

## TO AN INFANT

They have captured and chained you, my brother,  
from Aidenns beyond the blue,  
The Fates and the vast All-Mother, to laugh at an hour  
or two.  
They had enveyed your wings dilated, beating heedless  
of age or clime,  
So they snared you and cast you weighted into dungeons  
of space and time.  
And now as you newly languish in the quivering bonds  
called flesh,  
Unknowing as yet the anguish and gall of the long-felt  
mesh,  
They smile as they find you comely, and gloat on their  
ancient power  
To twist you and drive you dumbly for the sport of a  
listless hour.  
They have given you joy but to take it, and youth  
but to snatch it away,

They have made you a will but to break it, and hope  
but to lead you astray;  
They have bound you to objects inutile, and senses  
that shut out the light,  
That themselves, who are bitter and futile, may laugh  
as you grope in their sight.  
But you, if you will, can cheat them, and join in  
the mocking mirth,  
For you have that to defeat them which could not be  
chained at birth:  
Though your heart they have trussed and tethered,  
and your soul they have stricken drear,  
Yet a spark from your dreams has weathered all  
the whirlwinds that swept you here.  
It has slipped by the onyx portal that holds you  
to earthly things,  
From the crystalline gulfs immortal, that sounded  
once to your wings.  
It will flame through the mists of morning  
and lighten the hours of your youth,  
Till the blaze of its bright adorning will banish  
the clouds of truth.  
But foster it well, young dreamer, lest the covetous  
Great Ones call  
On Time, the malign Arch-Schemer, to gather it  
into his thrall;  
For dreams, as they are most precious, are most fragile  
of all we prize,  
And the powers of earth that enmesh us would sear  
them out of our eyes;  
Would marshall the years to slay them, and drive them  
beyond our reach.  
They are all that we have to save us from the sport  
of the Ruthless Ones,

These dreams that the cosmos gave us in the void past  
the farthest suns;  
They are freedom and light surviving as a flicker in  
cells of ill,  
As against the Dark Gods' contriving we must harbour  
and guard them still.  
So may you, in whose eyes serenely so much  
of the old lore shines,  
Grow valiant, and battle keenly the envious Gods' designs;  
Dissolve when they seek to bind you; fling worlds  
at their clanking chain;  
That never their noose may find you, and never  
their whim restrain.  
Weave magic against their weaving, dream out of  
their sly duress,  
Till the prisons of their deceiving shall crumble  
to nothingness.  
Mock back when they storm your reason, and hold you  
from all you crave,  
For your body alone they seize on — no dream  
can be made a slave.  
Deride all their empty offers, and sneer at their  
specious lure,  
Enriching your fancy's coffers with gold that is  
always pure.  
Your dreams are yourself, so tend them as all  
that preserves you free;  
With all of your strength defend them, nor grant  
to the years a fee;  
Let never a daemon buy them with pleasures  
that flash and fade,  
Nor sophistry's tongue defy them, nor dogma  
diffuse its shade.  
For these are your own, my brother, and hold  
in their boundless sweep

The wings that the Gods would smother, and the key  
to your native deep!

—H. P. Lovecraft

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