

THE SHADOW SINGER

AN ONLINE ARCHIVE OF ROBERT E. HOWARD STUDIES

BY FRANK COFFMAN

A MEMBER JOURNAL OF
ROBERT-E-HOWARD; ELECTRONIC AMATEUR PRESS ASSOCIATION

SHADOW SINGER #22 / SUMMER SOLSTICE 2014

COFFMAN STREET

Creative Writing Section of *The Shadow Singer*

The Bards

for REH

by Frank Coffman © 2014, all rights reserved

"Now is the harp of Homer flecked with rust..."

Robert E. Howard — from "Autumn"

He heard the chanting of a distant voice,
A harpist hallowing heroic deeds,
The age-old melodies of quest and strife.
And in his poet soul the planted seeds
Took root and, nurtured there, they sprang to life.

And he had made his choice:
To follow down the paths of song and story;
To burnish, as he could, the rusted harp;
To hone the dulled edge 'til it be full sharp
And brilliant in its bright and burnished glory.

And, shouldering the lyre, his fingers leapt
And struck strong songs and stories from the strings,
The chords of magic music for his age,
Great tales and verses full of wondrous things.
His gifts were graven on the printed page

Before the young voice slept.
Alas, the harp is flecked again with rust,
But tales true told can bear the trials of time,
And songs well sung reverberate and chime,
Though skies roll on above the singer's dust.

* * * * *

Mayhap one day another youth will hark
To a voice drifting on a whispering wind,
The echo of that selfsame bardic urge,
And feel the power, the thunder, and the surge
Of life, of strife, of death — and that day find

The courage to embark...
Along that road, lifting again the lyre,
The voice to chant strong songs of ice and fire.
And o'er those strings where long-dead fingers flew,
With bardic skills, chant out songs old — and New!

first four stanzas composed 6/23-24/2009
last two stanzas composed 12/12/2012