

Witchery

By Madison Cawein

She walks the woods, when evening falls,
With spirits of the winds and leaves;
And to her side the soul she calls
Of every flower she perceives.

She walks with introspective eyes
That see not as the eyes of man,
But with the dream that in them lies,
And which no outward eyes may scan.

She sits among the sunset hills,
Or trails a silken skirt of breeze,
Then with the voice of whip-poor-wills
Summons the twilight to the trees.

Among the hollows, dim with musk,
Where wild the stream shows heels of foam,
She sows with firefly-seeds the dusk,
And leads the booming beetle home.

She blows the glow-worm lamps a-glare,
And hangs them by each way like eyes;
Then, mid the blossoms, everywhere
She rocks to sleep the butterflies.

She calls the red fox from his den,
And, hollowing to her mouth one hand,
Halloos the owlets in the glen,
And hoots awake the purple land.

The cricket knows her foot's light tread
And sings for her an elfin mass;
She puts the bumble-bee to bed,
And shakes the white moth from the grass.

And to the mud-wasps, where they top
Their cells of clay, she murmurs *sleep*:
She bids the toad come forth and hop,
The snail put out its horns and creep.

She taps upon the dead tree's trunk:
And 'neath the bark the worm begins;
And where the rotted wood is punk
Its twinkling web the spider spins.

She claps a night-cap of the dew
On every rosy clover-head;
And on the lily, pale of hue,
She slips a gown while still in bed.

With kisses cool of drowsy mist
She thrills each wildflower's heart with June;
And, whispering gold and amethyst,
Sighs legends to them of the moon.

She bids the black bat forth, to be
The courier of her darker moods;
She mounts the moon-imp, Mystery,
And speeds him wildly through the woods.

She crowds with ghosts the forest-walks;
And with the wind's dim words invokes
The spirit that for ever talks
Unto the congregated oaks.

She leans above the flying stream:
Her starry gaze commands it stay:
And in its lucid deeps a dream
Takes shape and glimmers on its way.

She rests upon the lichened stone,
Her moonbeam hair spread bright around:
And in the darkness, one by one,
The unborn flowers break the ground.

She lays her mouth, like some sweet word,
Against the wild-bird's nest that swings:
And in the speckled egg, that heard,
The young bird stirs its wings and sings.

In her all dreams find permanence:
All mysteries that trance the soul:
And substance, that evades the sense,
Through her wood-magic is made whole.

Oh, she is lovelier than she seems
To any one whose soul may see:
But only they who walk with dreams
Shall meet with her and know 'tis she.