

Carmen De Boheme

By Hart Crane

Sinuously winding through the room
On smokey tongues of sweetened cigarettes, —
Plaintive yet proud the cello tones resume
The andante of smooth hopes and lost regrets.

Bright peacocks drink from flame-pots by the wall,
Just as absinthe-sipping women shiver through
With shimmering blue from the bowl in Circe's hall.
Their brown eyes blacken, and the blue drop hue.

The andante quivers with crescendo's start,
And dies on fire's birth in each man's heart.
The tapestry betrays a finger through
The slit, soft-pulling; — — — and music follows cue.

There is a sweep, — a shattering, — a choir
Disquieting of barbarous fantasy.
The pulse is in the ears, the heart is higher,
And stretches up through mortal eyes to see.

Carmen! Akimbo arms and smouldering eyes; —
Carmen! Bestirring hope and lipping eyes; —
Carmen whirls, and music swirls and dips.
"Carmen!," comes awed from wine-hot lips.

Finale leaves in silence to replume
Bent wings and Carmen with flaunts through the gloom
Of whispering tapestry, brown with old fringe: —
The winners leave too, and the small lamps twinge.

Morning: and through the foggy city gate
A gypsy wagon wiggles, striving straight.
And some dream still of Carmen's mystic face, —
Yellow, pallid, like ancient lace.