

DEBORAH-ZENHA ADAMS

hold the world

derived from The House of the Vampire by George Sylvester Viereck

The cause of the rupture between them was a matter only of surmise; but the effect it had on the woman testified clearly to the remarkable power of Reginald Clarke. He had entered her life and, behold! the world was transfixed on her canvases in myriad hues of transcending radiance; he had passed from it, and with him vanished the brilliancy of her colouring, as at sunset the borrowed amber and gold fade from the face of the clouds.

The glamour of Clarke's name may have partly explained the secret of his charm, but, even in circles where literary fame is no passport, he could, if he chose, exercise an almost terrible fascination. Subtle and profound, he had ransacked the coffers of mediæval dialecticians and plundered the arsenals of the Sophists. Many years later, when the vultures of misfortune had swooped down upon him, and his name was no longer mentioned without a sneer, he was still remembered in New York drawing-rooms as the man who had brought to perfection the art of talking. Even to dine with him was a liberal education.

Clarke's marvellous conversational power was equalled only by his marvellous style. Ernest Fielding's heart leaped in him at the thought that henceforth he would be privileged to live under one roof with the only writer of his generation who could lend to the English language the rich strength and rugged music of the Elizabethans.

hold the world

in amber

a secret charm

is no offer of fortune

no perfect art

only a thought

of music

ABOUT THE POEM & AUTHOR

“hold the world” was created from *The House of the Vampire* by George Sylvester Viereck (1907). About the poem and the process of composing it, Deborah-Zenha Adams writes:

My process for erasure poems is not particularly interesting, and probably not particularly original. I begin by selecting a few pages from any piece of text. I scan them for strong nouns and verbs, and I also look for compound words or words-within-words that might yield an unexpected turn to the poem. There is usually one word or phrase that becomes the core of the work; once I find that, the poem reveals itself. Texts from the 19th and early 20th centuries often contain a wide selection of both hard and flowery words, and these can be combined to make a high-tension poem. In this case, the words “secret,” “charm,” and “music” almost begged to be combined with the word “world.”

Deborah-Zenha Adams is the author of *All the Blood Relations* (Ballantine Books 1996), *All the Dirty Cowards* (Silver Dagger Mysteries 2001), and {This Tale is True} (Oconee Spirit Press 2018). Her work has appeared in *Adelaide Literary Magazine*, *Dead Mule School of Southern Literature*, *Orion*, *Sheila-Na-Gig*, *Scapegoat Review*, and elsewhere. She lives in Tennessee and can be found online at deborah-adams.com.

HERON TREE
30 March 2022
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