

And again I bow as the censer swings
And the God Enthroned goes by.)

Ay, we remember His sacred ark
And the virtuous men that knelt 30
To the dark and the hush behind the dark
Wherein we dreamed He dwelt;

Until we entered to hale Him out,
And found no more than an old
Uncleanly image girded about 35
The loins with scarlet and gold.

Him we o'erset with the butts of our spears —
Him and his vast designs —
To be the scorn of our muleteers
And the jest of our halted lines. 40

By the picket-pins that the dogs defile,
In the dung and the dust He lay,
Till the priests ran and chattered awhile
And wiped Him and took Him away.

Hushing the matter before it was known, 45
They returned to our fathers afar,
And hastily set Him afresh on His throne
Because he had won us the war.

Wherefore with knees that feign to quake —
Bent head and shaded brow — 50
To this dead dog, for my father's sake,
In Rimmon's House I bow!

1903

(From *Rudyard Kipling's Verse*. Definitive edition.
London, 1940)