

## THE PEDIGREE

### I

I bent in the deep of night  
Over a pedigree the chronicler gave  
As mine; and as I bent there, half-unrobed,  
The uncurtained panes of my window-square let in the watery light  
Of the moon in its old age:  
And green-rheumed clouds were hurrying past where mute and cold it  
globed  
Like a drifting dolphin's eye seen through a lapping wave.

### II

So, scanning my sire-sown tree,  
And the hieroglyphs of this spouse tied to that,  
With offspring mapped below in lineage,  
Till the tangles troubled me,  
The branches seemed to twist into a seared and cynic face  
Which winked and tokened towards the window like a Mage  
Enchanting me to gaze again thereat.

### III

It was a mirror now,  
And in it a long perspective I could trace  
Of my begetters, dwindling backward each past each  
All with the kindred look,  
Whose names had since been inked down in their place  
On the recorder's book,  
Generation and generation of my mien, and build, and brow.

#### IV

And then did I divine  
That every heave and coil and move I made  
Within my brain, and in my mood and speech,  
Was in the glass portrayed  
As long forestalled by their so making it;  
The first of them, the primest fuglemen of my line,  
Being fogged in far antiqueness past surmise and reason's reach.

#### V

Said I then, sunk in tone,  
"I am merest mimicker and counterfeit! -  
Though thinking, I AM I  
AND WHAT I DO I DO MYSELF ALONE."  
--The cynic twist of the page thereat unknit

Back to its normal figure, having wrought its purport wry,  
The Mage's mirror left the window-square,  
And the stained moon and drift retook their places there.

1916.