

Lou Reed, The City In The Sea / Shadow

Death has reared himself a throne

In a strange city
alone

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alone
Their shrines and palaces are not like ours
They do not tremble and rot
Eaten with time

Death has reared himself a throne

Lifted by forgotten winds
Resignedly beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie
A crown of stars

In a strange city
alone

A heaven God does not condemn
But the everlasting shadow
Makes mockery of it all

No holy rays come down
Lights from the lurid deep sea
stream up the turrets silently
Up thrones, up arbors
Of sculpted ivy and stone flowers
Up domes, up spires
Kingly halls all are melancholy shrines
The columns, frieze and entablature
Chokingly shockingly intertwined
The mast the viol and the vine
Twisted

There amid no earthly moans
Hell rises from a thousand thrones
Does reverence to death
And death does give his undivided time

There are open temples
and graves on a level with the waves
Death looms and looks
huge
gigantic
There is a ripple
now a wave
Towers thrown aside
Sinking in the dull tide
The waves glowing redder
The very hours losing their breath

All the cunning stars
watching fitfully over night after night of
matchless sleep
matched only with the whole of dream
The tell-tale beating of the heart
the breath
The desire, the pose
one poses upon the precipice
to fall to run to dive to tumble to fall down

down into the spiral down and then
One sees one's own death
one sees one committing murder or atrocious violent acts
and then across the shadow
not of man or God
but the shadow resting upon the brazen doorway

There were seven of us there
who saw the shadow as it came out from among the draperies
But we did not dare behold it
We looked down into the depths of the mirror of ebony
And the apparition spoke
"I am a shadow
and I dwell in the catacombs
which border
the country of illusion
hard by the dim plains of wishing";

And then did we start shuddering
starting from our seats
trembling
for the tones in the voice of the shadow
were not the tones of any one man
but of a multitude of beings
and varying in their cadences
from syllable to syllable
fell duskily upon our ears in the well
remembered and familiar accents
of a thousand departed friends