

# Fungi from Yuggoth

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Written 1929-30

Published

## I. The Book

The place was dark and dusty and half-lost  
In tangles of old alleys near the quays,  
Reeking of strange things brought in from the seas,  
And with queer curls of fog that west winds tossed.  
Small lozenge panes, obscured by smoke and frost,  
Just shewed the books, in piles like twisted trees,  
Rotting from floor to roof - congeries  
Of crumbling elder lore at little cost.

I entered, charmed, and from a cobwebbed heap  
Took up the nearest tome and thumbed it through,  
Trembling at curious words that seemed to keep  
Some secret, monstrous if one only knew.  
Then, looking for some seller old in craft,  
I could find nothing but a voice that laughed.

## II. Pursuit

I held the book beneath my coat, at pains  
To hide the thing from sight in such a place;  
Hurrying through the ancient harbor lanes  
With often-turning head and nervous pace.  
Dull, furtive windows in old tottering brick  
Peered at me oddly as I hastened by,  
And thinking what they sheltered, I grew sick  
For a redeeming glimpse of clean blue sky.

No one had seen me take the thing - but still  
A blank laugh echoed in my whirling head,  
And I could guess what nighted worlds of ill  
Lurked in that volume I had coveted.  
The way grew strange - the walls alike and madding -  
And far behind me, unseen feet were padding.

## III. The Key

I do not know what windings in the waste  
Of those strange sea-lanes brought me home once more,  
But on my porch I trembled, white with haste  
To get inside and bolt the heavy door.  
I had the book that told the hidden way  
Across the void and through the space-hung screens  
That hold the undimensioned worlds at bay,

And keep lost aeons to their own demesnes.

At last the key was mine to those vague visions  
Of sunset spires and twilight woods that brood  
Dim in the gulfs beyond this earth's precisions,  
Lurking as memories of infinitude.  
The key was mine, but as I sat there mumbling,  
The attic window shook with a faint fumbling.

#### **IV. Recognition**

The day had come again, when as a child  
I saw - just once - that hollow of old oaks,  
Grey with a ground-mist that enfolds and chokes  
The slinking shapes which madness has defiled.  
It was the same - an herbage rank and wild  
Clings round an altar whose carved sign invokes  
That Nameless One to whom a thousand smokes  
Rose, aeons gone, from unclean towers up-piled.

I saw the body spread on that dank stone,  
And knew those things which feasted were not men;  
I knew this strange, grey world was not my own,  
But Yuggoth, past the starry voids - and then  
The body shrieked at me with a dead cry,  
And all too late I knew that it was I!

#### **V. Homecoming**

The daemon said that he would take me home  
To the pale, shadowy land I half recalled  
As a high place of stair and terrace, walled  
With marble balustrades that sky-winds comb,  
While miles below a maze of dome on dome  
And tower on tower beside a sea lies sprawled.  
Once more, he told me, I would stand enthralled  
On those old heights, and hear the far-off foam.

All this he promised, and through sunset's gate  
He swept me, past the lapping lakes of flame,  
And red-gold thrones of gods without a name  
Who shriek in fear at some impending fate.  
Then a black gulf with sea-sounds in the night:  
"Here was your home," he mocked, "when you had sight!"

#### **VI. The Lamp**

We found the lamp inside those hollow cliffs  
Whose chiseled sign no priest in Thebes could read,  
And from whose caverns frightened hieroglyphs  
Warned every living creature of earth's breed.  
No more was there - just that one brazen bowl

With traces of a curious oil within;  
Fretted with some obscurely patterned scroll,  
And symbols hinting vaguely of strange sin.

Little the fears of forty centuries meant  
To us as we bore off our slender spoil,  
And when we scanned it in our darkened tent  
We struck a match to test the ancient oil.  
It blazed - great God!... But the vast shapes we saw  
In that mad flash have seared our lives with awe.

## **VII. Zaman's Hill**

The great hill hung close over the old town,  
A precipice against the main street's end;  
Green, tall, and wooded, looking darkly down  
Upon the steeple at the highway bend.  
Two hundred years the whispers had been heard  
About what happened on the man-shunned slope -  
Tales of an oddly mangled deer or bird,  
Or of lost boys whose kin had ceased to hope.

One day the mail-man found no village there,  
Nor were its folk or houses seen again;  
People came out from Aylesbury to stare -  
Yet they all told the mail-man it was plain  
That he was mad for saying he had spied  
The great hill's gluttonous eyes, and jaws stretched wide.

## **VIII. The Port**

Ten miles from Arkham I had struck the trail  
That rides the cliff-edge over Boynton Beach,  
And hoped that just at sunset I could reach  
The crest that looks on Innsmouth in the vale.  
Far out at sea was a retreating sail,  
White as hard years of ancient winds could bleach,  
But evil with some portent beyond speech,  
So that I did not wave my hand or hail.

Sails out of Innsmouth! echoing old renown  
Of long-dead times. But now a too-swift night  
Is closing in, and I have reached the height  
Whence I so often scan the distant town.  
The spires and roofs are there - but look! The gloom  
Sinks on dark lanes, as lightless as the tomb!

## **IX. The Courtyard**

It was the city I had known before;  
The ancient, leprous town where mongrel throngs  
Chant to strange gods, and beat unhallowed gongs

In crypts beneath foul alleys near the shore.  
The rotting, fish-eyed houses leered at me  
From where they leaned, drunk and half-animate,  
As edging through the filth I passed the gate  
To the black courtyard where the man would be.

The dark walls closed me in, and loud I cursed  
That ever I had come to such a den,  
When suddenly a score of windows burst  
Into wild light, and swarmed with dancing men:  
Mad, soundless revels of the dragging dead -  
And not a corpse had either hands or head!

## **X. The Pigeon-Flyers**

They took me slumming, where gaunt walls of brick  
Bulge outward with a viscous stored-up evil,  
And twisted faces, thronging foul and thick,  
Wink messages to alien god and devil.  
A million fires were blazing in the streets,  
And from flat roofs a furtive few would fly  
Bedraggled birds into the yawning sky  
While hidden drums droned on with measured beats.

I knew those fires were brewing monstrous things,  
And that those birds of space had been Outside -  
I guessed to what dark planet's crypts they plied,  
And what they brought from Thog beneath their wings.  
The others laughed - till struck too mute to speak  
By what they glimpsed in one bird's evil beak.

## **XI. The Well**

Farmer Seth Atwood was past eighty when  
He tried to sink that deep well by his door,  
With only Eb to help him bore and bore.  
We laughed, and hoped he'd soon be sane again.  
And yet, instead, young Eb went crazy, too,  
So that they shipped him to the county farm.  
Seth bricked the well-mouth up as tight as glue -  
Then hacked an artery in his gnarled left arm.

After the funeral we felt bound to get  
Out to that well and rip the bricks away,  
But all we saw were iron hand-holds set  
Down a black hole deeper than we could say.  
And yet we put the bricks back - for we found  
The hole too deep for any line to sound.

## **XII. The Howler**

They told me not to take the Briggs' Hill path

That used to be the highroad through to Zoar,  
For Goody Watkins, hanged in seventeen-four,  
Had left a certain monstrous aftermath.  
Yet when I disobeyed, and had in view  
The vine-hung cottage by the great rock slope,  
I could not think of elms or hempen rope,  
But wondered why the house still seemed so new.

Stopping a while to watch the fading day,  
I heard faint howls, as from a room upstairs,  
When through the ivied panes one sunset ray  
Struck in, and caught the howler unawares.  
I glimpsed - and ran in frenzy from the place,  
And from a four-pawed thing with human face.

### **XIII. Hesperia**

The winter sunset, flaming beyond spires  
And chimneys half-detached from this dull sphere,  
Opens great gates to some forgotten year  
Of elder splendours and divine desires.  
Expectant wonders burn in those rich fires,  
Adventure-fraught, and not untinged with fear;  
A row of sphinxes where the way leads clear  
Toward walls and turrets quivering to far lyres.

It is the land where beauty's meaning flowers;  
Where every unplaced memory has a source;  
Where the great river Time begins its course  
Down the vast void in starlit streams of hours.  
Dreams bring us close - but ancient lore repeats  
That human tread has never soiled these streets.

### **XIV. Star-Winds**

It is a certain hour of twilight glooms,  
Mostly in autumn, when the star-wind pours  
Down hilltop streets, deserted out-of-doors,  
But shewing early lamplight from snug rooms.  
The dead leaves rush in strange, fantastic twists,  
And chimney-smoke whirls round with alien grace,  
Heeding geometries of outer space,  
While Fomalhaut peers in through southward mists.

This is the hour when moonstruck poets know  
What fungi sprout in Yuggoth, and what scents  
And tints of flowers fill Nithon's continents,  
Such as in no poor earthly garden blow.  
Yet for each dream these winds to us convey,  
A dozen more of ours they sweep away!

### **XV. Antarktos**

Deep in my dream the great bird whispered queerly  
Of the black cone amid the polar waste;  
Pushing above the ice-sheet lone and drearily,  
By storm-crazed aeons battered and defaced.  
Hither no living earth-shapes take their courses,  
And only pale auroras and faint suns  
Glow on that pitted rock, whose primal sources  
Are guessed at dimly by the Elder Ones.

If men should glimpse it, they would merely wonder  
What tricky mound of Nature's build they spied;  
But the bird told of vaster parts, that under  
The mile-deep ice-shroud crouch and brood and bide.  
God help the dreamer whose mad visions shew  
Those dead eyes set in crystal gulfs below!

## **XVI. The Window**

The house was old, with tangled wings outthrown,  
Of which no one could ever half keep track,  
And in a small room somewhat near the back  
Was an odd window sealed with ancient stone.  
There, in a dream-plagued childhood, quite alone  
I used to go, where night reigned vague and black;  
Parting the cobwebs with a curious lack  
Of fear, and with a wonder each time grown.

One later day I brought the masons there  
To find what view my dim forbears had shunned,  
But as they pierced the stone, a rush of air  
Burst from the alien voids that yawned beyond.  
They fled - but I peered through and found unrolled  
All the wild worlds of which my dreams had told.

## **XVII. A Memory**

There were great steppes, and rocky table-lands  
Stretching half-limitless in starlit night,  
With alien campfires shedding feeble light  
On beasts with tinkling bells, in shaggy bands.  
Far to the south the plain sloped low and wide  
To a dark zigzag line of wall that lay  
Like a huge python of some primal day  
Which endless time had chilled and petrified.

I shivered oddly in the cold, thin air,  
And wondered where I was and how I came,  
When a cloaked form against a campfire's glare  
Rose and approached, and called me by my name.  
Staring at that dead face beneath the hood,  
I ceased to hope - because I understood.

## **XVIII. The Gardens of Yin**

Beyond that wall, whose ancient masonry  
Reached almost to the sky in moss-thick towers,  
There would be terraced gardens, rich with flowers,  
And flutter of bird and butterfly and bee.  
There would be walks, and bridges arching over  
Warm lotus-pools reflecting temple eaves,  
And cherry-trees with delicate boughs and leaves  
Against a pink sky where the herons hover.

All would be there, for had not old dreams flung  
Open the gate to that stone-lanterned maze  
Where drowsy streams spin out their winding ways,  
Trailed by green vines from bending branches hung?  
I hurried - but when the wall rose, grim and great,  
I found there was no longer any gate.

## **XIX. The Bells**

Year after year I heard that faint, far ringing  
Of deep-toned bells on the black midnight wind;  
Peals from no steeple I could ever find,  
But strange, as if across some great void winging.  
I searched my dreams and memories for a clue,  
And thought of all the chimes my visions carried;  
Of quiet Innsmouth, where the white gulls tarried  
Around an ancient spire that once I knew.

Always perplexed I heard those far notes falling,  
Till one March night the bleak rain splashing cold  
Beckoned me back through gateways of recalling  
To elder towers where the mad clappers tolled.  
They tolled - but from the sunless tides that pour  
Through sunken valleys on the sea's dead floor.

## **XX. Night-Gaunts**

Out of what crypt they crawl, I cannot tell,  
But every night I see the rubbery things,  
Black, horned, and slender, with membraneous wings,  
And tails that bear the bifid barb of hell.  
They come in legions on the north wind's swell,  
With obscene clutch that titillates and stings,  
Snatching me off on monstrous voyagings  
To grey worlds hidden deep in nightmare's well.

Over the jagged peaks of Thok they sweep,  
Heedless of all the cries I try to make,  
And down the nether pits to that foul lake  
Where the puffed shoggoths splash in doubtful sleep.  
But oh! If only they would make some sound,

Or wear a face where faces should be found!

### **XXI. Nyarlathotep**

And at the last from inner Egypt came  
The strange dark One to whom the fellahs bowed;  
Silent and lean and cryptically proud,  
And wrapped in fabrics red as sunset flame.  
Throngs pressed around, frantic for his commands,  
But leaving, could not tell what they had heard;  
While through the nations spread the awestruck word  
That wild beasts followed him and licked his hands.

Soon from the sea a noxious birth began;  
Forgotten lands with weedy spires of gold;  
The ground was cleft, and mad auroras rolled  
Down on the quaking citadels of man.  
Then, crushing what he chanced to mould in play,  
The idiot Chaos blew Earth's dust away.

### **XXII. Azathoth**

Out in the mindless void the daemon bore me,  
Past the bright clusters of dimensioned space,  
Till neither time nor matter stretched before me,  
But only Chaos, without form or place.  
Here the vast Lord of All in darkness muttered  
Things he had dreamed but could not understand,  
While near him shapeless bat-things flopped and fluttered  
In idiot vortices that ray-streams fanned.

They danced insanely to the high, thin whining  
Of a cracked flute clutched in a monstrous paw,  
Whence flow the aimless waves whose chance combining  
Gives each frail cosmos its eternal law.  
"I am His Messenger," the daemon said,  
As in contempt he struck his Master's head.

### **XXIII. Mirage**

I do not know if ever it existed -  
That lost world floating dimly on Time's stream -  
And yet I see it often, violet-misted,  
And shimmering at the back of some vague dream.  
There were strange towers and curious lapping rivers,  
Labyrinths of wonder, and low vaults of light,  
And bough-crossed skies of flame, like that which quivers  
Wistfully just before a winter's night.

Great moors led off to sedgy shores unpeopled,  
Where vast birds wheeled, while on a windswept hill  
There was a village, ancient and white-steepled,



With evening chimes for which I listen still.  
I do not know what land it is - or dare  
Ask when or why I was, or will be, there.

#### **XXIV. The Canal**

Somewhere in dream there is an evil place  
Where tall, deserted buildings crowd along  
A deep, black, narrow channel, reeking strong  
Of frightful things whence oily currents race.  
Lanes with old walls half meeting overhead  
Wind off to streets one may or may not know,  
And feeble moonlight sheds a spectral glow  
Over long rows of windows, dark and dead.

There are no footfalls, and the one soft sound  
Is of the oily water as it glides  
Under stone bridges, and along the sides  
Of its deep flume, to some vague ocean bound.  
None lives to tell when that stream washed away  
Its dream-lost region from the world of clay.

#### **XXV. St. Toad's**

"Beware St. Toad's cracked chimes!" I heard him scream  
As I plunged into those mad lanes that wind  
In labyrinths obscure and undefined  
South of the river where old centuries dream.  
He was a furtive figure, bent and ragged,  
And in a flash had staggered out of sight,  
So still I burrowed onward in the night  
Toward where more roof-lines rose, malign and jagged.

No guide-book told of what was lurking here -  
But now I heard another old man shriek:  
"Beware St. Toad's cracked chimes!" And growing weak,  
I paused, when a third greybeard croaked in fear:  
"Beware St. Toad's cracked chimes!" Aghast, I fled -  
Till suddenly that black spire loomed ahead.

#### **XXVI. The Familiars**

John Whateley lived about a mile from town,  
Up where the hills begin to huddle thick;  
We never thought his wits were very quick,  
Seeing the way he let his farm run down.  
He used to waste his time on some queer books  
He'd found around the attic of his place,  
Till funny lines got creased into his face,  
And folks all said they didn't like his looks.

When he began those night-howls we declared

He'd better be locked up away from harm,  
So three men from the Aylesbury town farm  
Went for him - but came back alone and scared.  
They'd found him talking to two crouching things  
That at their step flew off on great black wings.

### **XXVII. The Elder Pharos**

From Leng, where rocky peaks climb bleak and bare  
Under cold stars obscure to human sight,  
There shoots at dusk a single beam of light  
Whose far blue rays make shepherds whine in prayer.  
They say (though none has been there) that it comes  
Out of a pharos in a tower of stone,  
Where the last Elder One lives on alone,  
Talking to Chaos with the beat of drums.

The Thing, they whisper, wears a silken mask  
Of yellow, whose queer folds appear to hide  
A face not of this earth, though none dares ask  
Just what those features are, which bulge inside.  
Many, in man's first youth, sought out that glow,  
But what they found, no one will ever know.

### **XXVIII. Expectancy**

I cannot tell why some things hold for me  
A sense of unplumbed marvels to befall,  
Or of a rift in the horizon's wall  
Opening to worlds where only gods can be.  
There is a breathless, vague expectancy,  
As of vast ancient pomps I half recall,  
Or wild adventures, uncorporeal,  
Ecstasy-fraught, and as a day-dream free.

It is in sunsets and strange city spires,  
Old villages and woods and misty downs,  
South winds, the sea, low hills, and lighted towns,  
Old gardens, half-heard songs, and the moon's fires.  
But though its lure alone makes life worth living,  
None gains or guesses what it hints at giving.

### **XXIX. Nostalgia**

Once every year, in autumn's wistful glow,  
The birds fly out over an ocean waste,  
Calling and chattering in a joyous haste  
To reach some land their inner memories know.  
Great terraced gardens where bright blossoms blow,  
And lines of mangoes luscious to the taste,  
And temple-groves with branches interlaced  
Over cool paths - all these their vague dreams shew.

They search the sea for marks of their old shore -  
For the tall city, white and turreted -  
But only empty waters stretch ahead,  
So that at last they turn away once more.  
Yet sunken deep where alien polyyps throng,  
The old towers miss their lost, remembered song.

### **XXX. Background**

I never can be tied to raw, new things,  
For I first saw the light in an old town,  
Where from my window huddled roofs sloped down  
To a quaint harbour rich with visionings.  
Streets with carved doorways where the sunset beams  
Flooded old fanlights and small window-panes,  
And Georgian steeples topped with gilded vanes -  
These were the sights that shaped my childhood dreams.

Such treasures, left from times of cautious leaven,  
Cannot but loose the hold of flimsier wraiths  
That flit with shifting ways and muddled faiths  
Across the changeless walls of earth and heaven.  
They cut the moment's thongs and leave me free  
To stand alone before eternity.

### **XXXI. The Dweller**

It had been old when Babylon was new;  
None knows how long it slept beneath that mound,  
Where in the end our questing shovels found  
Its granite blocks and brought it back to view.  
There were vast pavements and foundation-walls,  
And crumbling slabs and statues, carved to shew  
Fantastic beings of some long ago  
Past anything the world of man recalls.

And then we saw those stone steps leading down  
Through a choked gate of graven dolomite  
To some black haven of eternal night  
Where elder signs and primal secrets frown.  
We cleared a path - but raced in mad retreat  
When from below we heard those clumping feet.

### **XXXII. Alienation**

His solid flesh had never been away,  
For each dawn found him in his usual place,  
But every night his spirit loved to race  
Through gulfs and worlds remote from common day.  
He had seen Yaddith, yet retained his mind,  
And come back safely from the Ghooric zone,  
When one still night across curved space was thrown

That beckoning piping from the voids behind.

He waked that morning as an older man,  
And nothing since has looked the same to him.  
Objects around float nebulous and dim -  
False, phantom trifles of some vaster plan.  
His folk and friends are now an alien throng  
To which he struggles vainly to belong.

### **XXXIII. Harbour Whistles**

Over old roofs and past decaying spires  
The harbour whistles chant all through the night;  
Throats from strange ports, and beaches far and white,  
And fabulous oceans, ranged in motley choirs.  
Each to the other alien and unknown,  
Yet all, by some obscurely focussed force  
From brooding gulfs beyond the Zodiac's course,  
Fused into one mysterious cosmic drone.

Through shadowy dreams they send a marching line  
Of still more shadowy shapes and hints and views;  
Echoes from outer voids, and subtle clues  
To things which they themselves cannot define.  
And always in that chorus, faintly blent,  
We catch some notes no earth-ship ever sent.

### **XXXIV. Recapture**

The way led down a dark, half-wooded heath  
Where moss-grey boulders humped above the mould,  
And curious drops, disquieting and cold,  
Sprayed up from unseen streams in gulfs beneath.  
There was no wind, nor any trace of sound  
In puzzling shrub, or alien-featured tree,  
Nor any view before - till suddenly,  
Straight in my path, I saw a monstrous mound.

Half to the sky those steep sides loomed upspread,  
Rank-grassed, and cluttered by a crumbling flight  
Of lava stairs that scaled the fear-topped height  
In steps too vast for any human tread.  
I shrieked - and knew what primal star and year  
Had sucked me back from man's dream-transient sphere!

### **XXXV. Evening Star**

I saw it from that hidden, silent place  
Where the old wood half shuts the meadow in.  
It shone through all the sunset's glories - thin  
At first, but with a slowly brightening face.  
Night came, and that lone beacon, amber-hued,

Beat on my sight as never it did of old;  
The evening star - but grown a thousandfold  
More haunting in this hush and solitude.

It traced strange pictures on the quivering air -  
Half-memories that had always filled my eyes -  
Vast towers and gardens; curious seas and skies  
Of some dim life - I never could tell where.  
But now I knew that through the cosmic dome  
Those rays were calling from my far, lost home.

### **XXXVI. Continuity**

There is in certain ancient things a trace  
Of some dim essence - more than form or weight;  
A tenuous aether, indeterminate,  
Yet linked with all the laws of time and space.  
A faint, veiled sign of continuities  
That outward eyes can never quite descry;  
Of locked dimensions harbouring years gone by,  
And out of reach except for hidden keys.

It moves me most when slanting sunbeams glow  
On old farm buildings set against a hill,  
And paint with life the shapes which linger still  
From centuries less a dream than this we know.  
In that strange light I feel I am not far  
From the fixt mass whose sides the ages are.

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