

The Wake World
a tale for babes and sucklings

an opera in one act drawn out the seed of Aleister Crowley's eponymous story, from the collection Konx om Pax, 1907

by David Hertzberg

-

Persons of the Drama:

Lola, soprano
The Fairy Prince, mezzo-soprano
The Palace of Names, 16-part mixed choir (4 sopranos, 4 altos, 4 tenors, 4 basses)

The following characters are drawn from the choir:

Three sirens:

PARTHENOPE, soprano
LIGEIA, soprano
LEUCOSIA, mezzo-soprano

Two angels/guards:

MORBUS, tenor
PESTILITAS, baritone

LUNA/HECATE, soprano

GIANT/BONE MAN/MAN IN THE AZURE COAT/MAN OF THE BLUE HOUSE, bass-baritone

The role of LILITH is played by a dancer.

-

“I tell you, you must have chaos in you, if you would give birth to a dancing star.”

- Zarathustra

THE WAKE WORLD
(a tale for babes and sucklings)

-

I. RITUAL PROCESSION

UPON CONVOCAION THE POLLUS IS LEAD INTO A CHAMBER
WHEREIN THERE IS NOT LIGHT

LO, THE FIRST ILLUMINATION, A SIGN

WRIT ALOFT IN BLOOD

THAT B[E]ARETH THE INSCRIPTION:

THE LANGUAGE OF THE WAKE WORLD IS SILENCE

-

A veiled bride. She beckons.

A labyrinth. Apparitions of faces, fleeting, phantom.

A music of voices, oozing at the edge of silence. Vociferous, seething, void.

Is this dream? Is this wake?

Whither these forms? Wherefore this music?

An image at the end of the cave,

Lovers, attend:

II. PRELUDIUM IN THE THEATRE

A very old tree in the middle of a garden.

All clad in dull, drab color.

The garden is enclosed; a discreet, unassuming gate stands front, off-center.

Nothing happens,

save the impalpable chimes of some long forgotten act.

Wind whistles through the branches.

MORBUS and PESTILITAS sit on either side of the gate, they have been waiting a long time.

PESTILITAS lets out a yawn, belchéd forth from the stolid slime of his soul.

MORBUS does not regard it. His gaze affixed on something (or nothing) far away.

Nothing continues to happen.

SPAKE MORBUS:

A fleck, a quiff-

Or the slinking of a foreign light-

What greets me here in happiness?

PESTILITAS:

Tis but the whites of thine eyes, old friend.
By now they have retreated into thine brains-
Wherein all commingle and cease their smarting.

(visibly disheartened)

MORBUS:

Ah, yes-
The warden shall not wear the wanton.
She is not comely on these planes,
Her air wan, smothered.

Nothing presses on.

MORBUS:

Friend,
How many changeless autumns have we withered,
Since His furtive finger found us here?

PESTILITAS:

The bog behind this stooping brow
Hath its measurements congealéd.
Tremors of the aspirated name
Writheth therein, besidest the worms.

(at once aroused and pathetic)

MORBUS:

And whence those bellowing vowels,
Whose sun-soaked tones once tore
Mine pallid lips in twain?

PESTILITAS:

Rent they were out our throats.
Gutturals the flayéd flesh retainéd.

I have not felt them since the fall.

(impotent)

MORBUS:

Yea,
Other beds need tending, surely
An errand out beyond the sun...

Let us wade here,
And find faultless joy in phlegm unstained.

PESTILITAS lets out one exasperated, listless groan.

Continue nothing

MORBUS is staring off far into the distance. PESTILITAS rolls his eyes back into his skull.

They wait.

LILITH arrives, aeons late. A serpent wrapped about her naked body. She is tired.

MORBUS and PESTILITAS sit motionless; they do not regard her.

She approaches them. Goes up to one and then the other, then sits down in between them.

Moments pass.

LILITH gets up, peers beyond the gate, and briefly considers entering.

She sighs a plaintive sigh, then leaves.

A seismic tremor.

The garden begins to devour itself.

MORBUS comes to.

MORBUS:
She is dancing, our limpid bed-

PESTILITAS:
The patch,
She devoureth herself.

Pluto explodes.

(looking down)

MORBUS:
And our fleecy porch, rattled-

PESTILITAS:
That shy, remotest little world,
His swollen belly resisteth no longer:
He is burst asunder.

MORBUS:
Oh-

They watch tacitly as everything careens into oblivion.

Shall we take leave, friend?

PESTILITAS gently nods his head.

They slowly get up and regard their surroundings with indifference.

Tell me, softly:
Were we placed here
With design,
To sponsor something
Lost to these currents,
That breathes, unfettered,
In an unfamiliar air?

(gazing out into the chaos in front of them)

PESTILITAS:
No.

They pause a moment. Then regard one another.

They share a tender, if slightly putrid, kiss.

The garden spills forth its entrails.

Holding hands, they leave as all is engulfed in flames.

III. THE BEGINNING:

The writhing soil, having toppled the gate, transforms the scene into a sprawling bed of overgrowth and concupiscent abundance.

LOLA lies sleeping, cocooned in a nest of exotic flowers.

Three alien blossoms spew forth PARTHENOPE, LIGEIA, and LEUCOSIA. They surround the sleeping girl.

INCANTING IN TRINE:

Lola,
Wake up, sleepyhead;

Little Lola Daydream,
Sunk in softest sift,
Pretty little dream-lids,
And wearied brow adrift,

Silly girl,
Dreaming girl,
Unfurl them, and arise,

Unspeakable pearls await those
Little ones with open eyes.

Little Lola floating,
In foam beyond the tide,
Whiling and wading,
As waking washes by,

Silly girl,
Dreaming girl,
Unbind you, and arise,

A special hush entreats you
In a world unchecked with sighs.

They dissolve themselves into the obscurity.

LOLA begins to come to, wafting in a malaise of dreamy whimsy.

LOLA:

Is that you, my love,
Frothing forth out
The distant reaches
Of my fitful dreams?

I grasp for you.

But I am a sleepy girl,
And my lover is wide awake.

I call him my fairy prince,
And I ache for his embrace.
Yet I fear him strangely.

When I meet his gaze in daydream
He sees through me
As though I were but a dream-girl

in the mirror of his mind.

He never laughs, nor frowns,
Nor smiles, because whatever he sees,
He sees what is beyond as well.

I wake up when we kiss each other.
And then there is no dream anymore.

And when they are not trembling on mine,
I see kisses on his lips,
As if he were kissing someone one could not see.

His mouth is redder than roses,
Redder than the vermillion of pomegranates,
Than the stained desert cliffs
Whose high crimson interiors
Disgorge themselves out the
Deep-delved earth.

I love his red, red mouth.
When it parts, it rends me,
And in the open fallow
Of my hazy mind, it murmurs,

VENTRILOQUIZING THE VOICE OF THE FAIRY PRINCE:

“Lola, Lola my darling,
Whenever you want me,
Just cling to the lingering brush
Of our secret caress,
And call me ever so softly,
I will find you then, and
Whisk you away to my palace,
There we will drink deep of
One another, and in the fullness
Of our foaming love, be
Of one another entirely
Possessed.”

Your furtive flame, my love,
Burns ever near;
Over again I feel your finger
and find you.

She recedes deep into herself. She closes her eyes.

WAFING FROM AFAR:

Little Lola Daydream,
Sunk in softest sift,

(as a strange and intoxicating invocation)

LOLA:

Scattered are the rose-leaves,
And trampled the purple grapes,

FROM AFAR:

Pretty little dream-lids,
And wearied brow adrift,

LOLA:

Quaffed is the breath of the hillside,
Awash in the fragrance of myrrh,

FROM AFAR:
Silly girl,
Dreaming girl,
Unfurl them, and arise,

LOLA:
Spilt is the juice of the peach,
And flayed the flesh of the pear,

FROM AFAR:
Unspeakable pearls await those
Little ones with open eyes.

LOLA:
And in their soft yolk I lay,
Reeling, upon your littlest thirst.

She opens her eyes and gazes with rapt intensity into the distance.

See, out there,
Over the crimson dawn,
He quickens,

Spurring the winged horse until the blood
Turns all the sky rosy red.

Rent am I by his thunder,
Rapt I am in his stride,

The vermillion frothing,
Cinnabar seething,
In these my veins.

As she continues to glare, eyes agape, into the distance, THE FAIRY PRINCE emerges from the hourless gloom behind her.

Rend me, Wrap me,
Red, red lover,

Feast of me,
I am famished...

Quivering, and without shifting her gaze, she sinks back into his arms.

FAIRY PRINCE:
I have been waiting for you.

He gently strokes her hair, her cheek, with a soft, strange coolness.

LOLA:
My love,
Through seas of sunless gloom
I have waded, longing for you,
Yet in this moment I tremble,
For I am a sleepy girl,
Weak in weary reverie,
And in the welling warmth of your embrace,
I find myself, unworthy.

FAIRY PRINCE:
Silly dreamer,
Just clutch me,
Clasp me, and come
Away with me,

There, wake light will find you,
Fill you, will flood
Those wondering eyes,

He wraps a blindfold around her head.

And when all is flush with lume,
And these your little moons
Have met their starry sun,
Will you bathe, bewildered in love.

He guides her to the palace.

Flourish.

Welcome to my palace!

IV. THE PALACE:

He unbinds her.

They are circumscribed in the PALACE OF NAMES. Apparitions of faces, frozen in form, surround them.

Her sight undone, she regards.

LO, A SIGN, WRIT ALOFT IN BLOOD:

TREMORS OF THE ASPIRATED NAME WRITHEETH HEREIN
(BESIDEST THE WORMS)

The apparitions solemnize the secret syllables. A music of voices.

(with wonder)

LOLA:

Your palace is beautiful,
The most beautiful thing I have ever seen.

All carved of pale olive-colored marble,
Awash in lemon-colored soot,

And here, rich, rich russet,
Like rotted leaves one sees in autumn,
In the fevers of one's most ashen dreams,

I love your palace.

That I have lived
To sink but one toe
In this ablution of breathing beauty.

FAIRY PRINCE:
Little Lola,
This is only the servants quarters,

And mostly dream at that.

Come close to me,
And let me draw you through these phantom halls;
Wake-up things attend.

They share one aching glance, suffuse with the flavor of the sulphur about them, brief and wrested from its wanton conclusion.

A veiled bride. She beckons.

The FAIRY PRINCE guides LOLA through the channel. The faces bate them in vociferous, seething silence, as an ossified hell-frieze from a 15th century Dutch master.

Draw near to me.

They pass through the corridor, and arrive in a room shaped as a great dome of violet, all carved out of amethyst. The aroma of ambergris flavors the air.

LOLA's gleaming opal eyes wonder at everything

A beautiful woman with long silver hair stands in the center, cast in a beam of moonlight.

LOLA:
Such soft violet
Glistens in this place.

Who is the lady
All aglow in the
Stooping starlight?

FAIRY PRINCE:
Drink deep of the purple ambergris,
Lift your crescent lids,
And breathe the silver radiance of the moon.

LOLA lets go his hand, and wanders toward the silver-haired woman, who begins to sing

LUNA:
Drift down, my tresses,
Finer than spider's twining,

Sunk in their mesh is
Secretive silver mining,

Silver sift,
In changeless lume adrift,
Gossamer floating

(mesmerized)

LOLA:
How strange and beautiful, her lull-

FAIRY PRINCE:
Your eyes, sleepy miner, keep them wide-

LOLA plays with her gleaming hair.

LUNA:
Fear not, my darling,
Wondering eyes unwinding,

Fray forth my starlings,
Glittering gloom unbinding,

Ripest rifts,
Ever-giving gifts,
Gleam in their gloating.

FAIRY PRINCE:
Your moons, little dreamer, all aglaze-

(rapt)
LOLA:
I'm drowning in the gauzy glow-

LUNA:
My tresses,
They sink to the ground.

LOLA:
Your thimble threads...

LOLA mines her heaps of silver hair. She lifts up a lock. It is soaked in blood.

Oh, Misses Moon,
Your silver strings are stained with red, red blood.

The woman stares vacantly through LOLA.

And you've sung out your song?

The mute woman does not regard. She cocks her head ever so slightly, as if tuning into radio stream from another dimension.

The moon wanes.

Hold me, my prince,
I am afraid.

A distant glimmer breaks from behind the silent woman.

What light
Lingers there,
Behind her
Lambent veil?

FAIRY PRINCE:
You have unlocked it, little Lola;
This orb is but a specter
Of a distant star.

She gives him her hand. They follow the light.

LOLA:
This shine is sharper than before.

The gleam, it grows.

The glint becomes excruciating

These orbs cannot refract the spume, the blaze,

It blinds, searing,
Scorching out their
Sheathless core,

FAIRY PRINCE:
But what do you see,
Wondering eyes?

They arrive in a hall wherein a glorious feast is being prepared. Song, order, light. Everything in perfect motion. A chorus of forms and functions.

THOSE WHO FEAST:
Glow-orange scarlet
Amber scarlet-flecked gold
Quicksilver storax
Fire opal-flecked sol

Red poppy-flecked flaxen
Cinnamon scarlet-streaked sol
Flaxen-flecked fire
Cadmium crimson-speckled gold

LOLA:
A joyous feast of
Forms in perfect motion,
Beaming, glistening,
Becoming as snowflakes
Dividing pure light.

Yet in this swiftness
I feel a certain fallow,
Half-hollow hush,
As though the threads of
Thawing thought
Brooded, behind.

My prince,
What function attends
These forms?

FAIRY PRINCE:
Hunger.

A dinner bell rings.

A giant, bound, blind, and tethered, is brought in. He groans, lumbers, thrashes in his shackles. The feasters attend, and begin to encircle him.

LOLA:
Who is this captive?

They draw knives.

Ah, this crystal, all
Acrawl with craven jackals!

FAIRY PRINCE:
Now you really wouldn't think it, little Lola,
But most people stay here
All their lives.

Cackling, they raise their daggers; he takes her through a door.

They arrive in a quiet corridor. In the far corner stands the woman with the silver hair. She is turned away from them. Her face is concealed.

LOLA:

It is quiet here,
In this corridor.

(pointing to the woman with the silver hair)

FAIRY PRINCE:

Do you recognize
This faraway form?

(remembering with fondness, to the woman)

LOLA:

Is that you, Misses Moon?
Why do you wade here,
In this listless estuary?

(speaking in a fluid multitude of voices, aspirated syllables asunder)

HECATE:

You left me lingering, Lola,
All alone in the sunken starlight.
My silver-sift tresses,
All cinnamon stained.

LOLA:

With what strange sickness
She speaks...

And that queerest coo of her voice,
Like a thousand nesting insects,
Sallows me,

Her moon goes Pisces.

(knowingly, with a hint of menace)

FAIRY PRINCE:

My little girl, all afidget,
Is something the matter?

(twitching and hissing to herself)

LOLA:

Sickens me...
Sallows me...
Sallows me sick...
Swallows me swallow...

HECATE:

Follow my finger,
Silly girl,
I promise,
In this place
There lives a lume,
More sweet and
More supple
Than before.

She beckons. LOLA lets go the FAIRY PRINCE's hand and follows her into a green, green room.

(echoing the silver-haired woman)

LOLA:
Here lives a lume,
More sweet, and more
Supple...
In this green, green room...

Malachite, Emerald, Crysolith. Soft light. All covered in the most supple furs. The silken coos of the sirens waft from afar.

WAFING FROM AFAR:

Little Lola floating,
In foam beyond the tide,
Whiling and wading
As waking washes by,

Silly girl,
Dreaming girl,
Unbind you, and arise,

LOLA:
All made of malachite and emerald,
Carved in silken crysolith,
And strewn about with fleecy ermine fur.

My prince,
This is truly the most
Perfect province
Of your palace;

Carrion birds would forgo
Their freshest findings, to gorge
Themselves here
In this green,
Green glow.

She rolls around in the fur, bathes in the soft green light. She mutters to herself:

...silken crysolith...
...fleecy fur...
...forgo their
freshest findings...
...in this green, green...

(solemnizing with the sirens)

FAIRY PRINCE:
Little Lola floating
In foam beyond the tide,
Whiling... wading...

(lost in a malaise of febrile whimsy)

LOLA:
“Lola, Lola,
Wake up sleepyhead...
Silly girl,
Dreaming girl...”

Shhhhhhhh...

She looks up at the ceiling, which is a mass of green mirrors.

What's this,
Up here?

A mass of green,
Green mirrors;
What do they disclose to me?

(seeing her reflection)

Oh,
My ashen air:
Wan, smothered.

(to the FAIRY PRINCE, without shifting her gaze)

Kiss me, love,
I must go on.

FAIRY PRINCE:
That was a near thing, that time:
My little Lola teetering there,
On the edge of sleep.

Cling to me now;
To go beyond
The green house
Is a dreadful business.

He leads her through a door.

V. TREASURE HOUSE OF GOLD:

They reenter the room with the feast. The giant has been dismembered. They feast on his flesh, drink of his blood. Severed limbs roasted on skewers over flames lit with the gas of cadavers. Musk, civet, sanguine. A carnivorous orgy.

LOLA:
The den of jackals,

They feast,
Frothed in the fumes
Of charred corpses
And marsh.

Their mouths scarlet stained,
Cinnabar sinews asunder,

All the spume of sloth and joy.

FAIRY PRINCE:
Only those who partake
Will know the path
To the treasure house.

Listen to my soft secret:

(whispering to her)

They are all little Lolas
And their own fairy princes,
Vein-woven in happiest love.

Stay close to me now,
And savor

The suckling flesh.

A craven feaster regards them, and beckons. They partakes.

THOSE WHO FEAST:

Musk... Civet...
Sucked they were out His throat,
Labials the flayed flesh retained,
We have not feasted since the fall.

Let us wade here,
And find frothing joy in phlegm undrained.

They pass to the end of the hall and see a man wearing his bones on the outside. He tries to cut down a small patch of grass with a bloody kitchen knife.

(picking her teeth)

LOLA:

Is that the man
Whose crimson sinews
Are stuck between my fangs?

BONE MAN:

I used to be whole,
Then the cannibals
Undid my flesh,

Now I only have
This brittle frame
And tend to this
Thirstless patch,

But it never wants,
Nor sprawls,
And though I try
To tame it, it cannot
But continue.

LOLA:

But Mister Bones,
Why do you so want
To cleave the helpless grass?

He does not answer or regard her. He continues to try and cut it down with a mystifying passivity.

Do you know where is
The gate to
The treasure house?

Without looking away from the grass, he points her in the direction with the bloody kitchen knife.

Thank you, Mister Bones.

They arrive at a gate. Two strange men stand in silence on either side.

Those silent wardens,
At once so strange,
And yet, familiar...

My prince,

How do we pass through
To the treasure house?

FAIRY PRINCE:
Lola,
You must trace this trial,
Alone.

LOLA:
Alone?!

Shadows appear and pull the FAIRY PRINCE away into the darkness. The two silent guards wrest LOLA and bring her through the gate. There they tie her unto a red, red board.

What happens with this red, red board?

THEY:
SWEAR THAT YOU LOVE THE FAIRY PRINCE

With every successive statement of their covenant, they bind her to the board by sinking a nail into her flesh.

SHE:
I swear!

THEY:
AND THAT YOU WILL ALWAYS CLING FAST TO HIM

SHE:
I will always cling fast to him!

THEY:
AND REMAIN FOREVER BY HIS SIDE

SHE:
And be forever by his side!

THEY:
UNTIL THE END OF TIME AND SPACE

SHE:
As long as I have eyes to see and skin to feel!

THEY:
AND YOU WRITHE UNDERGROUND

SHE:
Forever!

THEY:
BESIDEST THE WORMS

SHE:
Until I writhe there-

THEY:
WHEREIN ALL COMMINGLE

SHE:
And cease my smarting!

THEY:
AND CEASE THEIR SMARTING

LOLA:
What curious wonder:
All at once I feel more wake-up
Than ever before.

Could it be that these peculiar pair
Have bound me here
In loving tethers to my Fairy Prince?

Oh spring of love,
Fountain of rapture;

(closing her eyes)
Over again I feel your finger
And find you.

Lo, a sign, writ aloft in blood, strewn about with crimson roses:

BRIDAL CHAMBER

The guards leave.

(deeply to herself)
Scattered are the rose-leaves,
And trampled the purple grapes,
Quaffed is the breath of the hillside,
Awash in the fragrance of myrrh,

Spilt is the juice of the peach,
And flayed the flesh of the pear,
And in their soft yolk I lay, reeling,
Upon your littlest thirst.

The guards return bearing a coffin. They stand on either side of it, unspeaking, grinning malevolently.

(coming to)
Strangers,
Why do you stand there,
Smiling softly
In sinister silence?

This bier...
Does it bear the body,
Of my fairy prince?

They nod together in inhuman synchronicity.

She tears herself, limb by limb, from the board, and opens the coffin. The guards stand motionless. She gazes into the coffin with rapt intensity.

My love,
Lying there,
In lifeless sleep.

Stilled, those trembling lips.
Veiled, that perfect gaze.
Mute, that red, red...

(silently aroused)

And yet-

Though my eyes enfold
This listless form
I sense that they
Deceive me,

And feel, in the folds
Of fallen mystery,
His presence.

DISTANT VOICE OF THE FAIRY PRINCE:

“Lola, Lola my darling...”

LOLA:

That voice,
It trills through me,
Speaking things both strange
And true,

(increasingly filled with an inexplicable feeling of awe)

Like dying nightingales
That have sorrowed for the fading of roses,
And pressed themselves for love upon the thorns;

Sweet songbird,
I worship your liturgy.

She follows the current of voices, as it wells into a swirling choir of seraphim.

THINGS BOTH STRANGE AND TRUE:

Every man and every woman is a star.
Ever number is a vastness, without bound.

Breathe, the omnipresence of my body,
Lithe, arched for love over the hourless sky,
With silken feet that leave untrod the little blossoms.

Quaff, the furtive flame, the stooping starlight;
They are above you, they are within you,
Their ecstasy is yours, their joy is in your joy.

For this is the soft secret of the world:
That the sorrow of division is as nothing,
And the joy of dissolution, [all.]

She arrives at the end of the path and sees the FAIRY PRINCE cast in a mysterious glow.

LOLA:

My prince, my light,

FAIRY PRINCE:

I see you've found me, little Lola.

He opens another door.

VI. MISTRESS OF IT ALL:

They find themselves in a deep red room. Sinuous silence.

Lo, a sign, scrawled in sanguine:

RED RED RED RED RED RED RED RED RED RED RED RED RED RED RED RED RED RED RED RED

LOLA:
What queerest quiet
Attends us,
In this red,
Red room.

FAIRY PRINCE:
Yes, little Lola.

LOLA:
And what happens
Here, in this house?

FAIRY PRINCE:
This room is called
The Royal Armory,
My dear.

LOLA:
And why does it bear
That silly name?

FAIRY PRINCE:
Because it is here
That one dresses
For the ardors
Of war.

A blazing din is heard.

LOLA:
What is this wrenching racket?

Scraping my splitting skull until
The clang turns all my eyes rosy red.

LILITH appears and hands LOLA a whip. Thrashing about, she takes it and begins to flog herself.

Rent my drums by this thunder,
Trapped my flesh in this hide,

The vermillion frothing,
Cinnabar seething,
In these my brains,

Until all appears before me
As a craven cataract of spume and gore,

Wrest me, fairy prince,
And rend me from this
Red, red -

FAIRY PRINCE:
Now you really wouldn't think it,
Little Lola, but most people

Stay here all their lives.

He takes her through a door.

They find themselves in a quiet passageway. At the far end stands a demur man, draped in an enormous azure coat, that takes up the entire floorspace of the hall.

LOLA:

Who is the man
All covered up in
The azure coat?

THE MAN IN THE AZURE COAT:

First they bound me
Then they slew me,
Then they wove love
With my crimson sinews.

I could not tame this patch
So it consumed me.
Now I sit
Sunk in the soil
Under my mauve mantle.

It is soft here,
And soundless in this room.
Here futility,
Slowly,
Slips away.

(whispering to the FAIRY PRINCE)

LOLA:

I did not recognize him
Draped in this dress.

(to the man in the coat)

Can you show us, friend,
As you did once before,
The path beyond this place?

MAN IN THE AZURE COAT:

The blue room
Is beyond me.
To get there
One must wade
Underground,
And commingle
With the roots.

(whispering to her)

FAIRY PRINCE:

Hold my hand, little Lola.

He takes her hand and lifts one end of the coat.

She looks at him with an expression of trepidation. He gives her a softly reassuring nod.

Together they crawl under the massive mauve mantle and arrive in the blue house.

This is what they call the house of love.

(with profound calm and affection)

LOLA:

All calming baby blue,
Soft springs of quiet love,
In lapis lazuli,

Listen: a lullaby of fountains
That mutter the most equable music,
Like ripples of a thousand
Silent swans over still waters.

She calmly disrobes and wades on her back in a shallow pool of aquamarine.

I can see myself,
In this calming blue,
More truly,
And more strange.

She closes her eyes and begins to drift into sleep. The song of the sirens is heard, softly, from afar, as a wordless vocalise, a distant memory brought in and out of focus by the camera of the mind.

That once familiar song...
Its feeling,
Its fibers,
Are changed.

She continues to sink in sleep. The man of the blue house emerges from out the pool of aquamarine. He wades in water up to his waist.

MAN OF THE BLUE HOUSE:

Lola,
Wake up sleepyhead;

(coming to)

LOLA:
Is that you,
Mister Blue?

Where have you hung
Your sprawling coat?

MAN OF THE BLUE HOUSE:

Now that you reside
In the blue house, you are
Mistress of it all.

The other houses
Through which you've passed
Are in your jurisdiction:

They are all covered in advertisements.

(suddenly furious)

LOLA:
What?!

MAN OF THE BLUE HOUSE:

Advertisements, my dear.

LOLA:

My pristine palace,
All disfigured
In filthy falsehood?

Oh, let me find
And flay the vandals!

She looks up and regards a sign.

MUTTERING MUSIC

Here, lies!

She runs all over to the other houses, tearing down their signs.

RED RED RED RED RED RED RED RED RED RED RED RED RED RED RED RED RED RED RED RED

Smut, slime!

BRIDAL CHAMBER

Wrong, wrong, wrong!

MASS OF MIRRORS

CRAVEN JACKALS ACRAWL

More like: EXTERNAL FLOWERS, INTERNAL ROT!

SECRETIVE SILVER MINING

Such cloying, saccharine decay!

TREMORS OF THE ASPIRATED NAME WRITHEETH HEREIN
(BESIDEST THE WORMS)

Can you read the letters of my wrath?!?!?

THE LANGUAGE OF THE WAKE WORLD IS SILENCE

The FAIRY PRINCE appears at the end of her rampage.

FAIRY PRINCE:

Thank you for this courtesy,
My dear.

VII. OUT OF DOORS:

Now the next house, Lola,
Is your special house,
For which you've waited
All this time.

There once was a passage to get there,
But in the years since my principedom was fashioned,
It has fallen into disrepair,

And now, the only way is out of doors.

LOLA:

So long as I can clutch my fairy prince,
There is no wind I cannot weather.

FAIRY PRINCE:
Good.

They begin walking together to the edge of the palace.

There is a special way
One prepares
For this travel.

First, you must take off
All your clothes.

She acquiesces.

And your silky skin too.

She obliges.

Then your sweet supple flesh,
And your wee brittle bones,

And even those thoughts that linger in your little head.

And then you must remove your tendency clothes,
Which you never even knew you wore,
And whose petulant peeling is the most painful of all,
And when all these happy husks are shed,
You will find yourself crouched beneath the canopy of night,
Uncovered, and abandoned, by this pretty place.

(unveiling herself in complete nakedness, ecstatic, manic)

LOLA:
Here I am,
My prince,
All ready to greet you
In my special place;

Show me,
Love,
Where is the way
To our happy home?

Love?

Love??

She turns around and sees that the FAIRY PRINCE has vanished.

Love???!

She begins falling helplessly in the darkness. Violent nothingness. Dust devils, lies. A swelling surge of empty echoing thoughts.

She lands in a pool of black obsidian, in a place of total dark.

Into what hushed harrow
Have I fallen?

In what lifeless fallow
Am I, at last, found?

Lo, a sign, fashioned in a foreign style, heretofore unseen, of wan, neon light, smothered, reading:

HOUSE OF SORROW

What syllables are scrawled
Here, in this strange and
Yet, familiar script?

(trembling)

Can it be,
That all this time
I have loved in vain,

To be left here naked, afraid,
Alone in the darkness?

Never to gape that veiled dawn,
And bathe in the glow of my fairy prince?

...that changeless gaze...
...those trembling lips...
...that red, red...

Oh prince, why have you left me?
Was I unworthy of your love?

Is this the end of my journey,
To wade here in darkness,
Where even worms do not writhe,
And lose myself in foreverness?

Here, where flesh and soil
Cannot commingle,
And all is wrought with pain?

If only I could drown me
In this obstinate obsidian,
To suffocate, and cease, for once,
This senseless smarting!

A radiant light breaks through the darkness. Blazing regal trumpets sound their calls. The FAIRY PRINCE appears, aflush in the shimmering white gown of foreverness. SHE descends and gives LOLA her hand.

(grasping in awe)

Is that you, my love?

FAIRY PRINCE:

“Come, my dear one, my darling,
Let us pass from the land of the plough
To the glades and the groves of delight.

There we will pluck down the clustered vine of our trembling,
And scatter the rose-leaves of our desire,
And mingle the foaming cups of our joy in the glittering chalice of our love,
Until the spuming wine jets forth, hissing through our furtive flame,
And splashes into immensity, begetting a million suns.

I have watched the dawn, golden and crimson;
I have watched the night all starry-eyed;
I have drunk up the blue depths of the waters,
As the purple juice of the grape.
Yet alone in thine eyes do I find the delights of my joy,
In thy lips the vintage of my love.

The flowers of the fields I have gazed on,
And the gay plumage of the birds,
And the distant blue of the mountains;
But they all fade before the blush of thy cheeks,
Are all swallowed up in the excess of thy beauty.

I have breathed the odor of roses,
And the fragrance of myrtle,
And the sweet scent of the wild jessamine.
I have quaffed the breath of the hillside,
And the perfume of the woods and seas,
Yet thy breath is more fragrant than they,
It is sweeter still, it intoxicateth me
And filleth me with joy, as a rich ruby jar cured
In the depths of a desert of salt -
I drink and am quenched with love.

I have listened to the song of the skylark,
To the curlew, and to the nightingale in the thicket,
And to all the warblers of the woods,
To the murmur of the waters and the singing of the winds;
Yet what are they to the rapture of thy voice,
That echoes in the valley of my breast -
It trills through me, and sings in the depths of my being.

I have tasted the juice of the peach,
And the frothing flesh of the pear,
And drunk deep of the sweetness of honey and milk;
But the wine of thy lips is the elixir of my love,
Oh, let me drink till I reel
Bewildered with kisses... Oh love! My love! Oh my love!"

- *The Temple of Solomon the King, Frater Perdurabo, 1909*

LOLA:
My angel,
Whose fingers were created to caress,
I am woven in love.

My strength has left me,
My soul has commingled with thine,
I am not, yet I am-

FAIRY PRINCE:
My love, my all,
It is only this illusion,
That has brought us together,

As I am divided for love's sake,
For the chance of union:

It is your light that gives me strength,
Your flame that makes me glow.

SHE kneels before her.

Lola, my wide-wake-up girl,
Come away with me.

LOLA:
Oh, my love,
In your arms
The sorrow of division
Is as nothing.

FAIRY PRINCE [TOGETHER]:
And in yours,
The joy
Of dissolution, all.

Holding hands, they go together into the wide, wide wake light.

All is flush with lume.

All is flood with radiance.

Astride the light, the image of a woman arched for love over the hourless sky.

HARK, LOVERS!

ATTEND:

THE ASPIRATED NAME;

Can you disclose its secret song?

THE END.