

A Dream Vision

You're walking along a busy street in a city. It's night. You're in a hurry, but there are many other pedestrians about who slow your progress. Also, despite your haste, every twenty yards or so you feel compelled to stop and check that you have your key with you. You pull it out of an inside pocket of your jacket -- it is a large corroded old-fashioned key on a very long loop of string -- then thrust it back in. Once you hang it over your arm like a bag, a satchel, but you decide it's safer in the pocket and put it back in there. Then, as you take it out one more time, instead of the key you're looking at a small human-like figure, a fetish, lying there in your hand. It's grotesque, and now there's something else -- a sweet, fetid smell on the air, like rotting fruit.

You look up, disturbed, and the city is gone to be replaced by a flat landscape punctuated by mounds and hillocks and a few stunted trees. You stand with others. There's a pressure building as though a storm is in the air. You sense water nearby and the wind blows the smell to you. It's still dark but you can just make out and count nine shapes, pagan standing stones, placed around you. The quality of the air changes, then the ground beneath you, your heart feels too big for your chest. Something is coming. There are cut-off screams and one then another the people near you wink out like stars. You are alone, looking for the thing. You sense it at the last moment as it reaches out for you, takes you and lifts you up, lying there tiny under its inspection. You can't help but look up into its eyes . . .

You wake up in bed. You are sitting bolt upright and your heart is racing. The nightmare can be recalled in every detail, and the faint smell of rancid fruit permeates the room.