

All the time he was with Aphrodite she sought only to please him. He was keen for the chase, and often she would leave her swan-drawn car, in which she was used to glide at her ease through the air, and follow him along rough woodland ways dressed like a huntress. But one sad day she happened not to be with him and he tracked down a mighty boar. With his hunting dogs he brought the beast to bay. He hurled his spear at it, but he only wounded it, and before he could spring away, the boar mad with pain rushed at him and gored him with its great tusks. Aphrodite in her winged car high over the earth heard her lover's groan and flew to him. He was softly breathing his life away, the dark blood flowing down his skin of snow and his eyes growing heavy and dim. She kissed him, but Adonis knew not that she kissed him as he died. Cruel as his wound was, the wound in her heart was deeper. She spoke to him, although she knew he could no longer hear her: —

“You die, O thrice desired,
And my desire has flown like a dream.
Gone with you is the girdle of my beauty,
But I myself must live who am a goddess
And may not follow you.
Kiss me yet once again, the last, long kiss,
Until I draw your soul within my lips
And drink down all your love.”

The mountains all were calling and the oak trees answering,
Oh, woe, woe for Adonis. He is dead.
And Echo cried in answer, Oh, woe, woe for Adonis.
And all the Loves wept for him and all the Muses too.

But down in the black underworld Adonis could not hear them, nor see the crimson flower that sprang up where each drop of his blood had stained the earth.