

# I

## Su-Tekh Tracks Isis to Wa-Set

### Isis

Isis, as a beggar posed,  
walks Wa-Set's Avenue Of Rams.  
They bow – beyond perception – low  
their horn-winged heads  
as by she goes,  
her Horus in her hands.  
W'thout sandals on her feet she treads;  
th'carved falcon palmly stands.

Rent-ragged cloth to clothe her form;  
her hair cut close, 'n deeply brown.  
Bejewelled not – only adorned  
in wind-struck skin  
'n lines well-worn.  
She sits upon the ground.  
Her icon-child, with wooden wing,  
she places softly down.

There settled on the rust-red floor –  
with legs crossed; dirt-specked knees exposed –  
is she as one of th'urban poor.  
The city sings;  
bright sunfire soars;  
the day, in stature, grows.  
Her lament-gaze on her offspring,  
Isis comfort forgoes.

A throne of dust 'n grit thus claimed,  
the girl-child of th'Sun City Nine –  
Great Goddess Of Ten-Thousand Names! –  
sends back her hand,  
her gaze unchanged;  
a small bag does she find.  
She c'llects it with her fingers and  
brings it 'round from behind.

Placed 'tween the icon-child 'n she,  
the bag sags slightly. To 'n fro  
before her pass by th'many feet  
of th'many folk  
who daily speak  
of Wa-Set as their home.  
None took notice; none stopped or spoke  
to this bird-watching crone.

The sound-waves of speech uttered sweep  
about, over, upon, 'n by.  
Their ebbless flow floodfills each street;  
the shapen breath  
takes timbre, beat,  
'n decibelic life.  
An Afro-Asiatic mesh;  
a proud Khemetic cry.

Pulling open the bag she'd placed  
behind her falcon-offspring, frail  
Isis – a shadow 'cross her face –  
reaches in; draws  
back out a brace  
of curled scorpion's tails.  
No plated-trunk; no clasping claws:  
they yet of venom hail.

As if handling nought more than sticks,  
she clutches them whilst, back inside  
the bag, her left hand deftly picks  
(by touch alone;  
her mind's eye fixed)  
seven – together tied –  
worn-white 'n warped 'n cracked snake bones,  
wrapped w'thin papyrus-dried.

Both hands put down their contents. Now,  
the venerated mother takes  
a clothly, ragged bandage out  
from 'midst her thighs  
'n wraps it 'bout  
itself until it makes  
an ankh-like knot of yellowed-white,  
with scarlet-red inlaid.

This blood-blessed, fabric tatterfray,  
form-folded, falls against her knee  
to lean-rest there. To her display  
the goddess adds  
a small array  
of em'rald, lazuli,  
'n faience stones from out the bag.  
She sighs perceptibly.

### Su-Tekh

He From B'yond Th'River, where the land is red  
with drouhtsome desert – caked in heat; in cold –  
that stretches far; He Who (Sema-tawy!)  
Unites The Lands With Th'Elder Horus Hawk;  
He Of Great Ancience; He Of Rending Birth;  
He Who Helps Th'Blessed Dead Ascend; He Who  
Makes Oases Lifeful, Allied With Ra;  
He, The Black Boar Swallowing The Moon Disk;  
He Who's The Hippo 'N The Crocodile –  
Su-Tekh, as a scorp'yun in rock-shade stood,  
looks out o'er the City Of The Sceptre.

Its fat tail furled above its plate-armour;  
its palpable pincer-pow'r latent lies –  
Su-Tekh, as a scorpion, crawls along.  
A storm-cloud o'er The Peak in th'distance quakes.  
The shadow of the sha-jackal stretches  
up against the pylon's painted-white side –  
a stiff, forked tail erect down from the ears  
that stand square-ended 'bove a snout down-turned.  
It follows, whispering of ox-blood red,  
the scorpion along with its black shape.  
Thus, Su-Tekh leaves th'Most Select Of Places.

Emerging as a sight-hound, Su-Tekh leaps  
salukid t'land upon a muddied path.  
Paws assured, his coat of beige-red ruffled,  
the Barren-Night scan-searches with his eyes.  
Born of Nut 'n Geb (her star-braided hair;  
his harvest-earth), who're of Tefnut 'n Shu  
(Th'Lion Akhn-Yati! Th'Lionessid  
Lion Nafereti-Iti!), Su-Tekh  
hunts now for his sister. *Ahrr-roo-sah-aht...*  
Whisp'ring thus – god-voiced – he stalk-steps ahead,  
merge-melting into the bussuhling crowd.

## Isis

Into her eyes they look, o'er-awed –  
her story painted 'pon the air  
in songly brushstrokes fine 'n broad;  
bright-lit vibrance!  
Cheerful applause  
breaks from those gathered there –  
some old; some adult; some infant.  
She bows to this fanfare.

Her concert over, Isis sits.  
Her satiated crowd disbands.  
Above her head, a cat's tail flicks.  
One child remains,  
em'rald eyes fixed  
on th'one she understands –  
this poor woman who entertains,  
with words at her command.

*D'you see Ou-Bast above me, child,  
her tail her rattle? Watches she  
for danger. Of the Red Land wilds  
is this sand cat!  
Her prey reviles  
her skills predatory!  
Her perfume-scent disguises that  
she ends life easily!*

The pale-fawn fur fades into white  
across the seated Ou-Bast's breast.  
Sparse darkness are her few black stripes  
that ring her joints.  
Amazonite,  
her eyes glow-glare deep-set  
'neath ears that – pyramidal – point  
to vigilance w'thout rest.

*Girl-child, of th'riverrun fated,  
(Isis continues, as she moves  
her miscellany.) abated  
has th'crowd, 'n yet  
in this place did  
you stay. Seems she approves.  
Before her, th'Eye Of Ra, Wadj-Et,  
does th'hunted Horus soothe.*

'Tween vulture's wing 'n cobra's tail,  
etched out ornately in the space  
made clear by Isis, now prevails  
a right eye, browed  
'n tear-duct'd. *Hail*  
*her fierce, protective grace!*  
Its pupil filled-in, glaring, now  
the icon dissipates.

Her wrangled, rope-ly hair the hue  
of th'soil of Iteru's floodplains –  
in fraught delightment (Terrawe, too!)  
the girl-child flees.  
Up th'avenue  
she fades. Here, then, remains  
the mother 'n the child. Unease  
o'er her protectors reigns.

#### Su-Tekh

He lopes along. Passing shrines 'n workshops,  
he weaves amidst the legs of humankind;  
traversing paths 'n roads, he steps aside  
when th'legs of animals – domestic made –  
come confidently close, all sides about.  
Mercurial, his hunter's temp'rament:  
composure-calm composite with the storm;  
a thund'rous drive through-threaded with patience.  
Su-Tekh moves t'sit beneath the date-palm shade  
of two trees standing by a mud-brick well.  
The morning peaks, begetting afternoon.

Scratching his lean, strong-sinewed shoulder on  
th'surface of the weathered, usage-worn well,  
the deshret hound scans th'sightscentssoundscape with  
his deitific senses, fiendishly  
employed. He thinks of Isis (hidden; fled),  
the empty throne upon her headdress kept  
for her child of Osiris: th'falcon born  
of She, The Soaring Kite Of Mourning Song.  
Chosen not as the Lord Of The Two Lands,  
Su-Tekh endured his brother's ascension  
until th'crown was gifted to his sister!

Enraged when not made e'en caretaker-king:  
with quaking earth beneath him, Su-Tekh blazed  
with violent trickery – Osiris trapped  
'n cast into Iteru's waters 'til  
the coffin-box caught on a tamarisk;  
the bush grew tall out of proximity  
to th'green-black skin of th'fertile essence w'thin!  
From this, Isis found where her husband lay  
entangle-tomb'd 'n lapped at by the break  
of water 'gainst the rearranging earth.  
That his coup was hindered, Su-Tekh soon learned!

He knew her magic skill was prodigious –  
but to bear a son without a father!  
Heru-Sa-Aset... This avenging child  
named Horus! Foretold 'n destiny-clad...  
That Mooney-Crowned Creator interfered  
to speak – just as he in th'beginning spoke  
his self into existence – with Isis.  
The two composed the Ritual Of Life,  
bringing eternity to th'void b'yond death.  
But Su-Tekh stole Osiris! Savagely  
torn apart, the pieces were far scattered.

In Wa-Set now he feels he's closing in  
on the mother with her infant icon.  
This hunt that had unfolded 'cross th'expanse  
of Khemet's reaches – from the northmost marsh  
of the sprawling delta; southward he chased  
past settlements, caravans, fortresses,  
ports, 'n cities; through Abdu, where he found  
that Isis had built an Osirid shrine –  
is close to its concluding throes, in which  
the god Su-Tekh will end early the reign  
of Horus, leaving Egypt's throne for him!

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