

**THE DRAMA OF LOVE AND
DEATH; A STUDY
OF HUMAN EVOLUTION
AND TRANSFIGURATION**

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The Drama of Love and Death; A Study of Human Evolution and Transfiguration by Edward Carpenter

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EDWARD CARPENTER

**THE DRAMA OF LOVE AND
DEATH; A STUDY
OF HUMAN EVOLUTION
AND TRANSFIGURATION**

BY EDWARD CARPENTER

TOWARDS DEMOCRACY

LOVE'S COMING-OF-AGE

A Series of Papers on the Relations of
the Sexes

THE DRAMA OF LOVE AND DEATH

A Study of Human Evolution and Trans-
figuration

THE INTERMEDIATE SEX

A Study of Some Traditional Types of
Men and Women

INTERMEDIATE TYPES AMONG PRIMITIVE FOLK

A Study in Social Evolution

IOLÄUS

An Anthology of Friendship

THE DRAMA
OF LOVE AND DEATH

*A Study
of Human Evolution and
Transfiguration*

By
Edward Carpenter



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1912

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CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
<i>The Delphian Sibyl overlooking the Earth</i>	vii
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. THE BEGINNINGS OF LOVE	5
III. LOVE AS AN ART	24
IV. ITS ULTIMATE MEANINGS	48
V. THE ART OF DYING	69
VI. THE PASSAGE OF DEATH:	87
NOTE ON CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE BODY	107
VII. IS THERE AN AFTER-DEATH STATE?	111
VIII. THE UNDERLYING SELF	131
NOTE ON MEDIUMISTIC TRANCE	156
IX. SURVIVAL OF THE SELF	162
X. THE INNER OR SPIRITUAL BODY	176
XI. THE CREATION AND MATERIALIZATION OF FORMS	192
XII. REINCARNATION	215
XIII. THE DIVINE SOUL	237
XIV. THE RETURN JOURNEY	248
XV. THE MYSTERY OF PERSONALITY	262
XVI. CONCLUSION	284
APPENDIX	289

v

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THE DELPHIAN SIBYL

(On her mountain-slope overlooking the Earth)

*The coastline ranges far, the skies unfold;
The mountains rise in glory, stair on stair;
The darting Sun seeks Daphne as of old
In thickets dark where laurel blooms are fair.
The ancient sea, deep wrinkled, ever young,
With salt lip kisses still the silver strand;
In caverns dwell the Nymphs, their loves among,
And Titans still with strange fire shake the land.*

*A thousand generations here have come,
And wandered o'er these hills, and faced the light;
A thousand times slight man from mortal womb
Has leapt, and lapsed again into the night.
Here tribesmen dwelt, and fought, and curst their star,
And scoured both land and sea to sate their needs;
Prophetic eyes of youth gazed here afar,
With lips half open brooding on great deeds.*

THE DELPHIAN SIBYL

*Nor dreamed each little mortal of the Past,
Nor the deep sources of his life divined,
Watching his herds, or net in ocean cast,
Deaf to th' ancestral voices down the wind;
Nor guessed what strange sweet likenesses should rise,
Selves of himself, far in the future years,
With his own soul within their sunlit eyes,
And in their hearts his secret hopes and fears.*

*Yet I—I saw. Yea, from my lofty stand
I saw each life continuous extend
Beyond its mortal bound, and reach a hand
To others and to others without end.
I saw the generations like a river
Flow down from age to age, and all the vast
Complex of human passion float and quiver—
A wondrous mirror where the Gods were glassed.*

*And still through all these ages scarce a change
Has touched my mountain slopes or seaward curve,
And still the folk beneath the old laws range,
And from their ancient customs hardly swerve;
Still Love and Death, veiled figures, hand in hand,
Move o'er men's heads, dread, irresistible,
To ope the portals of that other land
Where the great Voices sound and Visions dwell.*

THE DRAMA OF LOVE AND DEATH

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

LOVE and Death move through this world of ours like things apart—underrunning it truly, and everywhere present, yet seeming to belong to some other mode of existence. When Death comes, breaking into the circle of our friends, words fail us, our mental machinery ceases to operate, all our little stores of wit and wisdom, our maxims, our mottoes, accumulated from daily experience, evaporate and are of no avail. These things do not seem to touch or illuminate in any effective way the strange vast Presence whose wings darken the world for us. And with Love, though in an opposite sense, it is the same. Words are of no use, all our philosophy fails—whether to account for the pain, or to fortify against the glamour, or to describe the glory of the experience.

These figures, Love and Death, move through