



## Frederic Roderigo Gruger

### Title

The Chant Was Like the Broken Breathing of an Inconceivable Animal

### Medium

Pencil and wash on illustration board

### Date

1927

### Dimensions

10 1/2 × 17 in. (26.7 × 43.2 cm)

### Accession number

82.19.2

### Copyright

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### Credit Line

Gift of Frederic R. Gruger, Jr., 1982

### Web Description

In Frederic Gruger's dramatic rendering, a frenzied scene unfolds for the viewer. Composed with intensely atmospheric light and dark tones, created with charcoal, black washes, and a variety of pencils, the illustration depicts a pivotal and unexpected twist in the short story "Charleston." At this moment, the protagonist—John Fearnese, a former Confederate Colonel living in Reconstruction-era South Carolina—secretly witnesses, and then stunningly takes part in, a mysterious Jujú ritual. Given the freedom to select the scenes he wished to illustrate, Gruger offers Fearnese's point of view just before his presence is revealed, making the viewer a co-conspirator in the bizarre events as they unfold. Trained in Philadelphia, Gruger learned the art of on-the-spot sketching for his job as a newspaper illustrator. Even as many of his colleagues in Philadelphia, such as John Sloan, Everett Shinn, and Robert Henri, went on to be more well known in the field of fine arts, Gruger remained devoted to illustration. As newspapers turned increasingly to photographic reproductions in the late nineteenth century, he embarked on a long career with *The Saturday Evening Post*, for which this drawing was made in 1927.