

# Beside the River

By Aleister Crowley

Rain, rain in May. The river sadly flows,  
A sullen silver crossed with sable bars,  
Damp, gloomy, shivering, while reluctant stars,  
Between swart masses of thick clouds that close,  
Drive with drooped plumes their winged cars  
Towards sleep, the scythe of woes.

Woes, woes in Spring. Ere summer deepeneth  
The pink of roses to a purpler tint  
Ere ripening corn shafts back the sudden glint  
Of sunshine that brings healing with the breath  
Of western winds that sigh, they hint  
Of sleep, twin soul with death.

Death, death ere dawn. The night is over dark;  
Trees are grown terrible; the shadows wan  
Make shudder all the tense desires of man  
No gleam of moonlight bears the golden mark  
Of sunny lips, nor shines upon  
Our sleep—Love's birchen bark.

Love, love to-night. To-night is all we know,  
Is all our care; lips joined to lips we lie,  
Tender hands touching, hearts in tune to die,  
With willing kiss reluctant to let go;  
So sweet love's last enduring sigh  
For sleep, so sure, so slow.

Sleep, sleep to-night. Our arms are intertwined;  
Breath desires breath and hand imprisons hand;  
Breezes cool faces, rosy with the brand  
Of long sweet kisses; sun shall dawn and find  
Two lovers who have passed the land  
Of sleep—and found Death kind.