

*As the season progresses, strange dreams bother you.*

*The dreams are like fragments of a play, each replete with dramaturgical symbolism. They are vivid, but not traumatic or disturbing – just strangely intense. In each dream, the unfolding play ends in the same final act.*

*In that finale, a figure from somewhere else, perhaps a man or perhaps a woman, returns to here, wherever here is. The figure always wears a silver mask. Sometimes the scene is set in a privy chamber, sometimes a library, and sometimes a grim mausoleum. Behind the silver-masked traveler, two other figures struggle as if for control of the scene – one a witch-magician garbed in the stars of night, the other a physick who tries to pull the mask from the traveler's face. Whispering malevolent shadows hang back further still, at the edges of the scene, and seem to wish the silver-masked traveler ill; they push forward a mirror that shows nothing but the mask and, in dream logic, becomes the mask; they try to snuff a lantern that the traveler carries; they scurry forward to try to keep a dark cloak from slipping from his or her shoulders.*

*The dream always ends before you discover its final outcome. Does the silver-masked figure make it to their destination? What becomes of them? You feel sure that the figure is going home, but as to where that home is, or what its nature is, you are uncertain. There are glimpses of fields of golden wheat and shining sun, but only glimpses, and then they are gone.*

*This dream grows in intensity as the season progresses; by the nights shortly before the Autumn Equinox, you are experiencing it almost every time you sleep. Your sleep is as restful (or not) as it would be normally.*