

In the Tents of Akbar

In the tents of Akbar
Are dole and grief to-day,
For the flower of all the Indies
Has gone the silent way.

In the tents of Akbar
Are emptiness and gloom,
And where the dancers gather,
The silence of the tomb.

Across the yellow desert,
Across the burning sands,
Old Akbar wanders madly,
And wrings his fevered hands.

And ever makes his moaning
To the unanswering sky,

For Sutna, lovely Sutna,

Who was so fair to die.

For Sutna danced at morning,

And Sutna danced at eve;

Her dusky eyes half hidden

Behind her silken sleeve.

Her pearly teeth out-glancing

Between her coral lips,

The tremulous rhythm of passion

Marked by her quivering hips.

As lovely as a jewel

Of fire and dewdrop blent,

So danced the maiden Sutna

In gallant Akbar's tent.

And one who saw her dancing,

Saw her bosom's fall and rise

Put all his body's yearning

Into his lovelit eyes.

Then Akbar came and drove him —

A jackal — from his door,

And bade him wander far and look

On Sutna's face no more.

Some day the sea disgorges,

The wilderness gives back,

Those half-dead who have wandered,

Aimless, across its track.

And he returned — the lover,

Haggard of brow and spent;

He found fair Sutna standing

Before her master's tent.

"Not mine, nor Akbar's, Sutna!"

He cried and closely pressed,
And drove his craven dagger
Straight to the maiden's breast.

Oh, weep, oh, weep, for Sutna,
So young, so dear, so fair,
Her face is gray and silent
Beneath her dusky hair.

And wail, oh, wail, for Akbar,
Who walks the desert sands,
Crying aloud for Sutna,
Wringing his fevered hands.

In the tents of Akbar
The tears of sorrow run,
But the corpse of Stuna's slayer,
Lies rotting in the sun.