

At Moonrise

By Madison J. Cawein

Pale faces looked up at me, up from the earth, like flowers;
Pale hands reached down to me, out of the air, like stars,
As over the hills, robed on with the twilight, the Hours
The Day's last Hours, departed, and Dusk put up her bars.

Pale fingers beckoned me on; pale fingers, like starlit mist;
Dim voices called to me, dim as the wind's dim rune,
As up from the night, like a nymph from the amethyst
Of her waters, as silver as foam, rose the round, white breast of the moon.

And I followed the pearly waving and beckon of hands,
The luring glitter and dancing glimmer of feet,
And the sibilant whisper of silence, that summoned to lands
Remoter than legend or faëry, where Myth and Tradition meet.

And I came to a place where the shadow of ancient Night
Brooded o'er ruins, far wilder than castles of dreams
Fantastic, a mansion of phantoms, where, wandering white,
I met with a shadowy presence whose voice I had followed, it seems.

And the ivy waved in the wind, and the moonlight laid,
Like a ghostly benediction, a finger wan
On the face of the one from whose eyes the darkness rayed—
The face of the one I had known in the years long gone.

And she looked in my face, and kissed me on brow and on cheek,
Murmured my name, and wistfully smiled in my eyes,
And the tears welled up in my heart, that was wild and weak,
And my bosom seemed bursting with yearning, and my soul with sighs.

And there 'mid the ruins we sat. . . . Oh, strange were the words that she
said!—

Distant and dim and strange; and hollow the looks that she gave:
And I knew her then for a joy, a joy that was dead,
A hope, a beautiful hope, that my youth had laid in its grave.