

Lou Reed, The Fall Of The House Of Usher

Edgar:
And then I had a vision

Roderick Usher:
Ah Edgar
Ah Edgar, my dear friend Edgar

Edgar:
It's been a long time, Roderick
I've ridden many miles
It's been a dull and soundless day for autumn
The leaves have lost their autumn glow
and the clouds seem oppressive with their drifting finery

Roderick Usher:
I know, my friend
Though I own so much of this land I find
the country insufferable
I deal only in half pleasures

Edgar:
Speaking of half pleasures
would you care for a tincture of opium?

Roderick Usher:
Nothing would please me more than to smoke
with an old friend

I've experienced the hideous dropping of the veil
the bitter lapse into common life
unredeemed dreariness of thought
I have an iciness, a sickening of the heart

Edgar:
It's true you don't look well, Roderick
but I am your friend
no matter the occasion or position of the stars
I'm glad you wrote me
but I must admit to concern

Roderick Usher:
I cannot contain my heart
Edgar, I look to you for solace
for relief from myself
What I have is constitutional
a family evil, a nervous affection that must surely pass
But I do have this morbid acuteness of senses
I can eat only the most insipid food
clothes only of the lightest texture
The odor of flowers I find oppressive
My eyes cannot bear even the faintest light

Madeline Usher:
[moaning]

Roderick Usher:
Did you hear that?

Edgar:
I hear
I am listening, go on

Roderick Usher:
I shall perish

I will perish in this deplorable folly
I dread the future
Not the events, the results
The most trivial event
causes the greatest agitation of the soul
I do not fear danger except in its absolute effect terror
I find I must inevitably abandon life and reason together
in my struggles with the demon fear

Perhaps you'll think me superstitious
but the physique of this place
it hovers about me like a great body
some diseased outer shell
some decaying finite skin encasing my morale

Edgar:
You mentioned your sister was ill

Roderick Usher:
My beloved sister, my sole companion
has had a long continuing illness
whose inevitable conclusion seems forsworn
This will leave me the last of the ancient race of Ushers

Madeline Usher:
[moaning]

Edgar:
She looks so much like you

Roderick Usher:
I love her in a nameless way
more than I love myself
Her demise will leave me hopelessly
confined to memories and realities of a future
so barren as to be stultifying

Madeline Usher:
[moaning]

Edgar:
Oh, what of physicians?

Roderick Usher:
Ah, they are baffled
Until today she refused bed rest
wanting to be present in your honor
but finally she succumbed to the prostrating power of the destroyer
You will probably see her no more

Edgar:
Sound and music take us to the twin curves of experience
Like brother and sister intertwined
they relieve themselves of bodily contact
and dance in a pagan revelry

Roderick Usher:

I have soiled myself with my designs
I am ashamed of my brain
The enemy is me
and the executioner terror
Music is a reflection of our inner self
unfiltered agony touches the wayward string
The wayward brain confuses itself

with the self-perceived future
and turns inward with loathing and terror
Either by design or thought
we are doomed to know our own end
I've written a lyric

Edgar:
May I hear it?

Roderick Usher:
It is called "The Haunted Palace";

In the greenest of our valleys,
By good angels tenanted,
Once a fair and stately palace --
Snow-white palace -- reared its head.

Banners yellow, glorious, golden,
On its roof did float and flow;
(This -- all this -- was in the olden time long ago)
And every gentle air that dallied,
Along the rampart plumed and pallid,
A winged odor went away.

All wanderers in that happy valley
Through two luminous windows saw
Spirits moving musically
The sovereign of the realm serene,
A troop of echoes whose sweet duty
Was but to sing
In voices of surpassing beauty,
The wit and wisdom of their king.

But evil things in robes of sorrow,
Assailed the monarch's high estate!
And round about his home the glory,
Is but a dim-remembered story.

Vast forms that move fantastically
To a discordant melody;
While, like a ghastly river,
A hideous throng rush out forever,
And laugh -- but smile no more.

Nevermore.

Edgar:
It's cold in here

Roderick Usher:
I tell you minerals are sentient things
The gradual yet certain condensation of an atmosphere
of their own about the waters and the walls proves this
Thus the silent yet importunate and terrible influence
which for centuries has molded my family
And now me

Madeline Usher:
[screaming]

Roderick Usher:
Excuse me

Madeline Usher:
[vomiting]

Roderick Usher:
She is gone
Out, sad light
Roderick has no life

I shall preserve her corpse for a fortnight

Edgar:
But Roderick..

Roderick Usher:
I shall place it in a vault facing the lake
I do not wish to answer to the medical men
nor place her in the exposed burial plot of my family
We shall inter her at the proper date
when I am more fully of a right mind
Her malady was unusual
Please do not question me on this

Edgar:
I cannot question you

Roderick Usher:
Then help me now

Madeline Usher:
[moaning]

Edgar:
One would think you twins

Roderick Usher:
We are
We have always been sympathetic to each other
Have you seen this?
It is her

Edgar:
It is a whirlwind
You should not
You must not behold this

Roderick, these appearances which bewilder you are mere electrical phenomena not uncommon
Or perhaps they have their rank origins in the marshy gases of the lake
Please, let's close this casement and I will read and you will listen
And together we will pass this terrible night together

What's that?
What is that?
Don't you hear that?

Roderick Usher:
Not hear it?
Yes, I hear it and have heard it many minutes have I heard it?
Oh, pity me miserable wretch
I dared not
Oh no
I dared not speak
We have put her living in the tomb
I have heard feeble movements in the coffin
I thought I heard
I dared not speak
Oh God
I have heard footsteps

Do you not hear them?

Attention

Do I not distinguish that heavy and horrible beating of her heart?

Madman

Madman

I tell you she now stands without the door

Madeline Usher :

[moaning and screaming]