

# Black Marigolds

Even now

If I see in my soul the citron-breasted fair one  
Still gold-tinted, her face like our night stars,  
Drawing unto her; her body beaten about with flame,  
Wounded by the flaring spear of love,  
My first of all by reason of her fresh years,  
Then is my heart buried alive in snow.

Even now

If my girl with lotus eyes came to me again  
Weary with the dear weight of young love,  
Again I would give her to these starved twins of arms  
And from her mouth drink down the heavy wine,  
As a reeling pirate bee in fluttered ease  
Steals up the honey from the nenuphar.

Even now

If I saw her lying all wide eyes  
And with collyrium the indent of her cheek  
Lengthened to the bright ear and her pale side  
So suffering the fever of my distance,  
Then would my love for her be ropes of flowers, and night  
A black-haired lover on the breasts of day.

Even now

My eyes that hurry to see no more are painting, painting  
Faces of my lost girl.  
O golden rings  
That tap against cheeks of small magnolia leaves,  
O whitest so soft parchment where  
My poor divorced lips have written excellent  
Stanzas of kisses and will write no more.

Even now

Death sends me the flickering of powdery lids

Over wild eyes and the pity of her slim body  
All broken up with weariness of joy;  
The little red flowers of her breasts to be my comfort  
Moving above scarves, and for my sorrow  
Wet crimson lips that once I marked as mine.

Even now  
They chatter her weakness through the two bazaars  
Who was so strong to love me,  
And small men  
That buy and sell for silver being slaves  
Crinkle the fat about their eyes; and yet  
No Prince of the Cities of the Sea has taken her,  
Leading to his grim bed.  
Little lonely one,  
You clung to me as a garment clings; my girl.

Even now  
I love long black eyes that caress silk,  
Ever and ever sad and laughing eyes,  
Whose lids make such sweet shadow when they close  
It seems another beautiful look of hers.  
I love a fresh mouth, ah, a scented mouth,  
And curving hair, subtle as a smoke,  
And light fingers, and laughter of green gems.

Even now I remember that you made answer very softly,  
We being one soul, your hand on my hair,  
The burning memory rounding your near lips:  
I have seen the priestess of Ratri make love at moon fall  
And then in a carpeted hall with a bright gold lamp  
Lie down carelessly anywhere to sleep.

Even now  
I mind the coming and talking of wise men from towers  
Where they had thought away their youth.  
And I, listening,  
Found not the salt of the whispers of my girl,

Murmur of confused colours, as we lay near sleep;  
Little wise words and little witty words,  
Wanton as water, honeyed with eagerness.

Even now  
I mind that I loved cypress and roses, clear,  
The great blue mountains and the small gray hills,  
The sounding of the sea.  
Upon a day  
I saw strange eyes and hands like butterflies;  
For me at morning larks flew from the thyme  
And children came to bathe in little streams.

Even now  
I know that I have savoured the hot taste of life  
Lifting green cups and gold at the great feast.

Just for a small and a forgotten time  
I have had full in my eyes from off my girl  
The whitest pouring of eternal light-

Translated by E. Powys Mathers from Caurapancas'ika (The Love Thief)