

Nathicana

by H.P. Lovecraft
and Alfred Galpin

It was in the pale garden of Zais;
The mist-shrouded gardens of Zais,
Where blossoms the white naphalot,
The redolent herald of midnight.
There slumber the still lakes of crystal,
And streamlets that flow without murm'ring;
Smooth streamlets from caverns of Kathos
Where broodth the calm spirits of twilight.
And over the lakes and the streamlets
Are bridges of pure alabaster,
White bridges all cunningly carven
With figures of fairies and daemons.
Here glimmer strange suns and strange planets,
And strange is the crescent Bnapis
That sets 'yong the ivy-grown ramparts
Where thicken the dusk of the evening.
Here fall the white vapours of Yabon;
And here in the swirl of vapours
I saw the divine Nathicana;
The garlanded, white Nathicana;
The slow-eyed, red-lipped Nathicana;
The silver-voiced, sweet Nathicana;
The pale-rob'd, belov'd Nathicana.
And ever was she my beloved,
From ages when time was unfashioned
Now anything fashion'd but Yabon.
And here dwelt we ever and ever,
The innocent children of Zais,
At peace in the paths and the arbours,
White-crowned with the blest nephalote.
How oft would we float in the twilight
O'er flow'r-cover'd pastures and hillsides
All white with the lowly astalthon;
The lowly yet lovely astalthon,
And dream in a world made of dreaming
The dreams that are fairer than Aidenn;

Bright dreams that are truer than reason!
So dreamed and so lov'd we thro' ages,
Till came the cursed season of Dzannin;
The daemon-damn'd season of Dzannin;
When red shone the suns and the planets,
And red leamed the crescent Banapis,
And red fell the vapours of Yabon.
Then redden'd the blossoms and streamlets
And lakes that lay under the bridges,
And even the calm alabaster
glowed pink with uncanny reflections
Till all the carv'd fairies and daemons
Leer'd redly from the backgrounds of shadow.
Now redden'd my vision, and madly
I strove to peer thro' the dense curtain
And glimpsed the divine Nathicana;
The pure, ever-pale Nathicana;
The lov'd, the unchang'd Nathicana.
But vortex on vortex of madness
Beclouded my labouring vision;
My damnable, reddening vision
That built a new world for my seeing;
Anew world of redness and darkness,
A horrible coma call'd living
So now in this come call'd living
I view the bright phantoms of beauty;
The false hollow phantoms of beauty
That cloak all the evils of Dzannin.
I view them with infinite longing,
So like do they seem to my lov'd one:
Yet foul for their eyes shines their evil;
Their cruel and pitiless evil,
More evil than Thaphron and Latgoz,
Twice ill fro its gorgeous concealment.
And only in slumbers of midnight
Appears the lost maid Nathicana,
The pallid, the pure Nathicana
Who fades at the glance of the dreamer.
Again and again do I seek her;
I woo with deep draughts of Plathotis,
Deep draughts brew'd in wine of Astarte
And strengthen'd with tears of long weeping.
I yearn for the gardens of Zais;

The lovely, lost garden of Zais
Where blossoms the white nephalot,
The redolent herald of midnight.
The last potent draught am I brewing;
A draught that the daemons delight ih;
A drught that will banish the redness;
The horrible coma call'd living.
Soon, soon, if I fail not in brewing,
The redness and madness will vanish,
And deep in the worm-people'd darkness
Will rot the base chains that hav bound me.
Once more shall the gardens of Zais
Dawn white on my long-tortur'd vision,
Andthere midst the vapours of Yabon
Will stand the divine Nathicana;
The deathless, restor'd Nathicana
whose like is not met with in living.

In a letter to Donald Wandrei written August 2, 1927, Lovecraft said that this poem was supposed to be a "parody on those stylistic excesses which really have no basic meaning". In his response ten days later, Wandrei said "It is a rare and curious kind of literary freak, a satire too good, so that, instead of parodying, it possesses, the original."