

Sestina II (Seduction Sestina)

By Mary Warner

- a. sultry
- b. moon
- c. trance
- d. lure
- e. embrace
- f. water

Beneath the murky fluid, she sifts her toes through mud so sultry.
Glancing over a pearly shoulder, she spots the reflection of the moon -
Its shimmering glow, golden-on-green, catches her in a trance.
The dancing orb bounces and beckons, behaves as a lure,
Calling her. She responds, raising her delicate arms to embrace
Its luminous face, smiling with fullness down upon the water

Waxy leaves, plump and black, shade my view of the water.
The air is saturated with the breath of foliage, moist and sultry.
Heavy dewdrops quiver, clinging to leaf tips in unsteady embrace -
Twinkling globules that mirror her grace and mimic the moon.
Oh! See one slide, down to the ground, caught in gravity's lure.
The leaf-silhouettes, the full, tremulous drops, I am in a trance!

But, surely, it is not the natural world that has placed me in this trance.
Not the lapping and lulling of gentle, breeze-broken water
Moving shoreward as a purple-finned fish moves to a lure.
Not the tango of condensation upon undergrowth dense, sultry,
Nor the curious illumination of a quick-silver moon.
No! It is not these I wish to embrace.

Through my filigreed shield, I see the object of desire's embrace.
It is she, with velvety bared nape, who has me in a trance -
She, with creamy-auburn hair gleaming in a radiant moon,
Her fingers now tracing lazy circles in the water,
Not aware that her posture is sultry
And presenting itself to me like a dangling lure.

Why am I resisting this sensuous lure?
Why am I not rushing to fill her embrace?
Crashing through these succulent, sultry
Petals with fragrance of intoxication's trance?
I should join her in the water
And kiss her beneath the voluptuous moon.

But she does not know my secret hunger. Only the moon
Is aware and with its omniscient beam tries to lure
Me, shake me out of the plush greenery and into the water,
Where I might discover the wonder of her embrace.
I am forlorn, trapped in my trance,
Because she is blind to me. I feel sullen, sultry.

Oh, mocking moon! Why must you taunt me by revealing her sultry
Seduction? Why must you lure me, yet hold her forever in an obtuse trance,
Sparkling as you do upon silky water, laughing as you deny me her embrace?

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