

Songs for the Witch Woman

by

John W Parsons

to

Candida

"In whom she is Incarnate"

Witch Woman

I hear your voice low in the dusk
Like the notes of the harp play^er
That carve the still air
Into a sensuous and subtle imagery^{of} sound

And my senses are drowned
By the scent of oleander and the musk
Of the datura dimly shining in the dark,
While your voice troubles the still air,

And I recall

An ancient garden and a secret call
And ~~you were~~ your slant eyes and your red hair
Engender dreams of days beyond despair

And under your sorcery I fare forth
To fabulous lands and meadows green with Spring
And caught on the gossamer web of evening
I behold incredible things no poet ever told.

Night

Subtle and amor^{ou}s
Lamia sings her love song on the evening
As is heard the alien, dubious song of the night bird

hurr Or the ~~power~~ of the lioness
On the damp, lambent dark
Or the soft disastrous word
Of murder following the extinguished spark
Into nothingness.

Allwhile the subject of her languorous caress
Dreams darkly dreams
As voyaging Deathward, the transfigured swan
Sings splendid sad things,
Drifts deeply down and nests, with folded wings
The jewell'd night
Or as the noon bright, desert sun dreams down
Into the smiling, upturned remnant of a face

A knife is beautiful, a jaguar
In motion is the embodiment of grace
And ~~shortly~~ slowly in the guest house in evening
I dream afar,

Seeking forbidden things on a black star
while ,throatily lamia sings
~~Her stange caress.~~ Her strange caress.

As strum the stirring croatali (?)
As the leopardess doth sing,
As does the vulture, strident, cry,
So does lam- H lamia strum and sing and cry
As wanton as the setting of star
In an ensanguined sea.

Dear dreadful dark,
Lean over me and press
The curtain of your awesometenderness
Against my mind,
Mother of stars, the secret of your vast maternity
In the infinity
Of the deep scented terror of the night
As echoes long
Lamia's doubtful song.

The lool

I followed a lonely way
I followed a drifting star
And following ever, a beast behind,
But the star was far and far.

I left the cozy coral,
I left the comfortable land
To seek a dream in the dreamy sky
And a skirling song unheard.

I found a wonderful flower
That mirrored the dream in the air.
I reached to gather the flower in
For my close curling hair

And a little spotted snake
Struck from the golden bud
I followed a lonely way
With poison in my blood.

I walked a dreadful way
In the jungle, sick and blind
With a quiet laughter overheard (til ? overhead)
And a monstrous beast behind

At last I turned at bay
On the narrow way I trod
And screamed aloud at what I saw,
For lo, the beast was God!

With the eyes of a laughing girl
And the flower in his hair
And the spotted snake about his throat
And his face was cruel and fair.

Pan

Do not lament thus, who have known and lost me
 With pale pastels and sounds of tuneless lyres,
 I was the amber girl when you first found me,
 The golden boy in the portal of new desires,
 I was the wind of Spring, the scent of roses,
 I was the night, the garden and I the fire,
 The rod that wakes, the flower that disposes,
 I the ~~innocent~~ singer, the song, the lyre.

immortal singer

I am the Autumn now, my winds are blowing
 Blossoms of Summer barrenly they blow
 Leaves and desires and summer hopes foreknowing
 I shall be Winter and silence of the snow.

Still I am thine, O stricken heart to follow
 Past gale and glacier, where I brood alone,
 Exultant, where all hopes and fears are hollow,
 The core of steel within the heart of stone.

I, who am black and bleak with old disasters,
 Was I not beautiful, and am I now the less
 Than all the pale and pure and pretty masters
 That leave you now upon my wilderness?

Then will you dare me, stinking and sardonic
 Who called me, soft and lovely, by my name?
 Embrace me then and feel my kiss demonic
 Shatter the glacier and reveal the flame.

 Stonehenge

The summer thunder chatters in the west
 As though
 The ghost of Caesar's iron legions go
 Behind the hills.

The ancient oaks are shadowy and still,
 The mistletoe
 Subservient in the argent of the glow
 Of moonlight, waits the golden sickle's ~~whim~~ will.

The woods await the thaumaturgic tune
 That called the old gods beneath a younger moon,
 And will await until the gods come back.

I know they will return
 They will return, who, going, left the slow
 Still circle broken and the altar black.

The Garden

There is a garden where Death has gone to sleep ;...
 Dark Death like a pale tired boy nods dreamily,
 For he is ~~enamored~~ ^{enamored} of her and doth keep her luminous blossoms
 forever from decay.

There in the dusky day, in the dim air
 Dreams, like disturbing notes from a secret song
 Simmer and float between beauty and despair
 In an ecstasy no heart endured for long.
 Hit to this golden garden all loves come,
 Young lovers, happening on eternity
 Where dark Death ~~seeps~~ and dreams, ^(sleeps)
 There venturing some
 Are briefly raised beyond desire or pity,
 Raised to a pitch of beauty unendured
 By faint mortality, where sobbing shakes the
 Garden's subtle silence, that insured
 Sleep, from which inhuman labyrinth
 Death ~~wakes~~ awakes.

Dance (sic)

The night, a huge bleak panther flecked with stars,
 Uneasily allows the warm west wind's caress.
 The moon, disasterous golden banner,
 Slightly smiles.

Off stage, an orchestra complains of love,
 Center, a sad-faced ape in clown costume dances slow stately circles,
 A werewolf, left, sings aucusly a horrible small song,
 While, right, a vampire, fondling a skull is also smiling.
 Alto saxophone in orchestra (sings)
 "My love, my love, my love."

Werewolf (sings)
 "Oh moon, oblique and smiling sinister,
 Oh bloody promise in the sky,
 Oh beautiful dancer mine,
 Betrothed, beloved --- "
 (He howls)

(saxophone) "My love, my love, my love)"
 (Werewolf) "Rot flesh and go down Kingdom to aunken jellied sea
 where black stars and wicker women
 Reel in infamy".

The vampire, smiling still, ^{regards} requests the skull,
 which vocalizes in a rich deep baritone.

(Skull) "Believe me if all those enduring young charms, etc"

The ape continues dancing.

(Werewolf)
 "O, night of stars that coriscate like semen spated in the womb of
 night -
 O serpent woman smiling sinister -
 O, lovely dancer at the feast to be - "
 (Saxophone) , "my love, my love, my love".

Sorcerer

I see him tread a craggy path
 Over dark hills, outlined against the sky,
 In a flapping cloak, and his sardonic eye
 Gleams with a joyous wrath

And he lifts his arms and behold
 A flight of birds all gold
 In the sunset carrying dreams,
 strange dreams from out of Africa and Spain.

Then in a harsh voice he spells the sun
 And leaps and dances on its crimson touch (? tomb),
 Casting distorted shadows on the moon ~~new-risen,~~
 New risen.

I see him flinging out his cloak,
 That swells and swirls like thick smoke,
 That rushes outwards and expands
 To engulf the houses in all lands.

Now, naked on the highest peak,
 He pauses with both hands above his head,
 He laughs and flings them outward with all his might
 And sows a million stars upon the night.

Under the Hill

Now while the sky is apple green
 And the wind is still and the moon is ripe,
 Come to the hollow under the hill
 While the night is young and the evening's thrills
 To the thump of drums and the ~~strain of strings~~ strum of strings
 And the shrill cry of the pipe.

A girl and a goat are dancing there
 In the hollow under the hill.
 The goat is black and the girl is fair,
 But his eyes are gold as her flying hair,
 With the thump of drums and the strum of strings
 And the shrill cry of the pipe.

His eyes are yellow and patient and wise
 As a snake is patient, a sage is wise,
 But the golden girl has demon's eyes
 As she dances and smiles in his golden eyes
 To the thump of drums and the strum of strings
 And the shrill cry of the pipe.

Narcissus

Drug me with drugs
 Slow acting, sensuous, sweet,
 Co-mingle gin and musk,
 Hashish and amber,
 Let me drink and breathe
 And hear slow, devious music

Until aroused
 To subtle, languorous moods,
 Until I see
 Ochre and mazarine and purple
 Emit lascivious sounds

Then I shall go
 Through dark and gothic ruins,
 Grey and golden mists
 Down to a forest, -Green-coeval, green
 Green- with an old dream

I shall go naked
 And magnolia and oleander
 Datura and jasmine,
 Whose blossoms will open and vaginally flower
 In infinite time, for a relative house,
 Whose white, subliminal flowers
 Will caress my breasts

And I shall perfume perform stately
 Phallic arabesques
 In the moonlight,
 Pale and white

Aztec

In a far place, in a dry land
 Where skull face with clawed hand
 Beats Death Drums.

In a high place, in a far land
 Where beak face with stone knife
 Draws thin lines on taut chest
 Where hot life beats Death Drums

In a red place, where a red sun
 Is blood red, and a damned race
 Hear skull face beat Death Drums

And each face is skull face
 And spit runs from sharp mouth
 In a dead sun and the hot drought
 Is done Death Drums

In a red rain, in a red feast, in a red pain
 Where a red breast with a skull face
 Beats Death Drums
 Death Drums
 Death Drums

Sabat

Ah, the horned moon
 Smiles in the purple sky.
 Not -and more obliquely sly
 -show- Than your sly smiling, sister.

See the ebon goats'
 Wise, diabolical yellow eyes

No more wildly wise
Than your wild, wise eyes, sister.

Beats Hark, ~~sp~~outed drum
Beats in the woods below
And what (sic) the lightsthat go
Incessant too and fro.

Stars~~they~~ have ~~cu-a-ught~~ caught, sister,
And their eyes,
Like yours,
Yellow and wise.

space — What shall the altar be,
And what the chalice cup?
What incense offered up,
And what the altar fire.?

The altar shall be white
As your white body, ~~sister~~ *sister*
The chalice cup is red
As your mouth, sly smiling,

Brighter blood and dark~~est~~ *desire*
Shall feed the altar fire.

Punch

Light and airy, bright and fairy
In the glade — how she whirls
Like a ~~per~~agon of girls,
On the strings, gossamer things,
Leading upward to the wings
In the boughs
Worked by long inhuman fingers,
Watched by sly, inhuman eyes,
Eyes of spiders watching flies.

Right foot forward, left foot back,
Flashing curls and dainty face,
Like a little painted death,
How she spies her, draws his breath,
Tiptoes closer, stares ~~en~~ *en* rapt,
Reaches out essaying hands —
Jerks the strands.

Down, down, dreadful down
On the unsuspecting clown,
Clicking fangs and fearful screams
And silence, and thereafter —
Long, long laughter.

Merlin

Red bearded Barbarossa sleeps
In Traumfells (sic), where the raven keeps
His sentinels, nor yet
Is Roland from his tower come,
Nor Arthur back from Avalon.
The hours darken and the years

The hours darken and the years
 Grow black with evil things
 And mad machines spawn monstrous fears
 That follow sleep with sombre wings.

The sword lies dreaming in the stone
 Neath waters over Avalon.

I would there were one man to tell
 The evil dream, the darkling hell,
 To seize the sword, to raise the spell.

Then England's mighty oaks would sing,
 The mistletoe beneath the bough moon,
 Would glow and chant the Druid rune,
 The spirit of the snow corn
 Would walk, and greet the morn.

Arcadia

The wood is a tumult of shouting and laughter
 And over the valleys and in the sky
 I hear your piping and follow after.

I see the rioting clouds go by.

Your hair is a banner for rally of rainbows,
 The wind is a flame wolf with your rollicking sheep,
 Slender of sunbursts are shafts for your arrows
 And meadows march and march at your feet.

Flower and feather and fur in wonder
 Follow your stride to the singing sea
 And ocean greets you with murmur and thunder,
 With swell of billow and shimmer of lea.

Then striding to mountains with sunset flaming
 A radiant brand in your flaming hair,
 With fire and purple, I see you taming
 The wrath of winter, the fury of air.

Autumn

If all my words were stars on silver strings,
 Oceanic jewels, or from the well
 Of my heart's blood, there are some things
 Of which I could not tell, could never tell.

Or could not tell how autumn sadness stirs
 Sear memories and balked desires half known,
 Or how the summer moon, behind old fire
 Smiles secretly, triumphant and alone.

Or, how far mountains move majestically
 In evening shadows when the embers die,
 Or why the night is still, or of the free
 High tumult of wild geese in the sky.

Or where dead loves go, or the leaves that blow
 Down drifting winds to other lands than these,
 Of songs of summer isles and silent snow
 And dim disasters under sullen seas,
 Least could I tell you what is in my mind.

Least could I tell you what is in my mind
Seeing your face on mist I half forget,
Half hope, remembering the wind
Stirring your hair to flames of old regret.

Farewell, Unknown

Remembered, faraway
Or near at hand, forgot
You were in every land
Where I am not.

Of-see I see you walk the wind
Like a banner flying
Where the sun sets, with the day
And the summer dying.

Lips, hair and lovely limbs
Eyes I called you
Flashing the desperate message
I never knew.

You are on all roads now
I have not taken,
With all remembered things
Lost or forsaken.

With the stars and the hills
And the geese that go
And all things I have loved
And do not know.

Beloved, I have not known
That I knew so well,
Being both mine and alone,
Unknown, farewell.

Passion Flowers

wolf

Where are you going, Mother, Mother
By the dark wood stream
Where wolbane grows and deadly clover
And the owls eyes glean

I am gathering simples, son, my love
And flowers for memories of my daughter
A handful of ashes is all they cover
But they will suffice for those that taught her.

Why do you gather monkshood chilly
And hellebore and laurel cherry
When she was as fair as the valley lilly
And her hair as red as the rowan berry?

Three times she called on Satan, lover
In the public square, in the red fire light
But once for vengeance to me, her mother,
The herbs I gather will serve, tonight.

King David

Not for the sorry carrion that was laid
 Bleeding before Judeah for a whore -
 Beloved prostitute, nor for the low lustful dust
 That smiles no more on my carved bed.

Not for the eight left hanging until rain
 Washed down the anger of a righteous god
 For Ahab's lamentation for her sons
 Or Michah's golden harvest gone to weed

Not for these dirtied hands, this blooded robe
 This beard blown away in the winds of time
 Nor for the sudden lightning long lost
 In alien thunder on the distant hills.

sensory → Not even for the tall and headstrong man son
 Scowling and dark and beautiful, that lay
 Sprawling in blood upon the Hebron (sic) plain/
 But for one thing, a young man's face
 Under mad eyes that guessed, but never spoke.

Neurosis

O pale face, dreaming in the dark
 Master of webs and silences
 Amid luxurious blossoms of the night
 Where ghostly long limed spiders slowly stalk
 And reach up dubious feelers to your eyes
 Serenely closed.

Festoons of dim evasions by a dark lagoon
 Half truths that fatten on a secret life
 And take weak wings and wander with the wind
 Gone seeking/
 Old loveliness (sic) overgrown with gaudy molds
 Lost powers, like trunks of blasted trees
 Old songs gone hollow hollow in an empty house
 Forsaken.

A shutter slowly opens ^{on} the wind
 And something sly looks out and is afraid
 Afraid

A-shutter

Overcoming tokens of a murdered spring deep buried
 A pale distorted face upon the night
 Master of webs and silences and lies
 The night moths flutter around it like a bloom
 Slow closing.

Bierce

And now bitterly
 I look upon God
 Ialda beath
 Ironic, vengeful and grotesque
 He calls himself Pancho Villa
 But I know him

Who set Halpin Fraser
 Gnawing his mother's bones in a graveyard
 And I am caught up into heaven alive
 Cursing.

 Harpocrates apt

How craftily does this pale ~~see~~ aspire
 To snare ~~god~~ in web~~of~~ memory
 And weave from incest an oblique desire
~~for an ephemeral~~
 For an ephemeral ~~nerve~~'s (? moment's) immortality
 Out of failed loves, dead loves, dreams gone awry
 Like some sea creature leaving halls of shell
 He builds so beautifully the gods must envy
 Monuments to his fear of ghosts and Hell
 Seeking, forever seeking out of season
 In every future ~~space~~ for the past
 And in ~~moment's~~ trance transcending reason,
 He shall not last, but shall himself outlast.
 From unbreached loneliness (sic) his soul goes winging
 To undreamed heavens or and (sic) an unknown doom
 Against the heedlessness I hear him singing
 Deep in the darkness of a little room.

 Lesbians

I suppose I should hate you, whose red mouths are sullen
 And whose eyes look upon me contemptuously,
 Save that I have known the pain and sadness
 Of lust for that which cannot be.
 Yes, I have known unbridled lust and madness,
 A passion for the passionless ~~careless~~,
 For the moon's fire and the grey ocean's gladness
 And the incredible flower in the ice wilderness.
 Therefore I love you, sisters in damnation,
 Whose loves, more cruel and tender than my own,
 In soft melodious songs make incantations
 That call the goddess from the Icnian sea foam.

 Night Song

I saw a gypsy going
 Into a factory
 A red flower going
 On a black river flowing
 Down into hell.

I heard a strange song rising
 Out of a prison
 A star rising
 And yearning and burning
 Out of a tomb.

Oh gypsy going
 Flower flowing
 Star glowing
 What doon? (sic)

The Witch House

I have strayed in a forest enchanted
 Where bale (sic) fire glows
 And followed a face, witch haunted
 The mad moon knows

I have come to the hostelry of posts
 To the Sylvan's (sic) home
 Where angels and shadows foregather
 In black ~~air~~ foam.

Yes, where corpse lights flicker
 And witch fires burn
 And the past unbearably nostalgic
 Looms in a dream

Here in the darkness suspended
 From the heaven that was and is ended
 And the heaven to be
 What phantoms I see.

Winged demons like kings in a story
 Set empires before me
 And princesses woo me and witch queens pursue me
 In castles of glass,
 And the panoplies pass ...

And I struggle with spectres and cobwebs -
 I speak with the moon

And slyly my shadow behind me
 Is weaving a doom.

And death, like the tick of a clock in a boarded up room
 Whispers circle and circle and circle forever too late and too soon.

Untitled

I remember
 When I was a star
 In the night
 A moving, burning ember
 Amid the bright
 Clouds of star fire
 Going deathward
 To the womb.

Oh moon
 Red moon of my desire
 My sisters and my others (sic) fire
 Down the great hall of heroes
 I the star seed
 Wooed the incredible flower

I alone
 My need, my power
 attained sustained the dark house
 and my bride
 I remember
 I remember
 When I was a god

In my hour
and like a god I died
By the deep waters, crucified
Crucified.

And I dreamed
and the great powers
moved over me
and a voice cried

Go free, star, go free
Seek the dark home
On the wild sky
Good by, star, good by.

Songs of for the Witch Woman. Poems by John W Parsons written from 1947 to 1952
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Anger and Cameron Feb 25 1962.

ARCANUM DCCXXIV

(The Ritual of the Shrine)

1. The Adept, removing his sandals, shall ^h approach the Shrine in a mood of reverence
2. He shall kneel and invoke the lunar Gods (and enter the door of the lunar temple)
3. He shall invoke the Gods of Wisdom
4. He shall become inflamed with adoration
5. He shall evoke the star of Light
6. ~~He shall worship both the shrine and star~~ He shall receive the power of heaven
7. He shall worship the shrine and star
8. He shall see the face of God
9. He shall rule over the animals and the elements
10. He shall receive the blessings of Light.