

# THE TEETH OF MAN

ZOHEB MASHIUR

Ten thousand were the teeth in Mashgaru's smiling mouth, with still more hidden until needed.

Twelve were the swords sheathed in Mashgaru's chest, with still more hidden until needed.

Three hundred verses were etched on Mashgaru's limbs, with still more hidden until needed.

A lone little light danced on the tip of Mashgaru's finger, and no more were needed.

The Man of the Outer Dark circled Mashgaru in a dance of capering triumph. Seven billion was He, and the marble floor thundered with the fall of His feet.

The lone little light struck down the Man of the Outer Dark in his ones and twos, yet a world's worth of Him remained.

The Man of the Outer Dark's seven billion forms bit and kissed at the body of Mashgaru, plundering the flesh of that universal being.

Mashgaru smiled, and with ten thousand teeth snatched and chewed on the Man of the Outer Dark, yet a world's worth of Him remained.

With twelve arms Mashgaru drew the swords on Mashgaru's chest, and they screamed with joy as they scythed through the Man of the Outer Dark.

Yet He remained in His billions, and Mashgaru bled.

Three hundred verses were sung in Mashgaru's marble hall, and with each perfect note the Man of the Outer Dark was reduced – still He danced and drank His fill.)

The lone little light sputtered and coughed but rallied and fought for Mashgaru's love.

Mashgaru smiled wider, revealing more teeth, and these were stained with blood.

Mashgaru breathed inward until the lines of Mashgaru's ribs were visible, and these cut through the flesh and revealed themselves as swords.

(Blood flowed through the rents on Mashgaru's breast and down into the mouths of the Man of the Outer Dark, who laughed as



rippled as the last remaining verses were sung.

The lone little light smote with fury, Mashgaru's only weapon of worth.

But the Man of the Outer Dark's mouths were many and His need was strong.

As Mashgaru sank to the marble floor, the surviving mouths of the Man laughed in adoration.

"Surrender to Me, Mashgaru of the Lone Light! Let Me kiss you, for I love you!"

And Man sunk His teeth and nails into the flesh of Mashgaru and began to climb the dying body to feast on the ruby-red lips.

The verses disappeared from the air of Mashgaru's hall, and we have not seen them since.

The swords fell from Mashgaru's hands, cutting through the marble floor down to we know not where.

Though Mashgaru's mouth was black with blood the infinite teeth still glimmered, and we call them stars.

And dying Mashgaru saw Man's seven billions hungry for love, and in Mashgaru's smile was sorrow.

For Man in the Outer Dark was lonely and without love, and who

was there to desire but Mashgaru?

Seven billion selves to love, but they were hidden by the dark and He saw only the light of Mashgaru.

And the lone little light sputtered and coughed but danced bravely on Mashgaru's finger.

And Mashgaru swallowed that little light and made it part of Mashgaru.

And as the Man of the Outer Dark ate Mashgaru the light passed into Him as well.

And the light entered Him in His seven billion selves, and has not departed since.

And without Dark Man saw all His selves and knew He had never been alone.

And Mashgaru departed, in pain and in love.

He drank His fill.)

And Mashgaru said, "O", which we now know to be true, and the air parted to reveal the verses that were hidden all this time.

The Man of the Outer Dark was afraid and assailed Mashgaru's perfect flesh with more urgent desire, though a world's worth of Him yet remained.

And Mashgaru fought Him in Mashgaru's true form, with teeth beyond counting and chest bloodied and bare.

The swords in Mashgaru's hands cursed and raged, bellowing in pain and fear.

And through Mashgaru's marble hall the air