

*THE BLACK VIRGIN OF SOUS-TERRE,  
CHARTRES*

**I**N the depths of the earth  
My prayer is hearkened.  
Thou art black but beautiful  
And thy face is darkened.  
O thou Mother of love and fear and wonder  
Hear my prayer in the dark down under.

Through thine aisles of shadow  
The dim lamps burning  
See the Star of Jacob  
In the place of yearning.  
Thou art black but beautiful in veils of mourning  
O thou Star of Jacob in darkness dawning.

The long long legend  
Of Time goes backward  
Through aeons forgotten  
To the Virgin bearing  
The One-Begotten.  
Under the earth and the paven floorway  
The dim Past waits at Her awful doorway  
Under the stones of Her old old town.  
In the cavernous glooms of a hallway hidden  
The great shades wait at a door forbidden,  
Druids and kings in the silence watching,  
Terror at prayer and the dark bowed down.

ELIZABETH BELLOC.