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Dominion of the Parthians

Ernest Hilbert

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Ernest Hilbert

Dominion of the Parthians

*University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology
and Anthropology*

The iridescent maps along the walls
Reveal lost empires that spread like species
Overbred toward their final decline;
The halls adorned with masks and dolls
Of nations destroyed by war and disease,
And fulcra on which bored queens would recline,
The marble busts of conquerors, satyr
Poised over a pool, a restyled colonnade,
Charms for love and health, onyx amulets,
Cuneiform incised in clay from Ur,
Galleries glamorous with gold and jade
Once gathered by war, too much to possess,
All seem to slip from me, become less true,
Now less to me than sitting here with you
And seeing that what little we've done
And have, will, gladly, just as well be gone.