

# THE TEMPTER

By Robert E. Howard

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Something tapped me on the shoulder,  
 Something whispered, "Come with me.  
 "Leave the world of men behind you,  
 "Come where care may never find you,  
 "Come and follow, let me bind you  
 "Where, in that dark, silent sea,  
 Temptest of the world n'er rages;  
 "There to dream away the ages,  
 "Heedless of Time's turning pages,  
 "Only come with me."

"Who are you?" I asked the phantom,  
 "I am Rest from Hate and Pride.  
 "I am friend to king and beggar,  
 "I am Alpha and Omega.  
 "I was councillor to Hagar,  
 "But men call me Suicide."  
 I was weary of tide breasting,  
 Weary of the world's behesting,  
 And I lusted for the resting  
 As a lover for his bride.

And my soul tugged at its moorings  
 And it whispered, "Set me free  
 "I am weary of this battle,  
 "Of this world of human cattle,  
 "All this dreary noise and prattle.  
 "This you owe to me."  
 Long I sat and long I pondered,  
 On the life that I had squandered,  
 O'er the paths that I had wandered  
 Never free.

In a shadow panorama  
 Passed life's struggles and its fray.  
 And my soul tugged with new vigor,  
 Huger grew the phantom's figure,  
 As I slowly pressed the trigger,  
 Saw the world fade swift away.  
 Through the fogs old Time came striding,  
 Radiant clouds were 'bout me riding,  
 As my soul went gliding, gliding  
 From the shadows into day.