

Despair

by H.P. Lovecraft

February 1919

O'er the midnight moorlands crying,
Thro' the cypress forests sighing,
In the night-wind madly flying,
 Hellish forms with streaming hair;
In the barren branches creaking,
By the stagnant swamp-pools speaking,
Past the shore-cliffs ever shrieking,
 Damn'd demons of despair.

Once, I think I half remember,
Ere the grey skies of November
Quench'd my youth's aspiring ember,
 Liv'd there such a thing as bliss;
Skies that now are dark were beaming,
Bold and azure, splendid seeming
Till I learn'd it all was dreaming --
 Deadly drowsiness of Dis.

But the stream of Time, swift flowing,
Brings the torment of half-knowing --
Dimly rushing, blindly going
 Past the never-trodden lea;
And the voyager, repining,
Sees the wicked death-fires shining,
Hears the wicked petrel's whining
 As he helpless drifts to sea.

Evil wings in ether beating;
Vultures at the spirit eating;
Things unseen forever fleeting
 Black against the leering sky.
Ghastly shades of bygone gladness,
Clawing fiends of future sadness,
Mingle in a cloud of madness
 Ever on the soul to lie.

Thus the living, lone and sobbing,
In the throes of anguish throbbing,
With the loathsome Furies robbing
Night and noon of peace and rest.
But beyond the groans and grating
Of abhorrent Life, is waiting
Sweet Oblivion, culminating
All the years of fruitless quest.