

The Handmaid

The dying moon pulls hard upon her golden bow,
Thinning her arc of havoc to this monument,
And flames in wind like double tongues
Lick scarlet wounds upon my city's flesh.
I raise the burnished robe of coiling scales,
And bear the garment to my tender queen.
My tears creep down,
As free as her unbraided hair.
Her body yields,
Her eyes by flickering shadows charmed,
And on her ears are scarabs fixed,
Eternal symbols of the waiting Nile.
Around her arm I place the golden snake
That gleams its ruby eye,
And looks its yearning to her lustrous crown.
My queen arrayed, I kneel before her feet,
Ceasing my silent breath with hers in peace.

—*Ian MacLennan*