

=====

An Introduction to **Musing the Maenad**, a Graphic  
Novella by Willard Thurston

=====

**Musing the Maenad** is an ample retelling of the spare and sketchy Bronze Age legend of Nitocris, an able Egyptian Queen who inspired the building of the Micerine pyramid. A later parallel Greek tale describes this Queen as Greek, a Thracian hetaera named Doricha or Rhodopis (Zelea in our story), who transfigured her slave status about the same time as her compatriot Aesop. Despite the anachronism, the chronicles of the two have become intertwined. Zelea's life before becoming a consort is the subject of this tale.

**Musing the Maenad** is a concise graphic rendering of the novel **Pneuma**.

=====

The book itself has 30 readable pages, taking up 14.3  
megabytes.

A further curiosity was a piercing ray of light that etched the new Navel Boss just before it was installed beneath the 'Pythia's Perch' in the reading chamber.

20



Nea, one of the shrine keepers, was the first to see it -- and the astonishing spectre of the Pythia herself! attired as a Thracian goddess -- but in a rag dress! -- wandering about the cellar to the shrine in a highly abstracted state!

The Regnant Maenad, who thought of herself as a Sovereign ruler, sat on the rooftop terrace overlooking the sheltered garden, her expression one of rapt wonder or -- aphrodisiac. Due some said to a mushroom; others, to a young widowed aristocrat by name of Zelea.



Cerberus, the Epopt, loitering on the breezeway, sensed the dicey possibility -- their flinty Maenad smitten by the vision of the sylphlike Glaean aristo and her flame-haired maid as they stood in the sun-flecked garden after the storm, their chitons drying on a trestle. In the Yew tree a royal cobra stalked an owl, a familiar of Athena herself!



It was a curious obsession for an ambitious Maenad, this young boyish widow of limited means.



With arms overhead in the eye-stalk pose, Zelea's newly acquired moves were approved by the mistress of the Snake Dance, a rarely-seen Hyperborean. So the pattern of the dance was thus broached, leaving the court in a state of reassured wonder and exploitable fascination. Only the ardors of the bull court Zelea eschewed, unlike the fearless Scheira.



Then, a near disaster, a division in the court: the faction opposed to the Orphic prophecy slyly argued that the servant was the more 'rhodopis' of the two, thus abjuring the prophesy. Several seer adjudicators were called and the Sibylline text re-examined. There was carefully assessed but deemed to be too old and less skilled in the terpsichore repertoire.

After a second assessment the Vizier's Prolocutor proclaimed the Lady Zelea to be the long-awaited Nitocris, thus abetting an older faction at court!

