***Supping with the Dead***

![C:\Users\Aphori\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\TDAQGTG7\MC910217128[1].wmf]()*Oscar told us that he had had a hideous dream the previous night—*

*that he had been supping with the dead. Reggie made a very typical re-*

*sponse: ‘My dear Oscar, you were probably the life and soul of the party’.*

 —Robbie Ross, Letter to More Adey, 14 December 1900

\* \* \*

*I would like to found an order for those who cannot believe…where…*

*a priest, in whose heart peace had no dwelling, might celebrate with*

*unblessed bread and a chalice empty of wine.—*De Profundis

1.

Not all down there is grief and dole;

 The dead will often dine together;

![C:\Users\Aphori\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\4AX925HK\MC900051004[1].wmf]() They form a party, in regions nether,

And Oscar is its life and soul.

![C:\Users\Aphori\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\TDAQGTG7\MC900436283[1].png]()Poised on a cobwebbed candelabra,

 One single flame holds back a gloom

 That otherwise might fill the room

With spectres *frightfully* macabre.

Droll anecdotes and witty chaffing

 Gleam through the shadows candle-brightly:

 With dusty top hat tipped just slightly,

Old Oscar has them laughing, laughing.

‘I died, friends, as I lived’, he quips,

 ‘Beyond my means’—and eyes his glass:

 Empty it is indeed, alas!

And still he lifts it to his lips.



2.

♫

The buttonhole in his lapel,

 A green carnation, somewhat sere,

 Is redolent still, and of a queer

Radiance rather loud for Hell.

‘Play *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*,

 Please, Aubrey. Let us harrow Hell

 With charm! No harm, no harm. All’s well.

Who says it all must be so *bleak*?

‘Like golden lamps in a green night

 Let us burn bravely and be seen!

 Not all is as it could have been…

Of such dark things let us make light’.

**3.

Outside, amongst the dark things, grey

 And ghastly shapes can hear the the noise,

 And they are hissing with one voice:

*You’ll pay for this, come Judgment Day!*

But nothing dims that genial spirit.

 He tells his friends, to ease their fears:

 ‘When the Last Trumpet sounds, my dears,

We shall pretend we do not hear it.

