

## IV

### Isis & Horus Reach Iteru

Isis

Slipspeeding inbetween houses  
that scattermake the city's fringe,  
moves she (as beggar still): Isis,  
with statuette  
of th'figure his –  
Horus, the future king.  
Against Nut's shawl, in silhouette,  
their forms of escape sing.

As her bare feet touch th'soft'ning mud  
that tells of th'near-off rushreed edge,  
she slows. The dying day doth flood  
the akhet with  
its crimson blood,  
ribboned with orange threads.  
To th'circumpolar stars she gives  
a fraught, empassioned pledge:

*You Imperishables! You Who  
Do Not Know Destruction! Come forth  
by night to see my suff'ring! You  
observe from where  
'pon Nut's blackblue  
you guard the gateway north!  
Undying 'n eternal pair –  
be my suffusing source!*

*As you outline heaven's far field  
(t'where these kings aim their rock-cut tombs),  
I try to circle 'bout 'n shield  
my hunted son...  
But here I yield –  
Su-Tekh will find me soon.  
Against Iteru's course I've run,  
yet still the danger looms!*

*My sister even now designs  
to pull his attention away!  
But it will be in vain – he'll find  
me soon enough,  
leaving behind  
her broken form! Today  
has passed. Issfet approaches us...  
Indifferent you stay.*

*And so my pledge thusthen: I'll stand  
here inbetween primeval Her  
who fluidflows 'n there where th'land  
is stood upon  
by that which th'hand  
of humankind conferred  
unto the world! Long live that song  
of th'city by th'river!*

## Iteru

Hapi arrives  
only through me,  
o'er th'marsh of fish 'n birds.  
Gilt water-lily;  
tall papyrus.

Variegated current –  
I move the earth;  
the earth moves me.  
They cling to me;  
channel me closer.

About my  
ceaseless change unchanging –  
streets saturated with time.

## Isis

Sits then the refugee. Cov'ring  
her head 'n hair 'n nose 'n mouth,  
she cradles her near-newborn king.  
Persecuted  
from birth, he'll bring  
ma'at unto the mouth  
of all in th'form of beer 'n bread!  
They'll flee no further south.

Conceived without a father (Well,  
his father lay re-pieced yet dead...),  
this One From On High, under th'spell  
his mother cast,  
travels this hell  
'fore th'crown can grace his head.  
Ursurpent uncle – now's his last  
approach! Unless misled...

William Altoft

<https://williamaltoft.blog>

