

HÉRODIADE

(From the French of Stéphane Mallarmé.)

HÉRODIADE.



O mine own self I am a wilderness.
You know it, amethyst gardens numberless
Enfolded in the flaming, subtle deep,
Strange gold, that through the red earth's heavy sleep
Has cherished ancient brightness like a dream,
Stones whence mine eyes, pure jewels, have their gleam

Of icy and melodious radiance, you,
Metals, which into my young tresses drew
A fatal splendour and their manifold grace !
Thou, woman, born into these evil days
Disastrous to the cavern sibylline,
Who speakest, prophesying not of one divine,
But of a mortal, if from that close sheath,
My robes, rustle the wild enchanted breath
In the white quiver of my nakedness,
If the warm air of summer, O prophetess,
(And woman's body obeys that ancient claim)
Behold me in my shivering starry shame,
I die !

The horror of my virginity
Delights me, and I would envelope me
In the terror of my tresses, that, by night,
Inviolat reptile, I might feel the white
And glimmering radiance of thy frozen fire,
Thou that art chaste and diest of desire,
White night of ice and of the cruel snow !

Eternal sister, thy lone sister, lo
My dreams uplifted before thee ! now, apart

THE SAVOY

So rare a crystal is my dreaming heart
 I live in a monotonous land alone,
 And all about me lives but in mine own
 Image, the idolatrous mirror of my pride,
 Mirroring this Hérodiade diamond-eyed.
 I am indeed alone, O charm and curse !

NURSE.

O lady, would you die then ?

HÉRODIADE.

No, poor nurse,
 Be calm, and leave me ; prithee, pardon me,
 But, ere thou go, close to the casement ; see
 How the seraphical blue in the dim glass smiles,
 But I abhor the blue of the sky !

Yet, miles
 On miles of rocking waves ! Know'st not a land
 Where, in the pestilent sky, men see the hand
 Of Venus, and her shadow in dark leaves ?
 Thither I go.

Light thou the wax that grieves
 In the swift flame, and sheds an alien tear
 Over the vain gold ; wilt not say in mere
 Childishness ?

NURSE.

Now ?

HÉRODIADE.

Farewell.

You lie, O flower
 Of these chill lips !

I wait the unknown hour,
 Or, deaf to your crying and that hour supreme,
 Utter the lamentation of the dream
 Of childhood seeing fall apart in sighs
 The icy chaplet of its reveries.

ARTHUR SYMONS.