In Willow Groves

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Locklin: In Willow Groves

I

In willow groves where sleeping beauties slept
Where sparrows whispered lyrics in my ear
In meadows green that glistened from the rain
Where fauns and kids still grazed and violets grew
I dreamed my boyhood days in heedless bliss
So circumcised of care, the blue-eyed boy
Of Mister Earth was I. I sang my song
To stars and moons and sprites, I did whate'er
I dreamed, I dreamed I flew and fly I did
With falcons, with eagles, with an angel or god,
Through caverns, through clouds from world to world still
The perfumed nymphs breathed love upon my eyes
And soothed my limbs with oils and sprinkled balm
Upon my hair, and no one taught me tears
In the green and golden innocence of youth
I played upon the earth and sang the song
Of sparrows, till...

IN WILLOW GROVES
by Gerald Ivan Locklin

II

The sparrows
Disappeared one day. A strange nymph came along
Clad in red and black, who did not soothe
My limbs, but touched my loins to life. Now fears,
Desires and pains cast out that heedless calm
I grasped at clouds that vanished like the sighs
That rose unbidden from my lips until
The nymph spoke:

"Mortal, whoever has trod
In youth through Eden's plains shall someday dare
Look back, but homesick you will wander long
And e'er you find its gates you may destroy
Yourself. Look now towards death and take but this
The sparrow's song."

And so the nymph withdrew
I stood alone and then I sought in vain
As still I seek the willow groves. I stood near
Death and sang the sparrow's song and wept.