

Ode to the Mad Moon

Robert B. Wallace

I. S. '41



Heavy-crusted on me bears the rust of the past,
Of halved words and acts cut short;
Of the sad attempt to ride, cloud-topt;
Of the larval song which now so sere
Lies flouted in my empty chrysalis.
For aeons now—or so it seems at least—
I have borne the burden of mortality
As the patriarch, bowed and hoary,
Stumbling, blind, into the gulf of time, where mourn
The clay-cold blasts of seasonal and earthly ebbs.

An opiated interlude of all that's black—
And now, though dusky still, the night is faintly
Spotted with lunar glow, slipping
In mellow fog shafts down through the leafage;
And aster-fresh gusts stir the purling leaves,
Unhinging each in turn to drift idly downward,
Soft, to the loam of my aisle-less forest.
And overhead my trees arch and sough
In the flux and reflux of harvest Aeolus.
My vital chord surges upward in the frost-sprung air.

Let the leaves of autumn fall and make their mold.
I am young; I cast away the "sere and yellow leaf",
Shield of senility; it belongs to me tomorrow.
Let Boreas sweep his sleet-ribbed desolation
Across my world—neither ice nor blaze
Can totter my Titan of youth back into the dusk.
For tonight I see the wrongs of mankind;
I see eternal goodness; I see my pattern in the scheme;
I see—or do I dream? A draught chills the night,
For the moon has sunk, and once again it is dark.