

As Eos with her roseate fingers
op'd the Gates of Morn
and bade Selene glide gently home
upon her silvern horn
I thought I spied, across far hills
some flicker in the trees
and started toward it, shivering in
the early morning breeze.

Over hill and dale I trod,
through thickset brush and bramble,
yet never heard a bird take flight,
nor saw one fawn a-gambol.
For hours on and on I marched,
for hours on and on,
yet still did never Helios
mount to his tethrippon!

Yet still did Eos hold the gate,
numb fingers on the metal,
while yet aloft her sister sailed,
an opalescing petal.
So, filled with 'mingled dread and awe
I pushed on through the trees.
And there! At Last! The source of light!
I tumbled to my knees.

It stood upon a crumbling plinth,
hid deep within the copse:
A chalice old, of gold, embossed
with all my spirit's hopes.
Each beam that Eos poured on it
glanced off, become as fire,
and from all sides life bent toward it,
filled with dumb desire.

Kneeling, my reverence I made
on weeds and polished stone,
and felt each honey'd flame seep through
my flesh, into the bone.
Kneeling thus, each finger splayed,
my mind suffused with light.
I saw myself—strange eidolon!—
in holy robes bedight.

I saw a holy eidolon
in folding robes bedight...
in flowering robes bedight...
in folding, folding, folding robes...
in folding...
folding...
folding...
fol...
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I rose and grasped the brimming chalice!  
The sanguine ichor guzzled!  
Then lifting up to pale Selene  
a shriek from out my muzzle,  
I bounded down among the glades  
—In fur or my old ropes?—  
Yet soon I stopped, sat down and wept,  
bereft at once of hope.

Now Helios, hearing my shriek,  
had saddled up his train  
and launching out his palace gates,  
swiftly the sky didst gain.  
With blazing steeds he harrowed me  
from fen to shady fen!  
Soon as I found some cool recess,  
He'd flush me out again!

At last I thought my lungs would burst,  
my flesh slough from my bones.  
The air was a sea of fire!  
The world a pure ocean of moans!  
But then! Far to the west a brazen  
hope did catch my eye!  
Sweet censers on Hesperides!  
The lovely Erythrai!

The evening of light with dark,  
—with gardening and song—  
these lovely maidens herald—and  
their Mother before long!  
No sooner said than She'd arrived  
over the eastern slopes,  
swaddled in adumbral raiment,  
carrying my hopes.

Helios fled to the west—  
He would return by sea.  
That left Selene, the dreadful Nix  
(who bore my hopes), and me.  
I fled into the darkness then,  
my mind still filled with flames  
and never again did see my soul,  
whom never had a name.

Perhaps my soul consumed herself.  
Perhaps she is no more  
than the fading, fading echo of  
a tide upon a shore.  
Perhaps she wanders, as a bird  
throughout this lonesome wood.  
Or perhaps yet she follows me,  
and does still as I would.

Tucker Whitney