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FÊTE



 thousand stars tonight.
The livid day has blown before itself
All clouds to leave this sepulchre of sky
A barren bowl of raving suns.
Come I into this mirthless wood,
This collonade of grey-striped masts
To celebrate some rhymed love?

I send the Leveller, wind fanged by North
To sink its hoarfrost tooth into the living stalks:
I cannot pass tonight where green things hope,
No leaf that has the glint of chlorophyll can last
A moment in my gusts: precede me, airborne
Nothingness, lay for my feet a carpet red
With all the summers I've renounced.

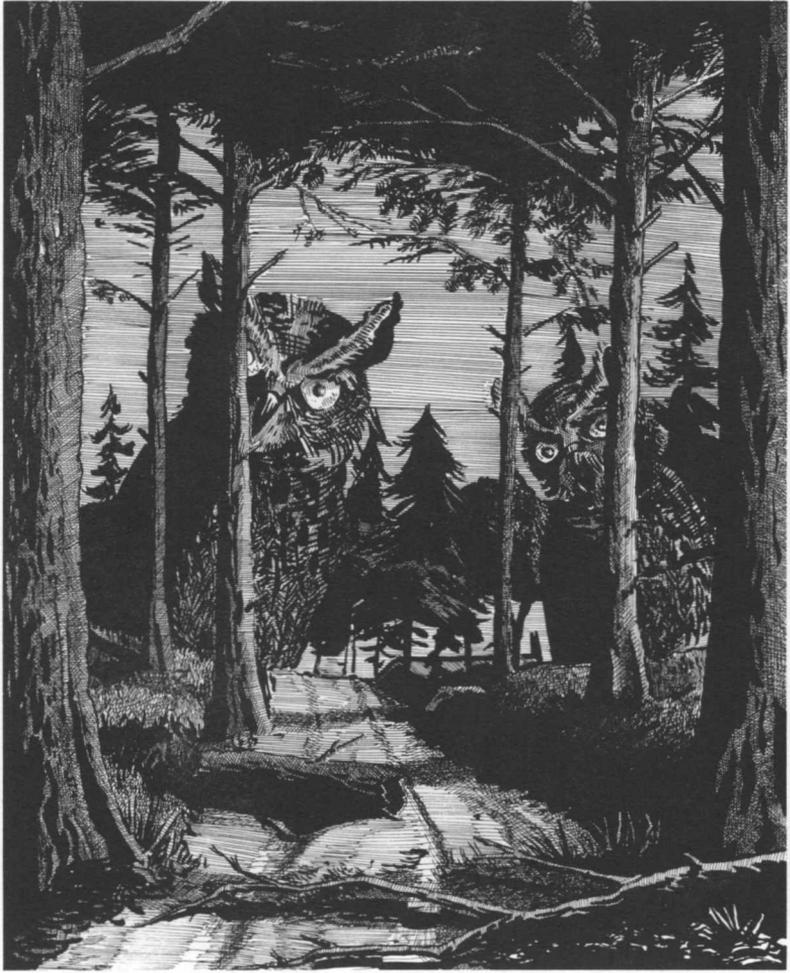
Each chink of sky leaps like a broken pane
From where it hangs suspended on a branch,
Or like a painted sliver where the trees
Thrust down to meet horizon — it is these stars,
My witnesses, who hover near,
While elms, by architecture thrust
Fade to infinity, night's palette mad.





close my cloak about my throat,
Hold tight the leaden box I bear;
The curve of earth blinks out the last
Scant gleam of habitation, save for that
Clapboard church, desanctified,
Which grinds against Pleiades as they rise,
Whose steeple breath exhales the lidless ones,
Those blind, carnivorous doves whom I now call
My court, to fly on dreams of gnats at dusk:
Go out, and with your leather wings
Make me an arbor black with rabid pride.

Beyond the church, abandoned graves
Lift sandstone paws and Christian signs
Against my passage. I laugh,
Spit fire from my eyes until the grass
Of unkempt sleep flares up —
The pitiful crosses burn to stumps.
No brazen god nor any angel can stay
What I would consummate tonight.

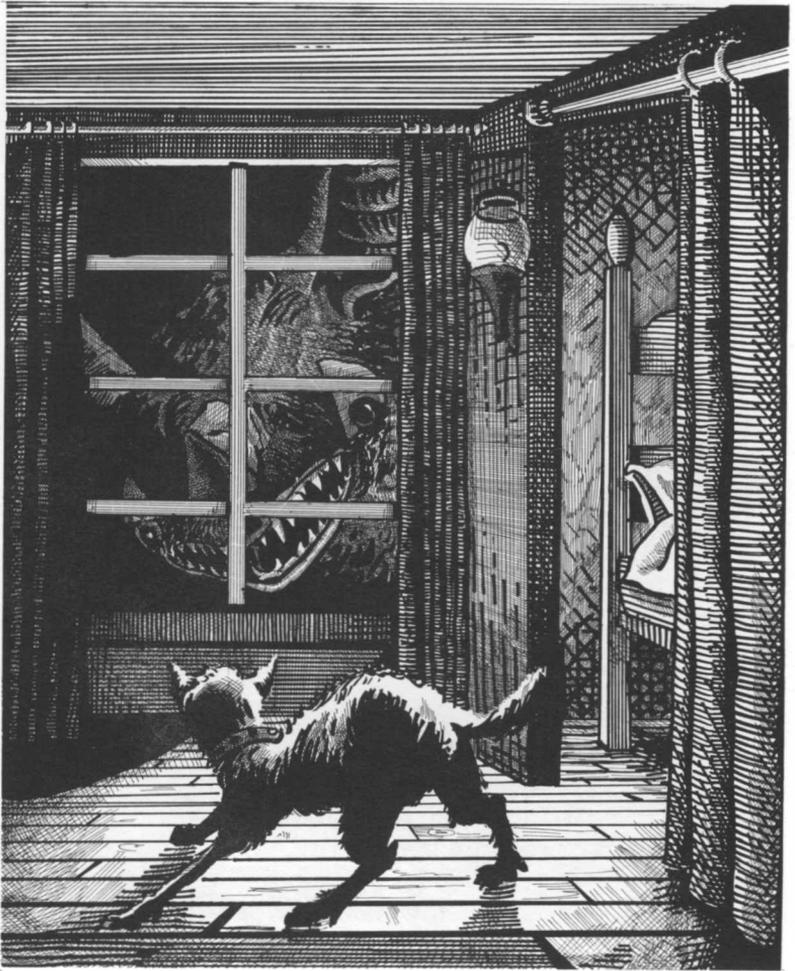




Do you suspect? Would even *your*
Fortress of intuition guard against *this*?
My tentacles of ink reach out:
You send me a moon
And in its pallid glare
The smoking earth gives up
Four horns that burst in red,
Blood wet and limpid as they rise,
Horns become ears, I recognize
The heads of owls, elm-high
And screeching as they snap their beaks.
They are but conjured — I am real;
I pass without a qualm between their wrath.

Ah, soon, comes my reward for nights
Denied, for days I circled your door
And never entered, for years and miles,
For those I loved who were disguised as you;
My calm revenge for the unforgivable sin
Of your beauty.

I cough a cloud and let it blot the moon
So that no mirror may repeat *that*
Which is sworn in the forbidden copse.
Here! now even the stars retire,
Not even a thought can penetrate
This furry arbor of my wretchedness.





pen the box.

Be sure the objects are counted.
Be sure the unspeakable ointments
Gleam in their silver cup.

Lay out the vestments now,
Another cup with water drawn
Blind from a spring in midnight oaths,
Scoop earth burned free of worms
And roots into the Pentagram,
Light the black candle *now*,
Step from the arbor and bid *you* come:



*ear me, ye nameless ones,
Ye lingering essence of fire and air,
By this dread ring which all obey
I conjure ye to take the form
I dream — give me that Nocturne,*

*Bat-winged and silver-reined
Whom once I saw lust-sated
Panic ride, and on his back
My will shall fly*

*Over these mountains,
Over those cities,
Along that Atlantic,
Then swoop, then scan the forest,
Then fall with unrelenting winds
Onto your lawn,
Touch not the door which has been daubed
Against my entry,
No, through the window send my call,
Where the cat, whom I have collared slave
Of my impulse, will beckon you.*

In an instant, you are borne away.”



ome love, come lie with me,
Let me anoint thy brow,
And thus, and thus,
With what still trembles in the cup,
With earth, with fire,
With midnight waters I now drink,
With ivory rings I now produce
From soulless lead and velvet lairs,

As all the bats take mawkish flight,
As leaves drift down upon your hair,
As stars seal our troth
With burning glaze
I do
Thee wed.