

# The Vision Of The Lady Of The Lake

Strawbs

The boatman rose to the sound of his heartbeat  
Loud in the silent approach of the dawn  
He glanced through the window at mist on the lake  
Which hung like a shroud in the still of the morn  
The silver cobwebs spun with the dew  
Hung from the bushes in filigree splendor  
And water lilies asleep on the lake  
Were reflected so delicate, tranquil and tender.

The boat man sighed as he strode through the woods  
To the place where his boat lay moored to a stake  
The hollow sound as his footsteps echoed  
Until the sound was lost on the lake  
He cast off, poling the boat from the shore  
Peering a head through damp clinging haze  
He thought that he saw strange swirling shapes  
A trick on the eyes that the mist often plays.

So intent was the boatman on crossing the lake  
That he failed to notice the current that flowed  
Leading his boat from familiar parts  
He was firmly, yet somehow unknowingly, towed  
All at once the mist seemed to lift  
Sufficient to show the boatman a pool  
That he'd never seen in the whole of his life  
Unnaturally deep, black and silent, and cool.

The boatman's shirt clung to his back  
He was sweating both from exertion and fear  
He had the sensation that someone was watching  
He felt the presence of somebody near  
An invisible force prevented him moving  
The strength of his arms was utterly sapped  
The twisted bushes converged round the lake  
Like a fish in a net he was trapped.

Suddenly out of the water before him  
The wraith-like form of a maiden appeared  
Clad in shimmering radiant robes  
The maiden materialized as she neared  
The hair which finely crowned her head  
Was a halo of golden reflecting the sun  
All of the beautiful women of time  
Were formed all at once into one.

She handed the boatman the sword she was holding  
Which flashed iridescent before his eyes  
Excalibur surely was hardly a match  
For a sword that simple description defies  
The boatman stood transfixed by her gaze  
Which reached to the depths of his very soul  
To he who could conquer the evils of life  
She offered herself as a whole.

The maiden vanished before his gaze  
Leaving him clutching the sword in his fist  
The hairs on the nape of his neck seemed to stiffen

A creature approached him from out of the mist  
It was powerful, huge and yet stupid indeed  
For it held right back and failed to attack  
The boatman struck at its small stupid eyes  
And it crashed to the ground and lay on its back.

Without a warning the sky seemed to blacken  
As though the sun were in total eclipse  
The boatman crouched low as a vast eagle swooped  
And a horrified cry escaped from his lips  
It strutted before him with pride in its bearing  
Admiring its talons both vicious and cruel  
Taking advantage the boatman struck fast  
And the eagle slid to the depths of the pool.

The terrified boatman tried moving his boat  
But his pole had grown roots in the watery deep  
The bank grew alive with the coils of a snake  
And all you could hear was its slither and creep  
It cast an envious stare at the boatman  
Slid into the water and swam to the boat  
He stood hypnotized by its green jealous eyes  
As it came from the water and coiled round his throat.

As its coils tightened slowly his breath came in gasps  
As he choked so he lifted the sword in despair  
As the snake was still gloating he severed its head  
And in death the snake's coils thrashed wild in the air  
The boatman wiped the sweat from his brow  
His heart was pounding as never before  
His eyes like a lizard's tongue darted around  
Not daring to rest for a minute or more.

An involuntary shiver went up his spine  
As he heard the sound of eerie howls  
A wolf appeared on the banks of the pool  
Saliva dripped from its loathsome jowls  
Hatred smoldered deep in his eyes  
Which glowed like coals from Hades fire  
It seemed to grow as it crouched and snarled  
And watched as the boatman began to tire.

It was almost as though the wolf had learned  
For it did not attack as the others had done  
But bended its time until the moment was right  
And sprang as the boatman stared into the sun  
But the boatman too had learned to hold back  
And holding his sword as though a knife  
He plunged it deep into the wolf's heart  
Then fell to his knees and prayed for his life.

As he felt a hand on his shoulder he whirled  
To find the maiden by his side  
She smiled and the world seemed to open before him  
He tried to speak but his tongue was tied  
You must plunge the sword deep into my heart  
Lest I should crumble into dust  
She offered the boatman the meaning of life  
And love, if he could but conquer lust.

She bared her breasts before his eyes  
The boatman still was stricken dumb  
He flung the sword back into the water

Back to the depths from which it had come  
The water around him began to boil  
The maiden began to wither away  
His boat was swamped as the creatures arose  
And evil lived for another day.