

The Wood Water

By Madison J. Cawein

An evil, stealthy water, dark as hate,
Sunk from the light of day,
'Thwart which is hung a ruined water-gate,
Creeps on its stagnant way.

Moss and the spawnny duckweed, dim as air
And green as copperas,
Choke its dull current; and, like hideous hair,
Tangles of twisted grass.

Above it sinister trees,—as crouched and gaunt
As huddled Terror,—lean;
Guarding some secret in that nightmare haunt,
Some horror they have seen.

Something the sunset points at from afar,
Spearing the sullen wood
And hag-gray water with a single bar
Of flame as red as blood.

Something the stars, conspiring with the moon,
Shall look on, and remain
Frozen with fear; staring as in a swoon
Striving to flee in vain.

Something the wisp that, wandering in the night,
Above the ghastly stream,
Haply shall find; and, filled with frantic fright,
Light with its ghostly gleam.

Something that lies there, under weed and ooze,
With wide and awful eyes
And matted hair, and limbs the waters bruise,
That strives, yet can not rise.