

# A Valentine, '98

By Aleister Crowley

The sea laughs jewels, on her breast  
The sunbeams bear  
Children most delicately drest,  
Gold flowers and fair.

The blue sea sparkles in the noon,  
At dusk is free,  
At midnight does the sacred moon  
Embrace the sea.

And on the land the woods are green,  
A wild bird's note  
Shrills till the air trembles between  
His beak and throat.

And up through blue and gold and black  
The shivering sound  
Rushes; no echo murmurs back  
From sky or ground.

In the loud agony of song  
The moon is still;  
The wind drops down the shore along;  
Night hath her will.

The bird becomes a dancing flame  
In leaf and bower.  
The forest trembles; loves reclaim  
Their own still hour.

So are the stars moved; so the night  
Puts off her robe.  
So to his music breaks the light  
O'er the pale globe.

The dawn is here, and on the sands  
Where sun first flames,  
I gather lilies from all lands  
Of sad sweet names.

The Lesbian lily is of white

Stained through with blood,  
Swayed with the stream, a wayward light  
Upon the flood.

The Spartan lily is of blue,  
With green leaves fresh;  
Apollo glints his crimson through  
The azure mesh.

The English lily is of white,  
All white and clean.  
There plays a tender flame of light  
Her flowers between.

The English lily is a bloom  
Too cold and sweet;  
One might say—in the twilight gloom  
A maiden's feet.

Silent and slim and delicate  
The flower shall spring,  
Till there be born immaculate  
A fair new thing.

Tall as the mother-lily, still  
By faint winds swayed;  
Tender and pure, without a will—  
An English maid.

No tree of poison, at whose feet  
All men lie dead;  
No well of death, whose waters sweet  
Are tinged with red.

No hideous impassioned queen  
For whom love dies;  
No warm imperious Messaline  
That slew with sighs.

Fiercer desires may cast away  
All things most good;  
A people may forget to-day  
Their motherhood.

She will remain, unshaken yet  
By storm and sun;

She will remain, when years forget  
That fierier one.

A race of clean strong men shall spring  
From her pure life.  
Men shall be happy; bards shall sing  
The English wife.

And thou, forget thou that my mouth  
Has ever clung  
To flame of hell; that of the south  
The songs I sung.

Forget that I have trampled flowers,  
And worn the crown  
Of thorns of roses in the hours  
So long dropped down.

Forget, O white-faced maid, that I  
Have dallied long  
In classic bowers and mystery  
Of classic song.

Eros and Aphrodite now  
I can forget,  
Placing upon thy maiden brow  
Love's coronet.

Wake from the innocent dear sleep  
Of childhood's life:  
An English maiden must not weep  
To be a wife.

So shall our love bridge space, and bring  
The tender breath  
Of sun and moon and stars that sing  
To gladden Death.

I see your cheek grow pale and cold,  
Then flush above.  
Kiss me; I know that I behold  
The birth of Love.