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The Wizard's Death

By RICHARD F. SEARIGHT

The end draws near, and weakness weights my limbs;
My step is leaden, and my keen eye dims.

No longer may my arts contrive a way
To hold the demon from his tryst with me—
Aye, soon will come the fiend to claim his fee:
The price I pledged him on a long-past day.

Is there no way I may evade this doom?
Evade, and pass in quiet to my tomb,
And in the saving arms of death sink down?
Ah, must I pay the frightful toll I swore,
'Mid ghastly rites of hideous primal lore,
Should be the price of sorcerous renown?

Nay, come! Rise up from grim Plutonian deep,
Ye lesser Forms of Evil. Rise and creep
Before my presence. Say there is a way. . . .
Ye will not speak? Ye smirk and mock at me,
And gibbering, titter with disloyal glee?
Then, go! I'll gain my grave as best I may. . . .

The final bitter dark begins to close;
My waning vigor fades and fails, and those,
My hasty plans, are rendered null. Now life,
As sweet to wizards as to common men,
Unversed in that dark ill beyond their ken,
Must vanish, with its victories and strife.

My breath grows short, and like a sable pall
The horror-ridden shadows spread and fall;
Now through the whispering blackness stirs a stray
And vagrant icy breath, and crimson eyes
Glare close and closer. Lo! I strive to rise—
The taloned paws have seized me—aye, *I pay!*