One absorbs lit-

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tle, and is called white and glistening; one absorbs all and is called black.

19. Therefore, O my darling, art thou black.

20. O my beautiful, I have likened thee to a jet Nubian slave, a boy of melancholy eyes.

21. O the filthy one! the dog! they cry against thee.

Because thou art my beloved.

22. Happy are they that praise thee; for they see thee with Mine eyes.

23. Not aloud shall they praise thee; but in the night watch one shall steal close, and grip thee with the secret grip; another shall privily cast a crown of violets over thee; a third shall greatly dare, and press mad lips to thine.

24. Yea! the night shall cover all, the night shall cover all.

25. Thou wast long seeking Me; thou didst run forward so fast that I was unable to come up with thee.

O thou darling fool! what bitterness thou didst crown thy days withal.

26. Now I am with thee; I will never leave thy being.

27. For I am the soft sinuous one entwined about thee, heart of gold!

28. My head is jewelled with twelve stars; My body is white as milk of the stars; it is bright with the blue of the abyss of stars invisible.

29. I have found that which could not be found; I have found a vessel of quicksilver.

30. Thou shalt instruct thy servant in his ways, thou shalt speak often with him.

31. (The scribe looketh upwards and crieth) Amen! Thou hast spoken it, Lord God!

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32. Further Adonai spake unto V.V.V.V.V. and said:

33. Let us take our delight in the multitude of men!

Let us shape unto ourselves a boat of mother-of-pearl from them, that we may ride upon the river of Amrit!

34. Thou seest yon petal of amaranth, blown by the wind from the low sweet brows of Hathor?

35. (The Magister saw it and rejoiced in the beauty of it.) Listen!

36. (From a certain world came an infinite wail.)

That falling petal seemed to the little ones a wave to engulf their continent.

37. So they will reproach thy servant, saying: Who hath set thee to save us?

38. He will be sore distressed.

39. All they understand not that thou and I are fashioning a boat of mother-of-pearl. We will sail down the river of Amrit even to the yew-groves of Yama, where we may rejoice exceedingly.

40. The joy of men shall be our silver gleam, their woe our blue gleam—all in the mother-of-pearl.

41. (The scribe was wroth thereat. He spake:

O Adonai and my master, I have borne the inkhorn and the pen without pay, in order that I might search this river of Amrit, and sail thereon as one of ye. This I demand for my fee, that I partake of the echo of your kisses.)

42. (And immediately it was granted unto him.)

43. (Nay; but not therewith was he content. By an infinite abasement unto shame did he strive. Then a voice:)

44. Thou strivest ever; even in thy yielding thou strivest to yield—and lo! thou yieldest not.

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45. Go thou unto the outermost places and subdue all things.

46. Subdue thy fear and thy disgust. Then—yield!

47. There was a maiden that strayed among the corn, and sighed; then grew a new birth, a narcissus, and therein she forgot her sighing and her loneliness.

48. Even instantly rode Hades heavily upon her, and ravished her away.

49. (Then the scribe knew the narcissus in his heart; but because it came not to his lips, therefore was he shamed and spake no more.)

50. Adonai spake yet again with V.V.V.V.V. and said: The earth is ripe for vintage; let us eat of her grapes, and be drunken thereon.

51. And V.V.V.V.V. answered and said: O my lord, my dove, my excellent one, how shall this word seem unto the children of men?

52. And He answered him: Not as thou canst see.

It is certain that every letter of this cipher hath some value; but who shall determine the value? For it varieth ever, according to the subtlety of Him that made it.

53. And He answered Him: Have I not the key thereof?

I am clothed with the body of flesh; I am one with the Eternal and Omnipotent God.

54. Then said Adonai: Thou hast the Head of the Hawk, and thy Phallus is the Phallus of Asar. Thou knowest the white, and thou knowest the black, and thou knowest that these are one. But why seekest thou the knowledge of their equivalence?

55. And he said: That my Work may be right.

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56. And Adonai said: The strong brown reaper swept his swathe and rejoiced. The wise man counted his muscles, and pondered, and understood not, and was sad.

Reap thou, and rejoice!

57. Then was the Adept glad, and lifted his arm.

Lo! an earthquake, and plague, and terror on the earth!

A casting down of them that sate in high places; a famine upon the multitude!

58. And the grape fell ripe and rich into his mouth.

59. Stained is the purple of thy mouth, O brilliant one, with the white glory of the lips of Adonai.

60. The foam of the grape is like the storm upon the sea; the ships tremble and shudder; the shipmaster is afraid.

61. That is thy drunkenness, O holy one, and the winds whirl away the soul of the scribe into the happy haven.

62. O Lord God! let the haven be cast down by the fury of the storm! Let the foam of the grape tincture my soul with Thy light!

63. Bacchus grew old, and was Silenus; Pan was ever Pan for ever and ever more throughout the æons.

64. Intoxicate the inmost, O my lover, not the outermost!

65. So was it—ever the same! I have aimed at the peeled wand of my God, and I have hit; yea, I have hit.

II

1. I passed into the mountain of lapis-lazuli, even as a green hawk between the pillars of turquoise that is seated upon the throne of the East.

2. So came I to Duant, the starry abode, and I heard voices crying aloud.

3. O Thou that sittest upon the Earth! (so spake a certain Veiled One to me) thou art not greater than thy mother! Thou speck of dust infinitesimal!

Thou art the Lord of Glory, and the unclean dog.

4. Stooping down, dipping my wings, I came unto the darkly-splendid abodes. There in that formless abyss was I made a partaker of the Mysteries Averse.

5. I suffered the deadly embrace of the Snake and of the Goat; I paid the infernal homage to the shame of Khem.

6. Therein was this virtue, that the One became the all.

7. Moreover I beheld a vision of a river. There was a little boat thereon; and in it under purple sails was a golden woman, an image of Asi wrought in finest gold. Also the river was of blood, and the boat of shining steel. Then I loved her; and, loosing my girdle, cast myself into the stream.

8. I gathered myself into the little boat, and for many days and nights did I love her, burning beautiful incense before her.

9. Yea! I gave her of the flower of my youth.

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10. But she stirred not; only by my kisses I defiled her so that she turned to blackness before me.

11. Yet I worshipped her, and gave her of the flower of my youth.

12. Also it came to pass, that thereby she sickened, and corrupted before me. Almost I cast myself into the stream.

13. Then at the end appointed her body was whiter than the milk of the stars, and her lips red and warm as the sunset, and her life of a white heat like the heat of the midmost sun.

14. Then rose she up from the abyss of Ages of Sleep, and her body embraced me. Altogether I melted into her beauty and was glad.

15. The river also became the river of Amrit, and the little boat was the chariot of the flesh, and the sails thereof the blood of the heart that beareth me, that beareth me.

16. O serpent woman of the stars! I, even I, have fashioned Thee from a pale image of fine gold.

17. Also the Holy One came upon me, and I beheld a white swan floating in the blue.

18. Between its wings I sate, and the æons fled away.

19. Then the swan flew and dived and soared, yet no whither we went.

20. A little crazy boy that rode with me spake unto the swan, and said:

21. Who art thou that dost float and fly and dive and soar in the inane? Behold, these many æons have passed; whence camest thou? Whither wilt thou go?

22. And laughing I chid him, saying: No whence! No whither!

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23. The swan being silent, he answered: Then, if with no goal, why this eternal journey?

24. And I laid my head against the Head of the Swan, and laughed, saying: Is there not joy ineffable in this aimless winging? Is there not weariness and impatience for who would attain to some goal?

25. And the swan was ever silent. Ah! but we floated in the infinite Abyss. Joy! Joy!

White swan, bear thou ever me up between thy wings!

26. O silence! O rapture! O end of things visible and invisible! This is all mine, who am Not.

27. Radiant God! Let me fashion an image of gems and gold for Thee! that the people may cast it down and trample it to dust! That Thy glory may be seen of them.

28. Nor shall it be spoken in the markets that I am come who should come; but Thy coming shall be the one word.

29. Thou shalt manifest Thyself in the unmanifest; in the secret places men shall meet with thee, and Thou shalt overcome them.

30. I saw a pale sad boy that lay upon the marble in the sunlight, and wept. By his side was the forgotten lute. Ah! but he wept.

31. Then came an eagle from the abyss of glory and overshadowed him. So black was the shadow that he was no more visible.

32. But I heard the lute lively discoursing through the blue still air.

33. Ah! messenger of the beloved One, let Thy shadow be over me!

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34. Thy name is Death, it may be, or Shame, or Love.
So thou bringest me tidings of the Beloved One, I shall
not ask thy name.

35. Where is now the Master? cry the little crazy boys.
He is dead! He is shamed! He is wedded! and their
mockery shall ring round the world.

36. But the Master shall have had his reward.
The laughter of the mockers shall be a ripple in the hair
of the Beloved One.

37. Behold! the Abyss of the Great Deep. Therein is
a mighty dolphin, lashing his sides with the force of the
waves.

38. There is also an harper of gold, playing infinite
tunes.

39. Then the dolphin delighted therein, and put off his
body, and became a bird.

40. The harper also laid aside his harp, and played in-
finite tunes upon the Pan-pipe.

41. Then the bird desired exceedingly this bliss, and
laying down its wings became a faun of the forest.

42. The harper also laid down his Pan-pipe, and with
the human voice sang his infinite tunes.

43. Then the faun was enraptured, and followed far;
at last the harper was silent, and the faun became Pan
in the midst of the primal forest of Eternity.

44. Thou canst not charm the dolphin with silence, O
my prophet!

45. Then the adept was rapt away in bliss, and the
beyond of bliss, and exceeded the excess of excess.

46. Also his body shook and staggered with the burden
of that bliss and that excess and that ultimate nameless.

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47. They cried. He is drunk or He is mad or He is in pain or He is about to die; and he heard them not.

48. O my Lord, my beloved! How shall I indite songs, when even the memory of the shadow of thy glory is a thing beyond all music of speech or of silence?

49. Behold! I am a man. Even a little child might not endure Thee. And lo!

50. I was alone in a great park, and by a certain hillock was a ring of deep enamelled grass wherein green-clad ones, most beautiful, played.

51. In their play I came even unto the land of Fairy Sleep.

All my thoughts were clad in green; most beautiful were they.

52. All night they danced and sang; but Thou art the morning, O my darling, my serpent that twinest Thee about this heart.

53. I am the heart, and Thou the serpent. Wind Thy coils closer about me, so that no light nor bliss may penetrate.

54. Crush out the blood of me, as a grape upon the tongue of a white Doric girl that languishes with her lover in the moonlight.

55. Then let the End awake. Long hast thou slept, O great God Terminus! Long ages hast thou waited at the end of the city and the roads thereof.

Awake Thou! wait no more!

56. Nay, Lord! but I am come to Thee. It is I that wait at last.

57. The prophet cried against the mountain; come thou hither, that I may speak with thee!

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58. The mountain stirred not. Therefore went the prophet unto the mountain, and spake unto it. But the feet of the prophet were weary, and the mountain heard not his voice.

59. But I have called unto Thee, and I have journeyed unto Thee, and it availed me not.

60. I waited patiently, and Thou wast with me from the beginning.

61. This now I know, O my beloved, and we are stretched at our ease among the vines.

62. But these thy prophets; they must cry aloud and scourge themselves; they must cross trackless wastes and unfathomed oceans; to await Thee is the end, not the beginning.

63. Let darkness cover up the writing! Let the scribe depart among his ways.

64. But thou and I are stretched at our ease among the vines; what is he?

65. O Thou beloved One! is there not an end? Nay, but there is an end. Awake! arise! gird up thy limbs, O thou runner; bear thou the Word unto the mighty cities, yea, unto the mighty cities.

III

1. Verily and Amen! I passed through the deep sea, and by the rivers of running water that abound therein, and I came unto the Land of No Desire.

2. Wherein was a white unicorn with a silver collar, whereon was graven the aphorism *Linea viridis gyrat universa*.

3. Then the word of Adonai came unto me by the mouth of the Magister mine, saying: O heart that art girt about with the coils of the old serpent, lift up thyself unto the mountain of initiation!

4. But I remembered. Yea, Than, yea, Theli, yea, Lilith! these three were about me from of old. For they are one.

5. Beautiful wast thou, O Lilith, thou serpent-woman!

6. Thou wast lithe and delicious to the taste, and thy perfume was of musk mingled with ambergris.

7. Close didst thou cling with thy coils unto the heart, and it was as the joy of all the spring.

8. But I beheld in thee a certain taint, even in that wherein I delighted.

9. I beheld in thee the taint of thy father the ape, of thy grandsire the Blind Worm of Slime.

10. I gazed upon the Crystal of the Future, and I saw the horror of the End of thee.

11. Further, I destroyed the time Past, and the time to Come—had I not the Power of the Sand-glass?

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12. But in the very hour I beheld corruption.

13. Then I said: O my beloved, O Lord Adonai, I pray thee to loosen the coils of the serpent!

14. But she was closed fast upon me, so that my Force was stayed in its inception.

15. Also I prayed unto the Elephant God, the Lord of Beginnings, who breaketh down obstruction.

16. These gods came right quickly to mine aid. I beheld them; I joined myself unto them; I was lost in their vastness.

17. Then I beheld myself compassed about with the Infinite Circle of Emerald that encloseth the Universe.

18. O Snake of Emerald, Thou hast no time Past, no time To Come. Verily Thou art not.

19. Thou art delicious beyond all taste and touch, Thou art not-to-be-beheld for glory, Thy voice is beyond the Speech and the Silence and the Speech therein, and Thy perfume is of pure ambergris, that is not weighed against the finest gold of the fine gold.

20. Also Thy coils are of infinite range; the Heart that Thou dost encircle is an Universal Heart.

21. I, and Me, and Mine were sitting with lutes in the market-place of the great city, the city of the violets and the roses.

22. The night fell, and the music of the lutes was stilled.

23. The tempest arose, and the music of the lutes was stilled.

24. The hour passed, and the music of the lutes was stilled.

25. But Thou art Eternity and Space; Thou art Matter and Motion; and Thou art the negation of all these things.

26. For there is no Symbol of Thee.

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27. If I say Come up upon the mountains! the celestial waters flow at my word. But thou art the Water beyond the waters.

28. The red three-angled heart hath been set up in Thy shrine; for the priests despised equally the shrine and the god.

29. Yet all the while Thou wast hidden therein, as the Lord of Silence is hidden in the buds of the lotus.

30. Thou art Sebek the crocodile against Asar; thou art Mati, the Slayer in the Deep. Thou art Typhon, the Wrath of the Elements, O Thou who transcendest the Forces in their Concourse and Cohesion, in their Death and their Disruption. Thou art Python, the terrible serpent about the end of all things!

31. I turned me about thrice in every way; and always I came at the last unto Thee.

32. Many things I beheld mediate and immediate; but, beholding them no more, I beheld Thee.

33. Come thou, O beloved One, O Lord God of the Universe, O Vast One, O Minute One! I am Thy beloved.

34. All day I sing of Thy delight; all night I delight in Thy song.

35. There is no other day or night than this.

36. Thou art beyond the day and the night; I am Thyself, O my Maker, my Master, my Mate!

37. I am like the little red dog that sitteth upon the knees of the Unknown.

38. Thou hast brought me into great delight. Thou hast given me of Thy flesh to eat and of Thy blood for an offering of intoxication.

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39. Thou hast fastened the fangs of Eternity in my soul, and the Poison of the Infinite hath consumed me utterly.

40. I am become like a luscious devil of Italy; a fair strong woman with worn cheeks, eaten out with hunger for kisses. She hath played the harlot in divers palaces; she hath given her body to the beasts.

41. She hath slain her kinsfolk with strong venom of toads; she hath been scourged with many rods.

42. She hath been broken in pieces upon the Wheel; the hands of the hangman have bound her unto it.

43. The fountains of water have been loosed upon her; she hath struggled with exceeding torment.

44. She hath burst in sunder with the weight of the waters; she hath sunk into the awful Sea.

45. So am I, O Adonai, my lord, and such are the waters of Thine intolerable Essence.

46. So am I, O Adonai, my beloved, and Thou hast burst me utterly in sunder.

47. I am shed out like spilt blood upon the mountains; the Ravens of Dispersion have borne me utterly away.

48. Therefore is the seal unloosed, that guarded the Eighth abyss; therefore is the vast sea as a veil; therefore is there a rending asunder of all things.

49. Yea, also verily Thou art the cool still water of the wizard fount. I have bathed in Thee, and lost me in Thy stillness.

50. That which went in as a brave boy of beautiful limbs cometh forth as a maiden, as a little child for perfection.

51. O Thou light and delight, ravish me away into the milky ocean of the stars!

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52. O Thou Son of a light-transcending mother, blessed be Thy name, and the Name of Thy Name, throughout the ages!

53. Behold! I am a butterfly at the Source of Creation; let me die before the hour, falling dead into Thine infinite stream!

54. Also the stream of the stars floweth ever majestical unto the Abode; bear me away upon the Bosom of Nuit!

55. This is the world of the waters of Maim; this is the bitter water that becometh sweet. Thou art beautiful and bitter, O golden one, O my Lord Adonai, O thou Abyss of Sapphire!

56. I follow Thee, and the waters of Death fight strenuously against me. I pass unto the Waters beyond Death and beyond Life.

57. How shall I answer the foolish man? In no way shall he come to the Identity of Thee!

58. But I am the Fool that heedeth not the Play of the Magician. Me doth the Woman of the Mysteries instruct in vain; I have burst the bonds of Love and of Power and of Worship.

59. Therefore is the Eagle made one with the Man, and the gallows of infamy dance with the fruit of the just.

60. I have descended, O my darling, into the black shining waters, and I have plucked Thee forth as a black pearl of infinite preciousness.

61. I have gone down, O my God, into the abyss of the all, and I have found Thee in the midst under the guise of No Thing.

62. But as Thou art the Last, Thou art also the Next, and as the Next do I reveal Thee to the multitude.

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63. They that ever desired Thee shall obtain Thee, even at the End of their Desire.

64. Glorious, glorious, glorious art Thou, O my lover supernal, O Self of myself.

65. For I have found Thee alike in the Me and the Thee; there is no difference, O my beautiful, my desirable One! In the One and the Many have I found Thee; yea, I have found Thee.

IV

1. O crystal heart! I the Serpent clasp Thee; I drive home mine head into the central core of Thee, O God my beloved.

2. Even as on the resounding wind-swept heights of Mitylene some god-like woman casts aside the lyre, and with her locks aflame as an aureole, plunges into the wet heart of the creation, so I, O Lord my God!

3. There is a beauty unspeakable in this heart of corruption, where the flowers are aflame.

4. Ah me! but the thirst of Thy joy parches up this throat, so that I cannot sing.

5. I will make me a little boat of my tongue, and explore the unknown rivers. It may be that the everlasting salt may turn to sweetness, and that my life may be no longer athirst.

6. O ye that drink of the brine of your desire, ye are nigh to madness! Your torture increaseth as ye drink, yet still ye drink. Come up through the creeks to the fresh water; I shall be waiting for you with my kisses.

7. As the bezoar-stone that is found in the belly of the cow, so is my lover among lovers.

8. O honey boy! Bring me Thy cool limbs hither! Let us sit awhile in the orchard, until the sun go down! Let us feast on the cool grass! Bring wine, ye slaves, that the cheeks of my boy may flush red.

9. In the garden of immortal kisses, O thou brilliant One, shine forth! Make Thy mouth an opium-poppo, that one

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kiss is the key to the infinite sleep and lucid, the sleep of Shiloh-am.

10. In my sleep I beheld the Universe like a clear crystal without one speck.

11. There are purse-proud penniless ones that stand at the door of the tavern and prate of their feats of wine-bibbing.

12. There are purse-proud penniless ones that stand at the door of the tavern and revile the guests.

13. The guests dally upon couches of mother-of-pearl in the garden; the noise of the foolish men is hidden from them.

14. Only the inn-keeper feareth lest the favour of the king be withdrawn from him.

15. Thus spake the Magister V.V.V.V.V. unto Adonai his God, as they played together in the starlight over against the deep black pool that is in the Holy Place of the Holy House beneath the Altar of the Holiest One.

16. But Adonai laughed, and played more languidly.

17. Then the scribe took note, and was glad. But Adonai had no fear of the Magician and his play.

For it was Adonai who had taught all his tricks to the Magician.

18. And the Magister entered into the play of the Magician. When the Magician laughed he laughed; all as a man should do.

19. And Adonai said: Thou art enmeshed in the web of the Magician. This He said subtly, to try him.

20. But the Magister gave the sign of the Magistracy, and laughed back on Him: O Lord, O beloved, did these fingers relax on Thy curls, or these eyes turn away from Thine eye?

21. And Adonai delighted in him exceedingly.

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22. Yea, O my master, thou art the beloved of the Beloved One; the Bennu Bird is set up in Philæ not in vain.

23. I who was the priestess of Ahathoor rejoice in your love. Arise, O Nile-God, and devour the holy place of the Cow of Heaven! Let the milk of the stars be drunk up by Sebek the dweller of Nile!

24. Arise, O serpent Apep, Thou art Adonai the beloved one! Thou art my darling and my lord, and Thy poison is sweeter than the kisses of Isis the mother of the Gods!

25. For Thou art He! Yea, Thou shalt swallow up Asi and Asar, and the children of Ptah. Thou shalt pour forth a flood of poison to destroy the works of the Magician. Only the Destroyer shall devour Thee; Thou shalt blacken his throat, wherein his spirit abideth. Ah, serpent Apep, but I love Thee!

26. My God! Let Thy secret fang pierce to the marrow of the little secret bone that I have kept against the Day of Vengeance of Hoor-Ra. Let Kheph-Ra sound his sharded drone! let the jackals of Day and Night howl in the wilderness of Time! let the Towers of the Universe totter, and the guardians hasten away! For my Lord hath revealed Himself as a mighty serpent, and my heart is the blood of His body.

27. I am like a love-sick courtesan of Corinth. I have toyed with kings and captains, and made them my slaves. To-day I am the slave of the little asp of death; and who shall loosen our love?

28. Weary, weary! saith the scribe, who shall lead me to the sight of the Rapture of my master?

29. The body is weary and the soul is sore weary and sleep weighs down their eyelids; yet ever abides the sure

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consciousness of ecstasy, unknown, yet known in that its being is certain. O Lord, be my helper, and bring me to the bliss of the Beloved!

30. I came to the house of the Beloved, and the wine was like fire that flieth with green wings through the world of waters.

31. I felt the red lips of nature and the black lips of perfection. Like sisters they fondled me their little brother; they decked me out as a bride; they mounted me for Thy bridal chamber.

32. They fled away at Thy coming; I was alone before Thee.

33. I trembled at Thy coming, O my God, for Thy messenger was more terrible than the Death-star.

34. On the threshold stood the fulminant figure of Evil, the Horror of emptiness, with his ghastly eyes like poisonous wells. He stood, and the chamber was corrupt; the air stank. He was an old and gnarled fish more hideous than the shells of Abaddon.

35. He enveloped me with his demon tentacles; yea, the eight fears took hold upon me.

36. But I was anointed with the right sweet oil of the Magister; I slipped from the embrace as a stone from the sling of a boy of the woodlands.

37. I was smooth and hard as ivory; the horror gat no hold. Then at the noise of the wind of Thy coming he was dissolved away, and the abyss of the great void was unfolded before me.

38. Across the waveless sea of eternity Thou didst ride with Thy captains and Thy hosts; with Thy chariots and horsemen and spearmen didst Thou travel through the blue.

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39. Before I saw Thee Thou wast already with me; I was smitten through by Thy marvellous spear.

40. I was stricken as a bird by the bolt of the thunderer; I was pierced as the thief by the Lord of the Garden.

41. O my Lord, let us sail upon the sea of blood!

42. There is a deep taint beneath the ineffable bliss; it is the taint of generation.

43. Yea, though the flower wave bright in the sunshine, the root is deep in the darkness of earth.

44. Praise to thee, O beautiful dark earth, thou art the mother of a million myriads of myriads of flowers.

45. Also I beheld my God, and the countenance of Him was a thousandfold brighter than the lightning. Yet in his heart I beheld the slow and dark One, the ancient one, the devourer of His children.

46. In the height and the abyss, O my beautiful, there is no thing, verily, there is no thing at all, that is not altogether and perfectly fashioned for Thy delight.

47. Light cleaveth unto Light, and filth to filth; with pride one contemneth another. But not Thou, who art all, and beyond it; who art absolved from the Division of the Shadows.

48. O day of Eternity, let Thy wave break in foamless glory of sapphire upon the laborious coral of our making!

49. We have made us a ring of glistening white sand, strewn wisely in the midst of the Delightful Ocean.

50. Let the palms of brilliance flower upon our island; we shall eat of their fruit, and be glad.

51. But for me the lustral water, the great ablution, the dissolving of the soul in that resounding abyss.

52. I have a little son like a wanton goat; my daughter is

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like an unfledged eaglet; they shall get them fins, that they may swim.

53. That they may swim, O my beloved, swim far in the warm honey of Thy being, O blessed one, O boy of beatitude!

54. This heart of mine is girt about with the serpent that devoureth his own coils.

55. When shall there be an end, O my darling, O when shall the Universe and the Lord thereof be utterly swallowed up?

56. Nay! who shall devour the Infinite? who shall undo the Wrong of the Beginning?

57. Thou criest like a white cat upon the roof of the Universe; there is none to answer Thee.

58. Thou art like a lonely pillar in the midst of the sea; there is none to behold Thee, O Thou who beholdest all!

59. Thou dost faint, thou dost fail, thou scribe; cried the desolate Voice; but I have filled thee with a wine whose savour thou knowest not.

60. It shall avail to make drunken the people of the old gray sphere that rolls in the infinite Far-off; they shall lap the wine as dogs that lap the blood of a beautiful courtesan pierced through by the Spear of a swift rider through the city.

61. I too am the Soul of the desert; thou shalt seek me yet again in the wilderness of sand.

62. At thy right hand a great lord and a comely; at thy left hand a woman clad in gossamer and gold and having the stars in her hair. Ye shall journey far into a land of pestilence and evil; ye shall encamp in the river of a foolish city forgotten; there shall ye meet with Me.

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63. There will I make Mine habitation; as for bridal will I come bedecked and anointed; there shall the Consummation be accomplished.

64. O my darling, I also wait for the brilliance of the hour ineffable, when the universe shall be like a girdle for the midst of the ray of our love, extending beyond the permitted end of the endless One.

65. Then, O thou heart, will I the serpent eat thee wholly up; yea, I will eat thee wholly up.

V

1. Ah! my Lord Adonai, that dalliest with the Magister in the Treasure-House of Pearls, let me listen to the echo of your kisses.

2. Is not the starry heaven shaken as a leaf at the tremulous rapture of your love? Am not I the flying spark of light whirled away by the great wind of your perfection?

3. Yea, cried the Holy One, and from Thy spark will I the Lord kindle a great light; I will burn through the great city in the old and desolate land; I will cleanse it from its great impurity.

4. And thou, O prophet, shalt see these things, and thou shalt heed them not.

5. Now is the Pillar established in the Void; now is Asi fulfilled of Asar; now is Hoor let down into the Animal Soul of Things like a fiery star that falleth upon the darkness of the earth.

6. Through the midnight thou art dropt, O my child, my conqueror, my sword-girt captain, O Hoor! and they shall find thee as a black gnarl'd glittering stone, and they shall worship thee.

7. My prophet shall prophesy concerning thee; around thee the maidens shall dance, and bright babes be born unto them. Thou shalt inspire the proud ones with infinite pride, and the humble ones with an ecstasy of abasement; all this shall transcend the Known and the Unknown with somewhat that hath no name. For it is as the abyss of the Arcanum that is opened in the secret Place of Silence.

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8. Thou hast come hither, O my prophet, through grave paths. Thou hast eaten of the dung of the Abominable Ones; thou hast prostrated thyself before the Goat and the Crocodile; the evil men have made thee a plaything; thou hast wandered as a painted harlot, ravishing with sweet scent and Chinese colouring, in the streets; thou hast darkened thine eyepits with Kohl; thou hast tinted thy lips with vermilion; thou hast plastered thy cheeks with ivory enamels. Thou hast played the wanton in every gate and by-way of the great city. The men of the city have lusted after thee to abuse thee and to beat thee. They have mouthed the golden spangles of fine dust wherewith thou didst bedeck thine hair; they have scourged the painted flesh of thee with their whips; thou hast suffered unspeakable things.

9. But I have burnt within thee as a pure flame without oil. In the midnight I was brighter than the moon; in the daytime I exceeded utterly the sun; in the byways of thy being I flamed, and dispelled the illusion.

10. Therefore thou art wholly pure before Me; therefore thou art My virgin unto eternity.

11. Therefore I love thee with surpassing love; therefore they that despise thee shall adore thee.

12. Thou shalt be lovely and pitiful toward them; thou shalt heal them of the unutterable evil.

13. They shall change in their destruction, even as two dark stars that crash together in the abyss, and blaze up in an infinite burning.

14. All this while did Adonai pierce my being with his sword that hath four blades; the blade of the thunderbolt, the blade of the Pylon, the blade of the serpent, the blade of the Phallus.

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15. Also he taught me the holy unutterable word Ararita, so that I melted the sixfold gold into a single invisible point, whereof naught may be spoken.

16. For the Magistracy of this Opus is a secret magistracy; and the sign of the master thereof is a certain ring of lapis-lazuli with the name of my master, who am I, and the Eye in the Midst thereof.

17. Also He spake and said: This is a secret sign, and thou shalt not disclose it unto the profane, nor unto the neophyte, nor unto the zelator, nor unto the practicus, nor unto the philosophus, nor unto the lesser adept, nor unto the greater adept.

18. But unto the exempt adept thou shalt disclose thyself if thou have need of him for the lesser operations of thine art.

19. Accept the worship of the foolish people, whom thou hatest. The Fire is not defiled by the altars of the Ghebers, nor is the Moon contaminated by the incense of them that adore the Queen of Night.

20. Thou shalt dwell among the people as a precious diamond among cloudy diamonds, and crystals, and pieces of glass. Only the eye of the just merchant shall behold thee, and plunging in his hand shall single thee out and glorify thee before men.

21. But thou shalt heed none of this. Thou shalt be ever the heart, and I the serpent will coil close about thee. My coils shall never relax throughout the æons. Neither change nor sorrow nor unsubstantiality shall have thee; for thou art passed beyond all these.

22. Even as the diamond shall glow red for the rose, and green for the rose-leaf; so shalt thou abide apart from the Impressions.

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23. I am thou, and the Pillar is 'stablished in the void.

24. Also thou art beyond the stabilities of Being and of Consciousness and of Bliss; for I am thou, and the Pillar is 'stablished in the void.

25. Also thou shalt discourse of these things unto the man that writeth them, and he shall partake of them as a sacrament; for I who am thou am he, and the Pillar is 'stablished in the void.

26. From the Crown to the Abyss, so goeth it single and erect. Also the limitless sphere shall glow with the brilliance thereof.

27. Thou shalt rejoice in the pools of adorable water; thou shalt bedeck thy damsels with pearls of fecundity; thou shalt light flame like licking tongues of liquor of the Gods between the pools.

28. Also thou shalt convert the all-sweeping air into the winds of pale water, thou shalt transmute the earth into a blue abyss of wine.

29. Ruddy are the gleams of ruby and gold that sparkle therein; one drop shall intoxicate the Lord of the Gods my servant.

30. Also Adonai spake unto V.V.V.V.V. saying: O my little one, my tender one, my little amorous one, my gazelle, my beautiful, my boy, let us fill up the pillar of the Infinite with an infinite kiss!

31. So that the stable was shaken and the unstable became still.

32. They that beheld it cried with a formidable affright: The end of things is come upon us.

33. And it was even so.

34. Also I was in the spirit vision and beheld a parricidal

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pomp of atheists, coupled by two and by two in the supernal ecstasy of the stars. They did laugh and rejoice exceedingly, being clad in purple robes and drunken with purple wine, and their whole soul was one purple flower-flame of holiness.

35. They beheld not God; they beheld not the Image of God; therefore were they arisen to the Palace of the Splendour Ineffable. A sharp sword smote out before them, and the worm Hope writhed in its death-agony under their feet.

36. Even as their rapture shore asunder the visible Hope, so also the Fear Invisible fled away and was no more.

37. O ye that are beyond Aormuzdi and Ahrimanes! blessèd are ye unto the ages.

38. They shaped Doubt as a sickle, and reaped the flowers of Faith for their garlands.

39. They shaped Ecstasy as a spear, and pierced the ancient dragon that sat upon the stagnant water.

40. Then the fresh springs were unloosed, that the folk athirst might be at ease.

41. And again I was caught up into the presence of my Lord Adonai, and the knowledge and Conversation of the Holy One, the Angel that Guardeth me.

42. O Holy Exalted One, O Self beyond self, O Self-Luminous Image of the Unimaginable Naught, O my darling, my beautiful, come Thou forth and follow me.

43. Adonai, divine Adonai, let Adonai initiate refulgent dalliance! Thus I concealed the name of Her name that inspireth my rapture, the scent of whose body bewildereth the soul, the light of whose soul abaseth this body unto the beasts.

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44. I have sucked out the blood with my lips; I have drained Her beauty of its sustenance; I have abased Her before me, I have mastered Her, I have possessed Her, and Her life is within me. In Her blood I inscribe the secret riddles of the Sphinx of the Gods, that none shall understand,—save only the pure and voluptuous, the chaste and obscene, the androgyne and the gynander that have passed beyond the bars of the prison that the old Slime of Khem set up in the Gates of Amennti.

45. O my adorable, my delicious one, all night will I pour out the libation on Thine altars; all night will I burn the sacrifice of blood; all night will I swing the thurible of my delight before Thee, and the fervour of the orisons shall intoxicate Thy nostrils.

46. O Thou who camest from the land of the Elephant, girt about with the tiger's pell, and garlanded with the lotus of the spirit, do Thou inebriate my life with Thy madness, that She leap at my passing.

47. Bid Thy maidens who follow Thee bestrew us a bed of flowers immortal, that we may take our pleasure thereupon. Bid Thy satyrs heap thorns among the flowers, that we may take our pain thereupon. Let the pleasure and pain be mingled in one supreme offering unto the Lord Adonai!

48. Also I heard the voice of Adonai the Lord the desirable one concerning that which is beyond.

49. Let not the dwellers in Thebai and the temples thereof prate ever of the Pillars of Hercules and the Ocean of the West. Is not the Nile a beautiful water?

50. Let not the priest of Isis uncover the nakedness of Nuit, for every step is a death and a birth. The priest of Isis lifted the veil of Isis, and was slain by the kisses of her

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mouth. Then was he the priest of Nuit, and drank of the milk of the stars.

51. Let not the failure and the pain turn aside the worshippers. The foundations of the pyramid were hewn in the living rock ere sunset; did the king weep at dawn that the crown of the pyramid was yet unquarried in the distant land?

52. There was also an humming-bird that spake unto the horned cerastes, and prayed him for poison. And the great snake of Khem the Holy One, the royal Uræus serpent, answered him and said:

53. I sailed over the sky of Nu in the car called Millions-of-Years, and I saw not any creature upon Seb that was equal to me. The venom of my fang is the inheritance of my father, and of my father's father; and how shall I give it unto thee? Live thou and thy children as I and my fathers have lived, even unto an hundred millions of generations, and it may be that the mercy of the Mighty Ones may bestow upon thy children a drop of the poison of eld.

54. Then the humming-bird was afflicted in his spirit, and he flew unto the flowers, and it was as if naught had been spoken between them. Yet in a little while a serpent struck him that he died.

55. But an Ibis that meditated upon the bank of Nile the beautiful god listened and heard. And he laid aside his Ibis ways, and became as a serpent, saying Peradventure in an hundred millions of millions of generations of my children, they shall attain to a drop of the poison of the fang of the Exalted One.

56. And behold! ere the moon waxed thrice he became an

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Uræus serpent, and the poison of the fang was established in him and his seed even for ever and for ever.

57. O thou Serpent Apep, my Lord Adonai, it is a speck of minutest time, this travelling through eternity, and in Thy sight the landmarks are of fair white marble untouched by the tool of the graver. Therefore Thou art mine, even now and for ever and for everlasting. Amen.

58. Moreover, I heard the voice of Adonai: Seal up the book of the Heart and the Serpent; in the number five and sixty seal thou the holy book.

As fine gold that is beaten into a diadem for the fair queen of Pharaoh, as great stones that are cemented together into the Pyramid of the ceremony of the Death of Asar, so do thou bind together the words and the deeds, so that in all is one Thought of Me thy delight Adonai.

59. And I answered and said: It is done even according unto Thy word. And it was done. And they that read the book and debated thereon passed into the desolate land of Barren Words. And they that sealed up the book into their blood were the chosen of Adonai, and the Thought of Adonai was a Word and a Deed; and they abode in the Land that the far-off travellers call Naught.

60. O land beyond honey and spice and all perfection! I will dwell therein with my Lord for ever.

61. And the Lord Adonai delighteth in me, and I bear the Cup of His gladness unto the weary ones of the old grey land.

62. They that drink thereof are smitten of disease; the abomination hath hold upon them, and their torment is like the thick black smoke of the evil abode.

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63. But the chosen ones drank thereof, and became even as my Lord, my beautiful, my desirable one. There is no wine like unto this wine.

64. They are gathered together into a glowing heart, as Ra that gathereth his clouds about Him at eventide into a molten sea of Joy; and the snake that is the crown of Ra bindeth them about with the golden girdle of the death-kisses.

65. So also is the end of the book, and the Lord Adonai is about it on all sides like a Thunderbolt, and a Pylon, and a Snake, and a Phallus, and in the midst thereof He is like the Woman that jetteth out the milk of the stars from her paps; yea, the milk of the stars from her paps.

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THE EQUINOX

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