

The Coming of Tropical Night

By

George E. Merrick

The life that is Day is dying away,
Fading; receding; as the tropical ocean
Sleepily ebbs in sensuous motion.
With swift-moving brush, in colors of fire,
The spirits of nature, the great western canvas,
Transform; touch softly; and subtly inspire;
As though with a great and a glowing desire
To enliven the day that is fainting away.

There comes with a rush from the magical brush,—
Tall castles and ramparts all burnished and gleaming;
Mountains of gold with molten floods streaming;
Great torrents and rivers of red-seething fluid
—A wild ragged ocean of fantastic motion—
Broad forests of copper with blood leafage lurid,
Swift-changing visions transcendently hued
—Born of a touch,—to pass at their flush.

Like views on a screen—with all space in between,—
Caught and transfigured on the sea's placid mirror
Move passing fancies. The sky visions,—clearer

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Glow with rich hues flashing mellowed and softer,
— As ebbing vibration from a fairy Creation:—
— Bright fugitives fleeing from night legions’ slaughter;
Now caught and imprisoned by gnomes of the water—
— They pass as a dream o’er ocean’s low screen.

The shades of the night in tropical blight
Out of the eastward,— as billows of vapor—
Slowly arise. In phantom-like labor,
Obscure;...enfold;— in eagerness spread;
Outstretch in unrest toward the red-glowing West
Hands dark and gigantic,— that fill with a dread:
A straining desire for the day that is dead;
— The day that the night has mantled with blight.

A zephyr-like sighing,— as breath from the dying,
— Breath of the passing of day, a wail for a morrow.—
Moaning sobs in low heart-throbs of sorrow;
Now dying in space,— the dead day as though tracing
To realms of the past,— it’s endless Oblivion...
Comes sadly returning with woe all embracing;
It’s murmurs dispelling the now erasing glow
— Like color last flying from cheeks of the Dying

Last streamer of Light!— The Wings of the Night
Noiselessly rushing from day’s devastation,

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Blotting,—all—folds in black desolation.
The night with it's fears; it's doubtings; it's shrinking;
The dark thickly forming as clouds in the storming,
Comes down with it's dread. The dead that the linking
Of dark of the night and of death in our thinking,
—Brings after the light on the wings of the night.