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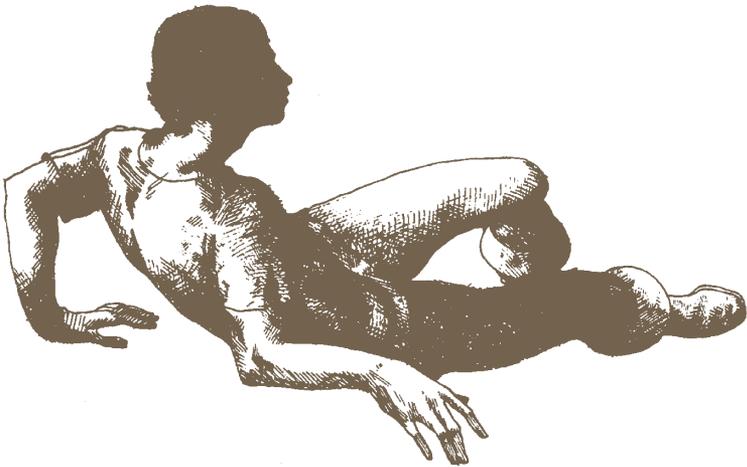
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*For most who live, hell is never
knowing who they are.*

*The Singer knew and knowing
was his torment.*





When he awoke, the song was there.

Its melody beckoned and begged him to sing it.

It hung upon the wind and settled in the meadows
where he walked.

He knew its lovely words and could have sung it all, but
feared to sing a song whose harmony was far too perfect
for human ear to understand.

And still at midnight it stirred him to awareness, and
with its haunting melody it drew him with a curious
mystery to stand before an open window.

In rhapsody it played among the stars.

It rippled through Andromeda and deepened
Vega's hues.

It swirled in heavy strains from galaxy to galaxy and gave
him back his very fingerprint.

“Sing the Song!” the heavens seemed to cry. “We never
could have been without the melody that you alone
can sing.”

But he drew back, sighing that the song they so desired
was higher than the earth.

And always in his agony of longing and reluctance, the
atmosphere around him argued back.

“You, too, are higher than the earth! You sang the
higher music once, before the oceans ever crashed their
craggy coasts.”

He braced himself upon a precipice above the canyon
floor, and with the wind full on his face, he cried into
the sky:

“Earthmaker, tell me if I have the right to sing . . .”

But then his final word trailed off into gales.

The gull screamed.

“No,” he thought, “only Earthmaker is everlasting. His alone must be the theme from which sprung the world I stand upon.”

And so he only loved but never sang the song.

Full well he knew that few would ever see him as a singer of so grand a piece.

He knew that they would say to him:

“You are no singer! And even if you are you should sing the songs we know.”

And well he knew the penalty of law. A dreamer could be ostracized in hate for singing songs the world had never heard.

Such songs had sent a thousand singers to their death already.

And the song which dogged his aching steps and begged him pleadingly to sing it was completely unfamiliar.

Only the stars and mountains knew it. But they were old. And man was new, and chained to simple, useless rhymes; thus he could not understand the majesty that settled down upon him.

But daily now it played upon his heart and swept his soul, until the joy exploded his awareness—crying near the edge of sanity, “Sing . . . sing . . . S I N G!”

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