

THE PROPHET

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I heard them murmur at midnight all together
While the day's frustration whirled in my sleepless head.
Naught better to do they found in the moonlit weather
Than pick my doings over, thread by thread.

There glowed a little patch where I succeeded—
A feat in a way, but a burning spot of shame
To me. Yet how their envy snarled: the reeded
Stillness was filled with wild-boar fangs aflame.

There greatly failing, my proud sun-chariot tumbled
On the scorched desert where I nearly died,
Streamed my life's best, with arches of empires crumbled.
And how the safe hyenas laughed, and lied!

I arose in my strength, unbarred the casement,
Remembering how my last day had not dawned
For soaring over new country: with what abasement
Their night-wind voices through the laurels fawned.

I arose, and a Vision thrilled and shook me,
Clothed me from head to heel in seraphic fleece
Of fire: they did not know me, they mistook me
For a ghost, a will o' the wisp. They held their peace.