
THE BOOK OF JADE

By

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To the Memory of

Charles Baudelaire

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PRELUDE

I am a little tired of all The Book of Jade things mortal;

*I see through half-shut eyelids languorous
The old monotonous
Gold sun set slowly through the western portal,
Where I recline upon my deep dîwân,
In Ispahân.*

*I am a little weary of the Persian
Girl that I lov'd; I am quite tir'd of love;
And I am weary of
The smoking censers, and the sweet diversion
Of stroking Leila's jasmine-scented hair,
I thought so fair.*

*At last I think I am quite tired of beauty;
Why do the stars shine always in the sky?
I think if I might die,
Something more sweet, less tiring than the duty
Of kissing her, might be; I am tired of myrrh,
And kissing her.*

*Khaled, come, come, and slowly move the scented
Gold narghilé away; let the lyres cease.
And now a little peace!
For see, moon-faced Leila hath repented
Of singing Hafiz' songs melodiously,
And languidly.*

*Surely all The Book of Jade things are vain, and great thanksgiving
Is due not; surely all things now are vain;
And all my heart is fain
Of something, something, far too great for living;
Nothing is very sad, nor wonderful,
Nor beautiful.*

*Well now, since all things are not worth the winning,
Goodbye! With these I have a little play'd;
And once, alas, I pray'd
That gorgeous, golden sins be mine for sinning;
But now I would not leave my palanquin
For any sin.*

*And long ago I prov'd in great compassion
For man, that Brahm is not nor ever was;
But now, alas, alas*

I would he were, that in the olden fashion

*I might laugh once again ere all is said;
But Brahm is dead.*

*Then with philosophy I bor'd me duly;
And since I could not slumber all the time,
I, in sweet golden rhyme,
On white papyrus scented with patchouli
Wrote masterpieces starry-beautiful.
The earth was full.*

*So beauty wearied me; in order slowly
Love, Joy, and Victory came unto me;
I kiss'd them languidly;
And Virtue came, and Duty, stiff and holy;
To these I said—Pray come another day;
And turn'd away.*

*Now since of The Book of Jade all I am a little weary,
And since on earth I must a while sojourn,
And since a while must burn
The censer of my long existence dreary,
All things shall walk, that own my mastery,
In luxury.*

*My Ennui shall in vestments falling lowly,
Stiff, purple, trailing, long, episcopal
Sweep through her palace hall,
Like to a consecrated bishop holy;
My Sin from golden goblets of Byzant
Shall drink absinthe.*

*And my gold-crowned wanton goddess Pleasure,
(My candles are all burning at her shrine)
Shall be made drunk with wine,
And walk unto the velvet-falling measure
Of golden-voiced, solemn-sounding shawms.
No rhyme for shawms.*

*All they that wait upon me in my glory,
My purple Pride, and my Luxuriousness,
And my Voluptuousness,
Shall show within their faces transitory
Something more subtile than all life can give,
While I shall live....*

Ah, all is liv'd, all The Book of Jade eaten, all is drunken!

*Soul, is there anything now left for thee
Excepting sanctity?*

*Nay, ev'n we too have been in virtue sunken,
We have been holy priest, we have confess'd,
Said, Missa Est.*

*I have drunk out of heavy goblets golden,
As from some hellish tabernaculum
Cannabis, conium;
I know quite all the poisons, all the olden
Sins, all the ténébreux dark secrets hid,
And things forbid.*

*I have had all things unto mortals given,
I all the women, all the passion I,
All The Book of Jade the satiety;
I have had all the pleasures known in heaven,
Paradisiacal, purpureal,
Exstactical.*

*With all the sciences I am acquainted,
Alas! I know quite all the languages,
All the philosophies,
Alas! and all the pictures that are painted,
And all the palac'd capitals that be
Have wearied me.*

*Alas, all art, all knowledge, and all passion
I have had: I have heard all the symphonies;
I have sail'd all the seas;
I have drain'd all life's cup in languid fashion;
And I am come to Persia again,
Land of cocagne.*

THE The Book of Jade BOOK OF JADE

PART ONE

ASHTORETH

In thy blue pallid gown that shimmereth
So pale thou standest in the wan moonlight,
Where the gold censer near thy body white
Wraps thee around with its perfumed breath;

So wan thy high tiara glimmereth
Above thy mystical far eyes of light,
Thou seemest some dead goddess of the night,
O starry love, O changeless Ashtoreth.

Pallid thou standest in thy divinity,
Like some moon-idol of the buried time,
Before whose face priests sing in solemn chime.

So I prostrate before thy deity,
Unto thy face have solemn praises sung,
And in my hands a golden censer swung.

PARFAIT AMOUR

It is not that thy face is fair

As dying sunsets are,

Nor that thy lovely eyelids wear

The splendour of a star;

Tis the The Book of Jade deep sadness The Book of Jade of thine eyes

Hath The Book of Jade my heart captive led,

And that within thy soul I prize

The calmness of the dead.

O holy love, O fair white face,

O sweet lost soul of thine!
Thy bosom is an altar-place,

Thy kisses holy wine;
Sweet incense offer'd for my bliss

Is thy corrupted breath,
And on thy stained lips I kiss

The holy lips of Death!
Wherefore because thy heart is all

Fill'd full of mournfulness,
And thy gold head as with a pall

Hung o'er with sinfulness;
Because thy soul is utterly

Sinful unto the core—
Therefore The Book of Jade my heart is bound to thee,

Dear love, forevermore!

OPIUM

Naught is more sweet than gently to let dream
The pallid flower of life asleep away;
Where the dim censer sends up far from day
Unceasingly its still-ascending stream,

O where the air winds its myrrh-scented steam
About thy naked body's disarray,

Shall not today's gold to thy shut eyes The Book of Jade seem
Born and forgot in the dead ages gray?

Sunk from life's mournful loud processional,
For thee shall not with high uplifted urn
The Night pour out dreams that awake and say,

—We were, O pallid maiden vesperal,
Before the world; we also in our turn
By the vain morning gold scatter'd away.

SOMBRE SONNET

I love all sombre and autumnal things,
Regal and mournful and funereal,
Things strange and curious and majestic,
Whereto a solemn savor of death clings:

Coerulean serpents mark'd with azure rings;
Awful cathedrals where rich shadows fall;
Hoarse symphonies sepulchral as a pall;
Mad crimes adorn'd with bestial blazonings.

Therefore I love thee more than aught that dies,
Within whose subtile beauty slumbereth
The twain solemnity of life and death;
The Book of Jade
Therefore I sit beside thee far from day
And look into thy holy eyes alway,
Thy desolate eyes, thine unillumin'd eyes.

LANGUOR

Although thy face be whiter than the dawn,
Fairer than aught the dawning hath descried,
Hast thou not now, O dear love deified,
Enough of kisses upon thy forehead wan?

The days and nights, like beads to pray The Book of Jade upon,
Pass by before our eyes and not abide,
And so these things shall be till The Book of Jade we have died,
Until our bodies to the earth are gone.

I think how pleasant such a thing must be,
That all thy lovely limbs should fall away,
And drop to nothing in their soft decay.

Then may thy buried body turn to me,
The Book of Jade With new love on thy changed lips like fire,
And kiss me with The Book of Jade a kiss that shall The Book of Jade not tire.

ENNUI

I sat in tall Gomorrah on a day,
Boring myself with solitude and dreams,
When, like strange priests, with sacerdotal tread,
The seven mortal sins, in rich array,

Came in and knelt: one old, and weak, and gray,
One that was shrouded like a person dead,
And one whose robes cast reddish-purple gleams
Upon her scornful face at peace always.

They swung before me amshirs of strange gold,
And one most beautiful began to pray,
Dreamily garmented in pallid blue.

But I said only—I have dream'd of you.
Naught really is; all things are very old,
And very foolish. Please to go away.

LITANY

All the authors that there are bore Me;
All the philosophies bore Me;
All the statues and all the temples bore Me;

—All the authors that there are bore Thee;
All the philosophies bore Thee;
All the statues and all the temples bore Thee.

All the women of the earth weary Me;
The fruit of the vine wearieth Me;
All the symphonies weary Me.

—All the women of the earth The Book of Jade weary Thee;
The fruit of the vine wearieſt Thee;
All the ſymphonies weary Thee.

Victory and defeat fatigue The Book of Jade Me;
Gladneſs and ſorrowing fatigue Me;
Life and death fatigue Me.

—Victory and defeat fatigue Thee;
Gladneſs and ſorrowing fatigue Thee;
Life and death fatigue Thee.

The earth and the heavens weary Me;
The ſun by day and the moon by night weary Me;
All the great ſtars of heaven weary Me.

—The earth and the heavens weary Thee;
The ſun by day and the moon by night weary Thee;
All the great ſtars of heaven weary Thee.

The glorious company of the Apoſtles tireth Me;
The goodly fellowſhip of the Prophets tireth Me;
The noble army of Martyrs tireth Me.

—The glorious company of the Apoſtles tireth Thee
The goodly fellowſhip of the Prophets tireth Thee;
The noble army of Martyrs tireth Thee.

All the race of men weary Me;
The Cherubim and the Seraphim weary Me;
Myſelf wearieſt Me.

—All the race of men weary Thee;
The Cherubim and the Seraphim weary Thee;
The Book of Jade Thyſelf wearieſt Thee.

HARVARD

ON HIS TWENTY-FIRST YEAR

Tired Muſe, put faded roſes on thy brow,
Put thy bare arms about the harp, and ſing:
—I am a little bor'd The Book of Jade with everything.

The Book Of Jade

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