

Charles Baudelaire

—  
Les

Fleurs  
du Mal





# Table des matières

<b>Préface</b>	<b>i</b>
Préface des Fleurs . . . . .	i
Projet de préface pour Les Fleurs du Mal . . . . .	iii
<b>Preface</b>	<b>vi</b>
Preface to the Flowers . . . . .	vi
III . . . . .	vii
Project on a preface to the Flowers of Evil . . . . .	viii
<b>Préface à cette édition</b>	<b>xi</b>
L'édition de 1857 . . . . .	xi
L'édition de 1861 . . . . .	xii
"Les Épaves" 1866 . . . . .	xii
L'édition de 1868 . . . . .	xii
<b>Preface to this edition</b>	<b>xiv</b>
About 1857 version . . . . .	xiv
About 1861 version . . . . .	xv
About 1866 "Les Épaves" . . . . .	xv
About 1868 version . . . . .	xv
<b>Dédicace – Dedication</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Au Lecteur – To the Reader</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Spleen et idéal / Spleen and Ideal</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Bénédictio – Benediction</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>L'Albatros – The Albatross (1861)</b>	<b>19</b>

Élévation – Elevation	22
Correspondances – Correspondences	25
J'aime le souvenir de ces époques nues – I Love to Think of Those Naked Epochs	27
Les Phares – The Beacons	31
La Muse malade – The Sick Muse	35
La Muse vénale – The Venal Muse	37
Le Mauvais Moine – The Bad Monk	39
L'Ennemi – The Enemy	41
Le Guignon – Bad Luck	43
La Vie antérieure – Former Life	45
Bohémiens en voyage - Traveling Gypsies	47
L'Homme et la mer – Man and the Sea	49
Don Juan aux enfers – Don Juan in Hell	51
À Théodore de Banville – To Théodore de Banville (1868)	55
Châtiment de l'Orgueil – Punishment of Pride	57
La Beauté – Beauty	60
L'Idéal – The Ideal	62
La Géante – The Giantess	64
Les Bijoux – The Jewels (1857)	66
Le Masque – The Mask (1861)	69
Hymne à la Beauté – Hymn to Beauty (1861)	73
Parfum exotique – Exotic Perfume	76

La Chevelure – Hair (1861)	78
Je t'adore à l'égal de la voûte nocturne – I Adore You as Much as the Nocturnal Vault...	82
Tu mettrais l'univers entier dans ta ruelle – You Would Take the Whole World to Bed with You	84
Sed non satiata – Never Satisfied	86
Avec ses vêtements ondoyants et nacrés – With Her Pearly, Undulat- ing Dresses	88
Le Serpent qui danse – The Dancing Serpent	90
Une Charogne – A Carcass	94
De profundis clamavi – From the Depths I Cried	99
Le Vampire – The Vampire	101
Le Léthé – Lethe (1857)	104
Une nuit que j'étais près d'une affreuse Juive – One Night I Lay be- side a Frightful Jewess	107
Remords posthume – Posthumous Remorse	109
Le Chat – The Cat	112
Duellum – The Duel (1861)	114
Le Balcon – The Balcony	116
Le Possédé – The Possessed (1861)	119
Un Fantôme – A Phantom (1861)	121
Je te donne ces vers afin que si mon nom – I Give You These Verses So That If My Name	127
Semper eadem – Always the Same (1861)	129
Tout entière – All Together	131

Que diras-tu ce soir, pauvre âme solitaire – What Will You Say Tonight, Poor Solitary Soul	134
Le Flambeau vivant – The Living Torch	136
À Celle qui est trop gaie – To She Who Is Too Gay (1857)	138
Réversibilité – Reversibility	142
Confession – Confession	145
L’Aube spirituelle – Spiritual Dawn	149
Harmonie du soir – Evening Harmony	151
Le Flacon – The Perfume Flask	153
Le Poison – Poison	156
Ciel brouillé – Cloudy Sky	159
Le Chat – The Cat	161
Le Beau Navire – The Beautiful Ship	165
L’invitation au voyage – Invitation to the Voyage	169
L’Irréparable – The Irreparable	173
Causerie – Conversation	178
Chant d’automne – Autumn Song (1861)	180
À une Madone – To a Madonna (1861)	183
Chanson d’Après-midi – Afternoon Song (1861)	187
Sisina – Sisina (1861)	191
Vers pour le portrait de M. Honoré Daumier – Verses for the Portrait of Honoré Daumier (1868)	193
Franciscae meae laudes – In Praise of My Frances	195

À une Dame créole – To a Creole Lady	199
Moesta et errabunda – Grieving and Wandering	201
Le Revenant – The Ghost	204
Sonnet d’automne – Autumn Sonnet (1861)	206
Tristesses de la lune – Sorrows of the Moon	208
Les Chats – The Cats	210
Les Hiboux – The Owls	212
La Pipe – The Pipe	214
La Musique – Music	216
Sépulture – Sepulchre	218
Une gravure fantastique – A Fantastic Engraving (1861)	220
Le Mort joyeux – The Grateful Dead	222
Le Tonneau de la Haine – The Cask of Hatred	224
La Cloche fêlée – The Broken Clock	227
Spleen (Pluviôse irrité) – Spleen (January irritated)	229
Spleen (J’ai plus de souvenirs) – Spleen (I have more memories)	231
Spleen (Je suis comme le roi) – Spleen (I’m like the King)	234
Spleen (Quand le ciel bas et lourd) – Spleen (When the low, heavy sky)	236
Obsession – Obsession (1861)	239
Le Goût du néant – The Taste for Nothingness (1861)	241
Alchimie de la douleur – The Alchemy of Grief (1861)	243
Horreur sympathique – Sympathetic Horror (1861)	245

Le Calumet de Paix, imité de Longfellow – The Peace Pipe, in Imitation of Longfellow (1868)	247
La Prière d'un païen – A Pagan's Prayer (1868)	253
Le Couvercle – The Cover (1868)	255
L'imprévu – The Unforeseen (1868)	257
L'Examen de minuit – Midnight Examination of Conscience (1868)	262
Madrigal triste – Sad Madrigal (1868)	265
L'Avertisseur – The Warner (1868)	269
À une Malabaraise – To a Lady of Malabar (1868)	271
La Voix – The Voice (1868)	274
Hymne – Hymn (1868)	277
Le Rebelle – The Rebel (1868)	281
Les Yeux de Berthe – Berthe's Eyes (1868)	283
Le Jet d'eau – The Fountain (1868)	285
La Rançon – The Ransom (1868)	289
Bien loin d'ici – Quite Far From Here (1868)	291
Le Coucher du Soleil Romantique – Sunset of Romanticism (1868)	293
Sur 'Le Tasse en prison' d'Eugène Delacroix – On 'Tasso in Prison' by Eugene Delacroix (1868)	295
Le Gouffre – The Abyss (1868)	297
Les Plaintes d'un Icare – The Laments of an Icarus (1868)	299
Recueillement – Meditation (1868)	301
L'Héautontimorouménos – To Self-Tormenter	303



L'Irrémédiable – The Irremediable	306
L'Horloge – The Clock (1861)	310
<b>Tableaux Parisiens / Parisian Scenes</b>	<b>315</b>
Paysage – Landscape (1861)	317
Le Soleil – The Sun	320
Lola de Valence – Lola of Valencia (1868)	323
La Lune offensée – The Moon Offended (1868)	324
À une Mendiante rousse – To a Mendicant Redhead	326
Le Cygne – The Swan (1861)	331
Les Sept vieillards – The Seven Old Men (1861)	336
Les Petites Vieilles – The Little Old Ladies (1861)	341
Les Aveugles – The Blind (1861)	349
À une passante – To a Passerby (1861)	351
Le Squelette laboureur – The Hard-Working Skeleton (1861)	353
Le Crépuscule du soir – Evening Crepuscule	357
Le Jeu – Gambling	361
Danse macabre – The Dance of Death (1861)	364
L'Amour du mensonge – The Love of Lies (1861)	370
Je n'ai pas oublié, voisine de la ville – I Have Not Forgotten, Near The City	373
La servante au grand coeur dont vous étiez jalouse – The Kind-Hearted Servant of Whom You Were Jealous	375
Brumes et pluies – Mists and Rain	378

Rêve parisien – Parisian Dream (1861)	380
Le Crépuscule du matin – Morning Crepuscule	386
<b>Le Vin / Wine</b>	<b>391</b>
L’Ame du Vin – The Soul of Wine	393
Le Vin de chiffonniers – The Rag-Picker’s Wine	396
Le Vin de l’assassin – The Murderer’s Wine	399
Le Vin du solitaire – The Lonely Man’s Wine	404
Le Vin des amants – The Wine of Lovers	406
<b>Fleurs du mal / Flowers of Evil</b>	<b>409</b>
Épigraphe pour un livre condamné – Epigraph for a Condemned Book (1868)	411
La Destruction – Destruction	413
Une Martyre – A Martyr	416
Lesbos – Lesbos (1857)	422
Femmes Damnés (Delphine et Hippolyte) – Damned Women (Delphine and Hippolyta) (1857)	429
Femmes damnées – Damned Women	439
Les Deux Bonnes Soeurs – The Two Good Sisters	442
La Fontaine de Sang – The Fountain of Blood	444
Allégorie – Allegory	446
La Béatrice – Beatrice	449
Les Métamorphoses du vampire – The Vampire’s Metamorphoses (1857)	452

Un Voyage à Cythère – A Voyage to Cythera	455
L'Amour et le Crâne – Love and the Skull	461
<b>Révolte / Revolt</b>	<b>465</b>
Le Reniement de Saint Pierre – The Denial of Saint Peter	467
Abel et Caïn – Abel and Cain	471
Les Litanies de Satan – The Litanies of Satan	475
<b>La Mort / Death</b>	<b>481</b>
La Mort des Amants – The Death of Lovers	483
La Mort des pauvres – The Death of the Poor	485
La Mort des artistes – The Death of Artists	487
La Fin de la Journée – The End of the Day (1861)	489
Le Rêve d'un Curieux – The Dream of a Curious Man (1861)	491
Le Voyage – The Voyage (1861)	493
<b>Les Épaves / Scraps (1866)</b>	<b>507</b>
Les Promesses d'un visage – The Promises of a Face	509
Le Monstre – The Monster	511
Sur les débuts d'Amina Boschetti – Amina Boschetti	516
À M. Eugène Fromentin – To Eugène M. Fromentin	518
Un Cabaret folâtre – A Jolly Cabaret	521

**Appendix**

**523**

**Charles Pierre Baudelaire**

**525**

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# Préface

La France traverse une phase de vulgarité. Paris, centre et rayonnement de bêtise universelle. Malgré Molière et Béranger, on n'aurait jamais cru que la France irait si grand train dans la voie du progrès. – Questions d'art, terræ incognitæ.

Le grand homme est bête.

Mon livre a pu faire du bien. Je ne m'en afflige pas. Il a pu faire du mal. Je ne m'en réjouis pas.

Le but de la poésie. Ce livre n'est pas fait pour mes femmes, mes filles ou mes sœurs.

On m'a attribué tous les crimes que je racontais.

Divertissement de la haine et du mépris. Les élégiaques sont des canailles. Et verbum caro factum est. Or le poète n'est d'aucun parti. Autrement il serait un simple mortel.

Le Diable. Le péché originel. Homme bon. Si vous vouliez, vous seriez le favori du Tyran ; il est plus difficile d'aimer Dieu que de croire en lui. Au contraire, il est plus difficile pour les gens de ce siècle de croire au diable que de l'aimer. Tout le monde le sent et personne n'y croit. Sublime subtilité du Diable.

Une âme de mon choix. Le Décor. – Ainsi la nouveauté. – L'Epigraphe. – D'Aurevilly. – La Renaissance. – Gérard de Nerval. – Nous sommes tous pendus ou pendables.

J'avais mis quelques ordures pour plaire à M.M. les journalistes. Ils se sont montrés ingrats.

## Préface des Fleurs

Ce n'est pas pour mes femmes, mes filles ou mes sœurs que ce livre a été écrit ; non plus que pour les femmes, les filles ou les sœurs de mon voisin. Je laisse cette fonction à ceux qui ont intérêt à confondre les bonnes actions avec le beau langage.

Je sais que l'amant passionné du beau style s'expose à la haine des multitudes ; mais aucun respect humain, aucune fausse pudeur, aucune coalition, aucun suffrage universel ne me contraindront à parler le patois incomparable de ce siècle, ni à confondre l'encre avec la vertu.

Des poètes illustres s'étaient partagé depuis longtemps les provinces les plus fleuries du domaine poétique. Il m'a paru plaisant, et d'autant plus agréable que la tâche était plus difficile, d'extraire la beauté du Mal. Ce livre, essentiellement inutile et absolument innocent, n'a pas été fait dans un autre but que de me divertir et d'exercer mon goût passionné de l'obstacle.

Quelques-uns m'ont dit que ces poésies pouvaient faire du mal ; je ne m'en suis pas réjoui. D'autres, de bonnes âmes, qu'elles pouvaient faire du bien ; et cela ne m'a pas affligé. La crainte des uns et l'espérance des autres m'ont également étonné, et n'ont servi qu'à me prouver une fois de plus que ce siècle avait désappris toutes les notions classiques relatives à la littérature.

Malgré les secours que quelques cuistres célèbres ont apportés à la sottise naturelle de l'homme, je n'aurais jamais cru que notre patrie pût marcher avec une telle vélocité dans la voie du progrès. Ce monde a acquis une épaisseur de vulgarité qui donne au mépris de l'homme spirituel la violence d'une passion. Mais il est des carapaces heureuses que le poison lui-même n'entamerait pas.

J'avais primitivement l'intention de répondre à de nombreuses critiques, et, en même temps, d'expliquer quelques questions très simples, totalement obscurcies par la lumière moderne : Qu'est-ce que la poésie ? Quel est son but ? De la distinction du Bien d'avec le Beau ; de la Beauté dans le Mal ; que le rythme et la rime répondent dans l'homme aux immortels besoins de monotonie, de symétrie et de surprise ; de l'adaptation du style au sujet ; de la vanité et du danger de l'inspiration, etc., etc. ; mais j'ai eu l'imprudence de lire ce matin quelques feuilles publiques ; soudain, une indolence, du poids de vingt atmosphères, s'est abattue sur moi, et je me suis arrêté devant l'épouvantable inutilité d'expliquer quoi que ce soit à qui que ce soit. Ceux qui savent me devinent, et pour ceux qui ne peuvent ou ne veulent pas comprendre, j'amoncèlerais sans fruit les explications.

*Ch. Daudelaine*

Comment, par une série d'efforts déterminée, l'artiste peut s'élever à une originalité proportionnelle ;



Comment la poésie touche à la musique par une prosodie dont les racines plongent plus avant dans l'âme humaine que ne l'indique aucune théorie classique ;

Que la poésie française possède une prosodie mystérieuse et méconnue, comme les langues latine et anglaise ;

Pourquoi tout poète, qui ne sait pas au juste combien chaque mot comporte de rimes, est incapable d'exprimer une idée quelconque ;

Que la phrase poétique peut imiter (et par là elle touche à l'art musical et à la science mathématique) la ligne horizontale, la ligne droite ascendante, la ligne droite descendante ; qu'elle peut monter à pic vers le ciel, sans essoufflement, ou descendre perpendiculairement vers l'enfer avec la vélocité de toute pesanteur ; qu'elle peut suivre la spirale, décrire la parabole, ou le zigzag figurant une série d'angles superposés ;

Que la poésie se rattache aux arts de la peinture, de la cuisine et du cosmétique par la possibilité d'exprimer toute sensation de suavité ou d'amertume, de béatitude ou d'horreur, par l'accouplement de tel substantif avec tel adjectif, analogue ou contraire ;

Comment, appuyé sur mes principes et disposant de la science que je me charge de lui enseigner en vingt leçons tout homme devient capable de composer une tragédie qui ne sera pas plus sifflée qu'une autre, ou d'aligner un poème de la longueur nécessaire pour être aussi ennuyeux que tout poème épique connu.

Tâche difficile que de s'élever vers cette insensibilité divine ! Car moi-même, malgré les plus louables efforts, je n'ai su résister au désir de plaire à mes contemporains, comme l'attestent en quelques endroits, apposées comme un fard, certaines basses flatteries adressées à la démocratie, et même quelques ordures destinées à me faire pardonner la tristesse de mon sujet. Mais MM. les journalistes s'étant montrés ingrats envers les caresses de ce genre, j'en ai supprimé la trace, autant qu'il m'a été possible, dans cette nouvelle édition.

Je me propose, pour vérifier de nouveau l'excellence de ma méthode, de l'appliquer prochainement à la célébration des jouissances de la dévotion et des ivresses de la gloire militaire, bien que je ne les aie jamais connues.

Note sur les plagiats. – Thomas Gray. Edgar Poe (2 passages). Longfellow (2 passages). Stace. Virgile (tout le morceau d'Andromaque). Eschyle. Victor Hugo.

## **Projet de préface pour Les Fleurs du Mal**

(À fondre peut-être avec d'anciennes notes)

S'il y a quelque gloire à n'être pas compris, ou à ne l'être que très peu, je peux dire sans vanterie que, par ce petit livre, je l'ai acquise et méritée d'un seul coup. Offert plusieurs fois de suite à divers éditeurs qui le epoussaient avec horreur, poursuivi et mutilé, en 1857, par suite d'un malentendu fort bizarre, lentement rajeuni, accru et fortifié pendant quelques années de silence, disparu de nouveau, grâce à mon insouciance, ce produit discordant de la Muse des derniers jours, encore avivé par quelques nouvelles touches violentes, ose affronter aujourd'hui, pour la troisième fois, le soleil de la sottise.

Ce n'est pas ma faute ; c'est celle d'un éditeur insistant qui se croit assez fort pour braver le dégoût public. " Ce livre restera sur toute votre vie comme une tache, " me prédisait, dès le commencement, un de mes amis, qui est un grand poète. En effet, toutes mes mésaventures lui ont, jusqu'à présent, donné raison. Mais j'ai un de ces heureux caractères qui tirent une jouissance de la haine, et qui se glorifient dans le mépris. Mon goût diaboliquement passionné de la bêtise me fait trouver des plaisirs particuliers dans les travestissements de la calomnie. Chaste comme le papier, sobre comme l'eau, porté à la dévotion comme une communiant, inoffensif comme une victime, il ne me déplairait pas de passer pour un débauché, un ivrogne, un impie et un assassin.

Mon éditeur prétend qu'il y aurait quelque utilité pour moi, comme pour lui, à expliquer pourquoi et comment j'ai fait ce livre, quels ont été mon but et mes moyens, mon dessein et ma méthode. Un tel travail de critique aurait sans doute quelques chances d'amuser les esprits amoureux de la rhétorique profonde. Pour ceux-là peut-être l'écrirai-je plus tard et le ferai-je tirer à une dizaine d'exemplaires. Mais, à un meilleur examen, ne paraît-il pas évident que ce serait là une besogne tout à fait superflue, pour les uns comme pour les autres, puisque les uns savent ou devinent, et que les autres ne comprendront jamais ? Pour insuffler au peuple l'intelligence d'un objet d'art, j'ai une trop grande peur du ridicule, et je craindrais, en cette matière, d'égaliser ces utopistes qui veulent, par un décret, rendre tous les Français riches et vertueux d'un seul coup. Et puis, ma meilleure raison, ma suprême, est que cela m'ennuie et me déplaît. Mène-t-on la foule dans les ateliers de l'habilleuse et du décorateur, dans la loge de la comédienne ? Montre-t-on au public affolé aujourd'hui, indifférent demain, le mécanisme des trucs ? Lui explique-t-on les retouches et les variantes improvisées aux répétitions, et jusqu'à quelle dose l'instinct et la sincérité sont mêlés aux rubriques et au charlatanisme indispensable dans l'amalgame de l'œuvre ? Lui révèle-t-on toutes les loques, les fards, les poulies, les chaînes, les repentirs, les épreuves barbouillées, bref toutes les horreurs qui composent le sanctuaire de l'art ?

D'ailleurs, telle n'est pas aujourd'hui mon humeur. Je n'ai désir ni de démontrer, ni d'étonner, ni d'amuser, ni de persuader. J'ai mes nerfs, mes vapeurs. J'aspire à un repos absolu et à une nuit continue. Chantre des voluptés folles du vin et de l'opium, je n'ai soif que d'une liqueur inconnue sur la terre, et que la pharmaceutique céleste, elle-même, ne pourrait pas m'offrir ; d'une liqueur qui ne contiendrait ni la vitalité, ni la mort, ni l'excitation, ni le néant. Ne rien savoir, ne rien enseigner, ne rien vouloir, ne rien sentir, dormir et encore dormir, tel est aujourd'hui mon unique vœu. Vœu infâme et dégoûtant, mais sincère.

Toutefois, comme un goût supérieur nous apprend à ne pas craindre de nous contredire un peu nous-mêmes, j'ai rassemblé, à la fin de ce livre abominable, les témoignages de sympathie de quelques-uns des hommes que je prise le plus, pour qu'un lecteur impartial en puisse inférer que je ne suis pas absolument digne d'excommunication et qu'ayant su me faire aimer de quelques-uns, mon cœur, quoi qu'en ait dit je ne sais plus quel torchon imprimé, n'a peut-être pas "l'épouvantable laideur de mon visage".

Enfin, par une générosité peu commune, dont MM. les critiques...

Comme l'ignorance va croissant...

Je dénonce moi-même les imitations...

# Preface

France is passing through a phase of vulgarity. Paris, center and appeal of universal stupidity. In spite of Molière and Béranger, we would never have believed France to be marching on the path of progress. Questions of art, terra incognita. Great men are fools. My book could have done some good ; I'm not grieved by this possibility. It could have been harmful ; this does not fill me with joy. The aim of poetry. This book was not made for my wives, my daughters, or my sisters.

All the crimes I have recounted have been imputed to me. The base entertainment of hate and contempt. The elegiacs are blackguards. And the word became flesh. For the poet is of no faction. Otherwise, he would be a simple mortal. The Devil. Original sin. Good man. You may be the Tyrant's favorite if you so wish. It is more difficult to love God than to believe in Him ; on the other hand, it is more difficult for people of this century to believe in the Devil than to love him. Everyone makes use of him and no one thinks him real. The sublime subtlety of that Devil.

A soul of my choosing. The decor. Hence novelty. An epigraph. D'Au-revilly. The Renaissance. Gérard de Nerval. We are all hanged or hangable. I had worked in some garbage to please the journalists. They turned out to be a bunch of ingrates.

C. B.

## Preface to the Flowers

It is not for my wives, my daughters, or my sisters that this book was written ; nor for the wives, daughters, or sisters of my neighbor. I will leave this analysis to those who mistake good actions for beautiful language.

I know well that the lover fascinated by a rich, beautiful style exposes his body to the hate of the masses. But no human respect, no false prudishness, no coalition, no universal suffrage will restrain me from speaking

the incomparable dialect of this century, nor from confounding ink with virtue.

Since time immemorial the best poets have shared the most flowered spaces of the poetic realm. To me it seemed pleasing, and more agreeable than difficult, to extract the beauty of Evil. This book, fundamentally useless and absolutely innocent, was made with no other goal than to provide me with some light entertainment and indulge my taste for obstacles.

Some have told me that poetry can do wrong; this does not fill me with joy. Others – good souls all of them – that it may do good; and I'm not grieved by this possibility. The fear of some and the hope of others surprised me in equal measure, and did nothing but prove yet again that this century has unlearned the classical concepts of literature.

Despite the assistance provided by some celebrated oafs to man's innate predilection for humbug, I would never have thought it possible that our country could march on the path of progress with such speed. This world of ours has acquired a thick film of vulgarity that imbues a spiritual man with all the violence of passion. But happy are the shells which the poison has not entered.

Initially, I had the intention of answering several critics and explaining at the same time some very simple questions totally obscured by modernity's glare. What is poetry? What is its aim? What is the distinction between the Beautiful and the Good? What could be the Beautiful in Evil? I could have averred that rhythm and rhyme fulfill man's immortal need for monotony, symmetry and surprise. I could have spoken at length on the adaptation of style to the subject, of the vanity and danger of inspiration, and so forth and so on. But I suffered from the imprudence of reading this morning several papers. Suddenly an indolence not unlike the weight of twenty atmospheres came over me, and my actions ceased in the face of the horrific inutility of explaining anything to anyone. Those who knew me were able to guess why. And for those who cannot or do not want to understand, any explanations would accumulate in vain into a heap of misconceptions.

### III

How can an artist, through a sustained series of efforts, attain originality commensurate with his talent?

How can poetry become music through prosody whose roots dig farther into the human soul than any classical theory might claim?

How does French poetry possess a little-known and mysterious system of prosody like that of Latin or English?

Why are all poets ignorant of how words rightly incorporate rhyme unable to express any ideas?

How is it that poetry (in this way akin to music and mathematics) can imitate a horizontal line, a straight line ascending, or a descending straight line? How can it rise in steep path to the sky without shortness of breath, or fall perpendicularly towards hell with the velocity of all gravity? How can it follow a spiral, trace a parabola or the zigzag of superimposed angles?

How does poetry relate to the art of painting, of cooking, of cosmetics by expressing every sensation of sweetness or bitterness, of beatitude or horror by the coupling of a certain noun with a certain adjective, analogue or opposite?

How is it that every man, reliant on my principles and availing himself of the knowledge which I plan to teach him in twenty lessons, can compose a tragedy no more lustily booed than any other or structure a poem of sufficient length to be as dull and tedious as all other epic poems?

Quite a task, rising up against all this divine insensitivity! More so due to the fact that I, despite numerous laudable attempts, could not resist the desire to please my contemporaries, as shown in various places highlighted like rouge, certain base flatteries addressed to her, Democracy, and even some other twaddle excusing the despondency of my subject matter. But my dearest gentlemen of the press were ungrateful for such caresses, and I omitted as much as possible in this new edition the traces of this ingratitude.

To verify once more the excellence of my method, I have suggested devoting myself in the future to a celebration of the joys of the dedication and intoxication of military glory, even if they are not known to me.

Notes on my plagiary : Thomas Gray ; Edgar Allen Poe (2 passages) ; Longfellow (2 passages) ; Statius ; Virgil (the whole part of Andromache) ; Aeschylus ; Victor Hugo.

## **Project on a preface to the Flowers of Evil**

(perhaps to be incorporated into previous notes)

If there is some glory in not being understood or in being understood just a little, I can say unboastfully that with this slender tome I have obtained and deserved such fame in one fell swoop. Offered numerous times to a series of publishers, all of whom shoved it away in horror ; harassed

and mutilated, in 1857, following a rather bizarre misunderstanding, slowly rejuvenated, sharpened and strengthened in the course of many years of silence; having disappeared yet again due to my insouciance, this discordant product of the Muse of the last days, revived again by a few new violent strokes, dares today to confront the sun a third time with its inanity.

This is not any fault of mine. The person to blame is the publisher insisting that he thought himself strong enough to brave the public's distaste. "This book will remain forever like a blemish on your life," one of my friends, an important poet, said to me from the very beginning. As it were, all my misadventures up to that point had affirmed the correctness of his observation. But I possess one of those happy personalities which derive a certain pleasure from hate, and which are glorified in their contempt. My taste so wickedly bent towards stupidity coerced me into finding particular pleasure in the travesties of calumny. As chaste as a sheet of white paper, as sober as water, as devoted to devotion as a communicant, as inoffensive as a victim, I do not mind passing for a debauched drunk, an impious lout, or an assassin.

My publisher continues to pretend that I, like he, would gain some benefit from explaining why and how I created this book, what my means and ends were, and from detailing my design and method. A critical work in that vein would surely amuse those minds enamored with profound rhetoric. For those dear souls I will write something later, perhaps, and have it printed in about ten copies. But, upon further scrutiny, doesn't this all seem superfluous and wasteful since some will know or guess its essence and others will never understand it? I am too afraid of ridicule to insufflate to the masses the intelligence of a work of art. And I fear that I too greatly accommodated those Utopians who want by some immediate and magical decree to render all Frenchmen rich and virtuous.

And then, my most important reason, that most important reason of all: such acts bore and displease me. Should one then lead the rabble into the dresser's and decorator's studio, or the actor's box? Should one reveal the tricks and levers of our gadgetry to the crowd so impassioned today and so indifferent tomorrow? Should one explain to them the edits and daubs and the variants improvised at rehearsals, or to what extent sincerity and instinct combine under the banner of indispensable charlatanism? Should they know of all the wrecks, makeup, pulleys, chains, regrets, and smears – in short, all the horrors that compose the sanctuary of art?

Besides, I'm not in the mood for all this today. I have no desire to demonstrate, surprise, amuse, or persuade. I have my nerves and my erratic whims. My goal is absolute rest and endless night. Bard of the mad pleasures of wine and opium, I thirst for nothing but a liqueur unknown

on earth which even the celestial pharmacy could not provide me. A liqueur containing neither vitality, nor death, nor excitement, nor nothingness. To know nothing, to teach nothing, to want nothing, to sense nothing, to sleep, and then to sleep more, this is today my one and only pledge. An infamous and disgusting pledge, but a sincere one.

Nevertheless, as superior taste instructs us not to be afraid of contradicting ourselves a bit, I have gathered at the end of this abominable book testimonies of sympathy on the part of certain men whom I value most. In this way, the impartial reader may see that I am not absolutely deserving of excommunication and that, having learned to make myself loved by some, my heart, although I no longer know on what printed cloth, does not perhaps have the "horrific ugliness of my face."

Finally, by unmatched generosity, whereby my dear critics ...

As ignorance, more and more so ...

I myself denounce all imitations...



# Préface à cette édition

Ce livre regroupe les poèmes de toutes les éditions Des 'Fleurs Du Mal' de 1857, 1861 & 1868, plus tous les nouveaux poèmes Des 'Épaves' condamnés par la censure en 1857.

Les poèmes suivent l'ordre de l'édition originale de 1861, ainsi que l'ordre Des éditions de 1857 & 1868. Dans la section finale du livre se trouvent 'Les Épaves'.

## L'édition de 1857

La poésie de Baudelaire était connue bien avant la parution des Fleurs Du Mal en 1857. Quelques poèmes épars avaient été publiés dans Des journaux et Des revues, et Baudelaire avait assis sa notoriété en récitant certains de ses macabres vers à voix haute. Il avait plusieurs fois annoncé la publication de ses poèmes sous Le titre 'Les Lesbiennes' ou 'Les Limbes'. Le titre définitif ne sera choisi qu'en 1855, suggéré par son ami Hippolyte Babou et la publication ne se fera qu'en 1857 lorsque son ami Auguste Poulet-Malassis imprimera la 1<sup>o</sup> version de ses 'Fleurs Maladives'. (Baudelaire leur rendra hommage dans sa dédicace).

'Les Fleurs Du Mal' apparurent sur les étagères Des librairies Parisiennes en juin 1857 : 1 100 exemplaires furent imprimés et destinés à la vente plus 20 'hors commerce' imprimés sur papier de luxe. Moins d'un mois plus tard, Le Gouvernement français engagea une action en justice contre l'auteur et la maison d'édition, les accusant d'outrage aux bonnes mœurs.

Le 20 août une cour française décida de supprimer 6 poèmes pour raison morale. Le procès fit sensation et l'été suivant l'édition originale Des Fleurs Du Mal fut épuisée.

## L'édition de 1861

Baudelaire ne cessa de composer de nouveaux poèmes à ajouter à l'édition originale pour justifier une impression quasi constante parmi ces poèmes se trouvent 'Le Cygne' et 'Le Voyage', de nos jours considérés comme Des chefs d'oeuvre. La 2<sup>o</sup> édition des Fleurs Du Mal parue en librairie à Paris début Février 1861 (prix 3f) : 1 500 exemplaires furent imprimés plus quelques exemplaires hors commerce sur papier de Luxe. Cette édition, considérée comme définitive ne comprenait pas les 6 poèmes censurés par Le Gvt Fr, mais contenait les 'Tableaux Parisiens' ainsi qu'un portrait de l'auteur par Félix Bracquemond.

## "Les Épaves" 1866

Baudelaire était un écrivain au talent reconnu mais son succès lui fournissait plus de notoriété que de revenus. En 1864 il déménagea à Bruxelles, principalement pour échapper à ses créanciers, ou il retrouva son ami l'éditeur A. Poulet-Malassis. Une nouvelle édition, tirée à 216 exemplaires plus 10 exemplaires hors commerce sorti regroupant 'Les Epaves' et les 6 poèmes censurés, comprenant 33 poèmes, 1 intro et un portrait par Félicien Rops.

L'édition de 1866 fut Le dernière ouvrage supervisé par l'auteur lui-même, qui souffrit d'une attaque de démence en mars 1866 et mourut l'année suivante après être retourné à Paris.

## L'édition de 1868

Après la mort de Baudelaire Le 31 août 1867, les droits de ses oeuvres furent reversés à sa mère vieillissante, ce qui peut sembler ironique vue la relation qu'il entretenait avec elle. Effrayés & mécontents à l'idée que son oeuvre puisse disparaître, ses amis poussèrent sa mère à publier une toute dernière édition.

Cette dernière publication comprenait Les Fleurs Du Mal, Les Paradis Artificiels, Les Traductions D'Edgar Allan Poe, ses poèmes en prose, ses critiques d'art et d'autres écrits divers. Mais les 6 poèmes censurés en 1857 n'y sont pas.

Cette édition de 1868 fut la seule autorisée par les ayants-droits de Baudelaire, jusqu'à ce que son oeuvre tombe dans Le domaine public en 1917.

Certains puristes désapprouvent la manière dont les poèmes choisis et ainsi réunis altèrent la 'structure secrète' de l'édition de 1861.

## Preface to this edition

This book contains poems from all editions of "Les Fleurs du mal" - the 1857, 1861, and 1868 editions - plus all new poems from Les Épaves.

Poems banned by censorship in 1857 are denoted as "(1857)" in title; poems added in 1861, 1866 and 1868 are denoted by "(1861)", "(1866)" and "(1868)" in title, respectively.

Poems follow the order of 1861 edition of LFD, with poems from 1857 and 1868 editions added in order where appropriate; poems added in 1866's Les Épaves are contained in final section of the book, called "Les Épaves".

### About 1857 version

Baudelaire's poetry was well-known long before it was collected in Les Fleurs du mal in 1857. A few scattered poems had appeared in journals and reviews, and Baudelaire had also achieved notoriety reciting his lurid verses aloud. Several times he announced that he was going to publish a collection of poems, giving titles such as "Les Lesbiennes" and "Les Limbes". However, the definitive title was not to come until 1855, when "fleurs du mal" was suggested by his friend Hippolyte Babou, and publication was not to come until 1857, when his friend Auguste Poulet-Malassis printed the first edition of "ces fleurs malades," as Baudelaire wrote in the dedication.

Les Fleurs du mal appeared on the bookshelves of Paris in June 1857. Eleven hundred copies had been printed for sale, with an additional twenty copies hors commerce printed on fine paper. Within a month, the French government initiated an action against the author and the publisher, accusing them of outrages to public morality. On August 20th, a French court acknowledged the literary merit of the book as a whole but demanded that six poems be deleted on moral grounds. In a pattern now familiar, however, the trial only served to create a sensation, and by the following summer the initial printing of Les Fleurs du mal was sold out.

## About 1861 version

Anxious to keep his poems in print, Baudelaire agitated for several years for another edition to be published. In addition, he composed new poems to add to the collection, including several works such as “Le Cygne” and “Le Voyage” which are today regarded as masterpieces.

The second edition of *Les Fleurs du mal* entered the bookshops of Paris in the first week of February, 1861. Readers spent three francs to purchase the new edition, of which fifteen hundred copies had been printed (plus a few hors commerce on fine paper). This edition, now considered definitive, lacked the six poems censored by the French government but contained a new subdivision (“Tableaux parisiens”), thirty-five new poems, and a portrait of the author by Félix Bracquemond.

## About 1866 “Les Épaves”

Although Baudelaire had become increasingly successful as a writer, his success brought him more notoriety than income. In 1864 he moved from Paris to Brussels, largely to evade creditors. Earlier his friend and publisher Auguste Poulet-Malassis had also moved to Brussels to escape legal trouble, so together the two decided to put out another book of Baudelaire’s verse.

This new work was not intended to be a comprehensive collection. It was, instead, a collection of incidental and recent verse - hence the title “épaves”. It also included the six poems censored from the first edition of *Les Fleurs du mal*. Published in February 1866 in an edition of only two hundred and sixty copies (plus ten hors commerce), *Les Épaves* contained twenty-three poems, an introduction by Poulet-Malassis, and a frontispiece of the author by Félicien Rops.

It was the last book overseen by Baudelaire himself, who suffered a debilitating stroke in March, 1866, and died the following year back in Paris.

## About 1868 version

After the death of Baudelaire on August 31, 1867, the rights to the poet’s work reverted - ironically enough, given his relationship with her - to his aging mother. His friends, however, were not content to allow Baudelaire to fade into nothingness, and thus induced his mother to allow them

to produce a definitive edition of his works.

Subsequently, Baudelaire's close friends the poet Théodore de Banville and the bibliophile Charles Asselineau sold the rights to his complete works to the publisher Michel Lévy. The complete works were to include *Les Fleurs du mal*, *Les Paradis artificiels*, Baudelaire's translations of Edgar Allan Poe, as well as prose poems, art criticism, and miscellaneous writings.

In December 1868 the third edition of *Les Fleurs du mal* – volume 1 of the poet's complete works – went on sale in Paris. Along with an introduction by the poet Théophile Gautier, this new edition contained all the poems of the 1861 edition, eleven poems from *Les Épaves*, plus a few others. (It lacked, however, the six poems censored from the first edition, since these were still illegal to print in France.) This 1868 edition was the only one authorized by Baudelaire's estate until his work fell into the public domain in 1917. However, though Banville and Asselineau certainly meant well in assembling and editing the work, scholars today generally disagree with some of the choices made by the two friends, in particular with several of the poems they chose to include and with the way in which these poems altered the "secret architecture" of the 1861 edition.

## Dédicace

### Dédicace

Au poète impeccable  
Au parfait magicien ès lettres françaises  
A mon très-cher et très-vénéré  
Maître et ami  
Théophile Gautier  
Avec les sentiments  
De la plus profonde humilité  
Je dédie  
Ces fleurs malades

*Ch. Baudelaire*

### Dedication

To the impeccable poet  
To the perfect magician of French letters  
To my very dear and very revered  
Master and friend  
Théophile Gautier  
With sentiments  
Of the most profound humility  
I dedicate  
These unhealthy flowers  
C.B.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Au Lecteur

### Au Lecteur

La sottise, l'erreur, le péché, la lésine,  
Occupent nos esprits et travaillent nos corps,  
Et nous alimentons nos aimables remords,  
Comme les mendiants nourrissent leur vermine.  
Nos péchés sont têtus, nos repentirs sont lâches ;  
Nous nous faisons payer grassement nos aveux,  
Et nous rentrons gaiement dans le chemin bourbeux,  
Croyant par de vils pleurs laver toutes nos taches.  
Sur l'oreiller du mal c'est Satan Trismégiste  
Qui berce longuement notre esprit enchanté,  
Et le riche métal de notre volonté  
Est tout vaporisé par ce savant chimiste.  
C'est le Diable qui tient les fils qui nous remuent !  
Aux objets répugnants nous trouvons des appas ;  
Chaque jour vers l'Enfer nous descendons d'un pas,  
Sans horreur, à travers des ténèbres qui puent.  
Ainsi qu'un débauché pauvre qui baise et mange  
Le sein martyrisé d'une antique catin,  
Nous volons au passage un plaisir clandestin  
Que nous pressons bien fort comme une vieille orange.  
Serré, fourmillant, comme un million d'helminthes,  
Dans nos cerveaux ribote un peuple de Démons,  
Et, quand nous respirons, la Mort dans nos poumons  
Descend, fleuve invisible, avec de sourdes plaintes.  
Si le viol, le poison, le poignard, l'incendie,  
N'ont pas encor brodé de leurs plaisants dessins  
Le canevas banal de nos piteux destins,  
C'est que notre âme, hélas ! n'est pas assez hardie.



Mais parmi les chacals, les panthères, les lices,  
Les singes, les scorpions, les vautours, les serpents,  
Les monstres glapissants, hurlants, grognants, rampants,  
Dans la ménagerie infâme de nos vices,  
Il en est un plus laid, plus méchant, plus immonde !  
Quoiqu'il ne pousse ni grands gestes ni grands cris,  
Il ferait volontiers de la terre un débris  
Et dans un bâillement avalerait le monde ;  
C'est l'Ennui ! L'oeil chargé d'un pleur involontaire,  
Il rêve d'échafauds en fumant son houka.  
Tu le connais, lecteur, ce monstre délicat,  
– Hypocrite lecteur, – mon semblable, – mon frère !

– Charles Baudelaire

## To the Reader

Folly, error, sin, avarice  
Occupy our minds and labor our bodies,  
And we feed our pleasant remorse  
As beggars nourish their vermin.  
Our sins are obstinate, our repentance is faint ;  
We exact a high price for our confessions,  
And we gaily return to the miry path,  
Believing that base tears wash away all our stains.  
On the pillow of evil Satan, Trismegist,  
Incessantly lulls our enchanted minds,  
And the noble metal of our will  
Is wholly vaporized by this wise alchemist.  
The Devil holds the strings which move us !  
In repugnant things we discover charms ;  
Every day we descend a step further toward Hell,  
Without horror, through gloom that stinks.  
Like a penniless rake who with kisses and bites  
Tortures the breast of an old prostitute,  
We steal as we pass by a clandestine pleasure  
That we squeeze very hard like a dried up orange.  
Serried, swarming, like a million maggots,  
A legion of Demons carouses in our brains,

And when we breathe, Death, that unseen river,  
Descends into our lungs with muffled wails.  
If rape, poison, daggers, arson  
Have not yet embroidered with their pleasing designs  
The banal canvas of our pitiable lives,  
It is because our souls have not enough boldness.  
But among the jackals, the panthers, the bitch hounds,  
The apes, the scorpions, the vultures, the serpents,  
The yelping, howling, growling, crawling monsters,  
In the filthy menagerie of our vices,  
There is one more ugly, more wicked, more filthy !  
Although he makes neither great gestures nor great cries,  
He would willingly make of the earth a shambles  
And, in a yawn, swallow the world ;  
He is Ennui ! – His eye watery as though with tears,  
He dreams of scaffolds as he smokes his hookah pipe.  
You know him reader, that refined monster,  
– Hypocritical reader, – my fellow, – my brother !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## To the Reader

Folly and error, avarice and vice,  
Employ our souls and waste our bodies' force.  
As mangy beggars incubate their lice,  
We nourish our innocuous remorse.  
Our sins are stubborn, craven our repentance.  
For our weak vows we ask excessive prices.  
Trusting our tears will wash away the sentence,  
We sneak off where the muddy road entices.  
Cradled in evil, that Thrice-Great Magician,  
The Devil, rocks our souls, that can't resist ;  
And the rich metal of our own volition  
Is vaporised by that sage alchemist.  
The Devil pulls the strings by which we're worked :  
By all revolting objects lured, we slink  
Hellwards ; each day down one more step we're jerked  
Feeling no horror, through the shades that stink.

Just as a lustful pauper bites and kisses  
The scarred and shrivelled breast of an old whore,  
We steal, along the roadside, furtive blisses,  
Squeezing them, like stale oranges, for more.  
Packed tight, like hives of maggots, thickly seething  
Within our brains a host of demons surges.  
Deep down into our lungs at every breathing,  
Death flows, an unseen river, moaning dirges.  
If rape or arson, poison, or the knife  
Has wove no pleasing patterns in the stuff  
Of this drab canvas we accept as life –  
It is because we are not bold enough!  
Amongst the jackals, leopards, mongrels, apes,  
Snakes, scorpions, vultures, that with hellish din,  
Squeal, roar, writhe, gambol, crawl, with monstrous shapes,  
In each man's foul menagerie of sin –  
There's one more damned than all. He never gambols,  
Nor crawls, nor roars, but, from the rest withdrawn,  
Gladly of this whole earth would make a shambles  
And swallow up existence with a yawn...  
Boredom! He smokes his hookah, while he dreams  
Of gibbets, weeping tears he cannot smother.  
You know this dainty monster, too, it seems –  
Hypocrite reader! – You! – My twin! – My brother!

– Roy Campbell, 1952







SPLEEN ET IDÉAL  
SPLEEN AND IDEAL





# Bénédition

## Bénédition

Lorsque, par un décret des puissances suprêmes,  
Le Poète apparaît en ce monde ennuyé,  
Sa mère épouvantée et pleine de blasphèmes  
Crispe ses poings vers Dieu, qui la prend en pitié :  
– « Ah ! que n'ai-je mis bas tout un noeud de vipères,  
Plutôt que de nourrir cette dérision !  
Maudite soit la nuit aux plaisirs éphémères  
Où mon ventre a conçu mon expiation !  
Puisque tu m'as choisie entre toutes les femmes  
Pour être le dégoût de mon triste mari,  
Et que je ne puis pas rejeter dans les flammes,  
Comme un billet d'amour, ce monstre rabougri,  
Je ferai rejaillir ta haine qui m'accable  
Sur l'instrument maudit de tes méchancetés,  
Et je tordrai si bien cet arbre misérable,  
Qu'il ne pourra pousser ses boutons empestés ! »  
Elle ravale ainsi l'écume de sa haine,  
Et, ne comprenant pas les desseins éternels,  
Elle-même prépare au fond de la Géhenne  
Les bûchers consacrés aux crimes maternels.  
Pourtant, sous la tutelle invisible d'un Ange,  
L'Enfant déshérité s'enivre de soleil  
Et dans tout ce qu'il boit et dans tout ce qu'il mange  
Retrouve l'ambrosie et le nectar vermeil.  
Il joue avec le vent, cause avec le nuage,  
Et s'enivre en chantant du chemin de la croix ;  
Et l'Esprit qui le suit dans son pèlerinage  
Pleure de le voir gai comme un oiseau des bois.

Tous ceux qu'il veut aimer l'observent avec crainte,  
Ou bien, s'enhardissant de sa tranquillité,  
Cherchent à qui saura lui tirer une plainte,  
Et font sur lui l'essai de leur férocité.  
Dans le pain et le vin destinés à sa bouche  
Ils mêlent de la cendre avec d'impurs crachats ;  
Avec hypocrisie ils jettent ce qu'il touche,  
Et s'accusent d'avoir mis leurs pieds dans ses pas.  
Sa femme va criant sur les places publiques :  
« Puisqu'il me trouve assez belle pour m'adorer,  
Je ferai le métier des idoles antiques,  
Et comme elles je veux me faire redorer ;  
Et je me soulerai de nard, d'encens, de myrrhe,  
De genuflexions, de viandes et de vins,  
Pour savoir si je puis dans un coeur qui m'admire  
Usurper en riant les hommages divins !  
Et, quand je m'ennuierai de ces farces impies,  
Je poserai sur lui ma frêle et forte main ;  
Et mes ongles, pareils aux ongles des harpies,  
Sauront jusqu'à son coeur se frayer un chemin.  
Comme un tout jeune oiseau qui tremble et qui palpite,  
J'arracherai ce coeur tout rouge de son sein,  
Et, pour rassasier ma bête favorite  
Je le lui jetterai par terre avec dédain ! »  
Vers le Ciel, où son oeil voit un trône splendide,  
Le Poète serein lève ses bras pieux  
Et les vastes éclairs de son esprit lucide  
Lui dérobent l'aspect des peuples furieux :  
– « Soyez béni, mon Dieu, qui donnez la souffrance  
Comme un divin remède à nos impuretés  
Et comme la meilleure et la plus pure essence  
Qui prépare les forts aux saintes voluptés !  
Je sais que vous gardez une place au Poète  
Dans les rangs bienheureux des saintes Légions,  
Et que vous l'invitez à l'éternelle fête  
Des Trônes, des Vertus, des Dominations.  
Je sais que la douleur est la noblesse unique  
Où ne mordront jamais la terre et les enfers,  
Et qu'il faut pour tresser ma couronne mystique  
Imposer tous les temps et tous les univers.

Mais les bijoux perdus de l'antique Palmyre,  
Les métaux inconnus, les perles de la mer,  
Par votre main montés, ne pourraient pas suffire  
A ce beau diadème éblouissant et clair ;  
Car il ne sera fait que de pure lumière,  
Puisée au foyer saint des rayons primitifs,  
Et dont les yeux mortels, dans leur splendeur entière,  
Ne sont que des miroirs obscurcis et plaintifs ! »

– Charles Baudelaire

## Benediction

When, after a decree of the supreme powers,  
The Poet is brought forth in this wearisome world,  
His mother terrified and full of blasphemies  
Raises her clenched fist to God, who pities her :  
– “Ah! would that I had spawned a whole knot of vipers  
Rather than to have fed this derisive object !  
Accursed be the night of ephemeral joy  
When my belly conceived this, my expiation !  
Since of all women You have chosen me  
To be repugnant to my sorry spouse,  
And since I cannot cast this misshapen monster  
Into the flames, like an old love letter,  
I shall spew the hatred with which you crush me down  
On the cursed instrument of your malevolence,  
And twist so hard this wretched tree  
That it cannot put forth its pestilential buds !”  
Thus she gulps down the froth of her hatred,  
And not understanding the eternal designs,  
Herself prepares deep down in Gehenna  
The pyre reserved for a mother's crimes.  
However, protected by an unseen Angel,  
The outcast child is enrapt by the sun,  
And in all that he eats, in everything he drinks,  
He finds sweet ambrosia and rubiate nectar.  
He cavorts with the wind, converses with the clouds,  
And singing, transported, goes the way of the cross ;

And the Angel who follows him on pilgrimage  
Weeps to see him as carefree as a bird.  
All those whom he would love watch him with fear,  
Or, emboldened by his tranquility,  
Emulously attempt to wring a groan from him  
And test on him their inhumanity.  
With the bread and the wine intended for his mouth  
They mix ashes and foul spittle,  
And, hypocrites, cast away what he touches  
And feel guilty if they have trod in his footprints.  
His wife goes about the market-places  
Crying : "Since he finds me fair enough to adore,  
I shall imitate the idols of old,  
And like them I want to be regilded ;  
I shall get drunk with spikenard, incense, myrrh,  
And with genuflections, viands and wine,  
To see if laughingly I can usurp  
In an admiring heart the homage due to God !  
And when I tire of these impious jokes,  
I shall lay upon him my strong, my dainty hand ;  
And my nails, like harpies' talons,  
Will cut a path straight to his heart.  
That heart which flutters like a fledgling bird  
I'll tear, all bloody, from his breast,  
And scornfully I'll throw it in the dust  
To sate the hunger of my favorite hound !"  
To Heav'n, where his eye sees a radiant throne,  
Piously, the Poet, serene, raises his arms,  
And the dazzling brightness of his illumined mind  
Hides from his sight the raging mob :  
– "Praise be to You, O God, who send us suffering  
As a divine remedy for our impurities  
And as the best and the purest essence  
To prepare the strong for holy ecstasies !  
I know that you reserve a place for the Poet  
Within the blessed ranks of the holy Legions,  
And that you invite him to the eternal feast  
Of the Thrones, the Virtues, and the Dominations.  
I know that suffering is the sole nobility

Which earth and hell shall never mar,  
And that to weave my mystic crown,  
You must tax every age and every universe.  
But the lost jewels of ancient Palmyra,  
The unfound metals, the pearls of the sea,  
Set by Your own hand, would not be adequate  
For that diadem of dazzling splendor,  
For that crown will be made of nothing but pure light  
Drawn from the holy source of primal rays,  
Whereof our mortal eyes, in their fullest brightness,  
Are no more than tarnished, mournful mirrors!"

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Benediction

When by an edict of the powers supreme  
A poet's born into this world's drab space,  
His mother starts, in horror, to blaspheme  
Clenching her fists at God, who grants her grace.  
"Would that a nest of vipers I'd aborted  
Rather than this absurd abomination.  
Cursed be the night of pleasures vainly sported  
On which my womb conceived my expiation.  
Since of all women I am picked by You  
To be my Mate's aversion and his shame :  
And since I cannot, like a billet-doux,  
Consign this stunted monster to the flame,  
I'll turn the hatred, which You load on me,  
On the curst tool through which You work your spite,  
And twist and stunt this miserable tree  
Until it cannot burgeon for the blight."  
She swallows down the white froth of her ire  
And, knowing naught of schemes that are sublime,  
Deep in Gehenna, starts to lay the pyre  
That's consecrated to maternal crime.  
Yet with an unseen Angel for protector  
The outcast waif grows drunken with the sun,  
And finds ambrosia, too, and rosy nectar

In all he eats or drinks, suspecting none.  
He sings upon his Via Crucis, plays  
With winds, and with the clouds exchanges words :  
The Spirit following his pilgrim-ways  
Weeps to behold him gayer than the birds.  
Those he would love avoid him as in fear,  
Or, growing bold to see one so resigned,  
Compete to draw from him a cry or tear,  
And test on him the fierceness of their kind.  
In food or drink that's destined for his taste  
They mix saliva foul with cinders black,  
Drop what he's touched with hypocrite distaste,  
And blame themselves for walking in his track.  
His wife goes crying in the public way  
– "Since fair enough he finds me to adore,  
The part of ancient idols I will play  
And gild myself with coats of molten ore.  
I will get drunk on incense, myrrh, and nard,  
On genuflections, meat, and beady wine,  
Out of his crazed and wondering regard,  
I'll laugh to steal prerogatives divine.  
When by such impious farces bored at length,  
I'll place my frail strong hand on him, and start,  
With nails like those of harpies in their strength,  
To plough myself a pathway to his heart.  
Like a young bird that trembles palpitating,  
I'll wrench his heart, all crimson, from his chest,  
And to my favourite beast, his hunger sating,  
Will fling it in the gutter with a jest."  
Skyward, to where he sees a Throne blaze splendid,  
The pious Poet lifts his arms on high,  
And the vast lightnings of his soul extended  
Blot out the crowds and tumults from his eye.  
"Blessed be You, O God, who give us pain,  
As cure for our impurity and wrong –  
Essence that primes the stalwart to sustain  
Seraphic raptures that were else too strong.  
I know that for the Poet You've a post,  
Where the blest Legions take their ranks and stations,

Invited to the revels with the host  
Of Virtues, Powers, and Thrones, and Dominations  
That grief's the sole nobility, I know it,  
Where neither Earth nor Hell can make attacks,  
And that, to deck my mystic crown of poet,  
All times and universes paid their tax.  
But all the gems from old Palmyra lost,  
The ores unmixed, the pearls of the abyss,  
Set by Your hand, could not suffice the cost  
Of such a blazing diadem as this.  
Because it will be only made of light,  
Drawn from the hearth of the essential rays,  
To which our mortal eyes, when burning bright,  
Are but the tarnished mirrors that they glaze."

– Roy Campbell, 1952





## L'Albatros (1861)

### L'Albatros

Souvent, pour s'amuser, les hommes d'équipage  
Prennent des albatros, vastes oiseaux des mers,  
Qui suivent, indolents compagnons de voyage,  
Le navire glissant sur les gouffres amers.  
À peine les ont-ils déposés sur les planches,  
Que ces rois de l'azur, maladroits et honteux,  
Laissent piteusement leurs grandes ailes blanches  
Comme des avirons traîner à côté d'eux.  
Ce voyageur ailé, comme il est gauche et veule !  
Lui, naguère si beau, qu'il est comique et laid !  
L'un agace son bec avec un brûle-gueule,  
L'autre mime, en boitant, l'infirme qui volait !  
Le Poète est semblable au prince des nuées  
Qui hante la tempête et se rit de l'archer ;  
Exilé sur le sol au milieu des huées,  
Ses ailes de géant l'empêchent de marcher.

– Charles Baudelaire

### The Albatross

Often, to amuse themselves, the men of a crew  
Catch albatrosses, those vast sea birds  
That indolently follow a ship  
As it glides over the deep, briny sea.  
Scarcely have they placed them on the deck  
Than these kings of the sky, clumsy, ashamed,  
Pathetically let their great white wings

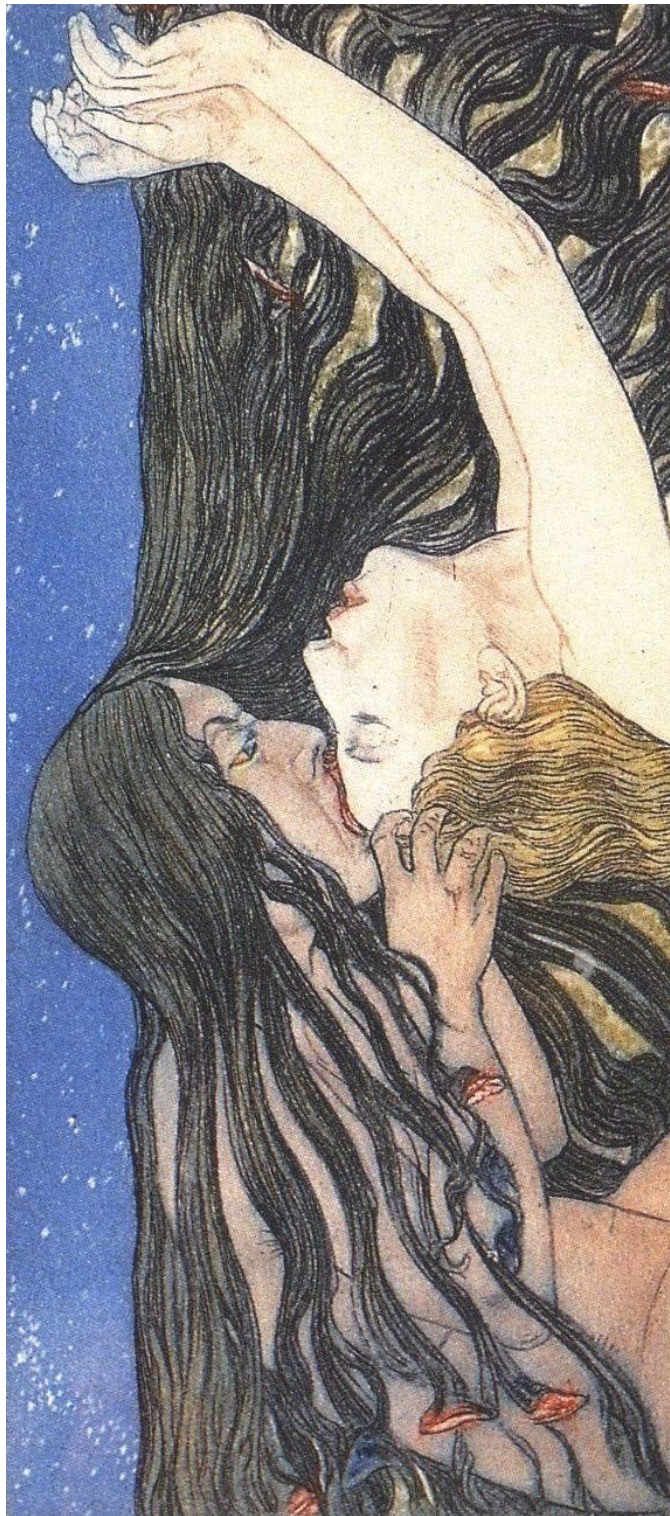
Drag beside them like oars.  
That winged voyager, how weak and gauche he is,  
So beautiful before, now comic and ugly !  
One man worries his beak with a stubby clay pipe ;  
Another limps, mimics the cripple who once flew !  
The poet resembles this prince of cloud and sky  
Who frequents the tempest and laughs at the bowman ;  
When exiled on the earth, the butt of hoots and jeers,  
His giant wings prevent him from walking.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Albatross

Sometimes for sport the men of loafing crews  
Snare the great albatrosses of the deep,  
The indolent companions of their cruise  
As through the bitter vastitudes they sweep.  
Scarce have they fished aboard these airy kings  
When helpless on such unaccustomed floors,  
They piteously droop their huge white wings  
And trail them at their sides like drifting oars.  
How comical, how ugly, and how meek  
Appears this soarer of celestial snows !  
One, with his pipe, teases the golden beak,  
One, limping, mocks the cripple as he goes.  
The Poet, like this monarch of the clouds,  
Despising archers, rides the storm elate.  
But, stranded on the earth to jeering crowds,  
The great wings of the giant baulk his gait.

– Roy Campbell, 1952



# Élévation

## Élévation

Au-dessus des étangs, au-dessus des vallées,  
Des montagnes, des bois, des nuages, des mers,  
Par delà le soleil, par delà les éthers,  
Par delà les confins des sphères étoilées,  
Mon esprit, tu te meus avec agilité,  
Et, comme un bon nageur qui se pâme dans l'onde,  
Tu sillones gaiement l'immensité profonde  
Avec une indicible et mâle volupté.  
Envole-toi bien loin de ces miasmes morbides ;  
Va te purifier dans l'air supérieur,  
Et bois, comme une pure et divine liqueur,  
Le feu clair qui remplit les espaces limpides.  
Derrière les ennuis et les vastes chagrins  
Qui chargent de leur poids l'existence brumeuse,  
Heureux celui qui peut d'une aile vigoureuse  
S'élancer vers les champs lumineux et sereins ;  
Celui dont les pensers, comme des alouettes,  
Vers les cieus le matin prennent un libre essor,  
– Qui plane sur la vie, et comprend sans effort  
Le langage des fleurs et des choses muettes !

– Charles Baudelaire

## Elevation

Above the lakes, above the vales,  
The mountains and the woods, the clouds, the seas,  
Beyond the sun, beyond the ether,

Beyond the confines of the starry spheres,  
My soul, you move with ease,  
And like a strong swimmer in rapture in the wave  
You wing your way blithely through boundless space  
With virile joy unspeakable.  
Fly far, far away from this baneful miasma  
And purify yourself in the celestial air,  
Drink the ethereal fire of those limpid regions  
As you would the purest of heavenly nectars.  
Beyond the vast sorrows and all the vexations  
That weigh upon our lives and obscure our vision,  
Happy is he who can with his vigorous wing  
Soar up towards those fields luminous and serene,  
He whose thoughts, like skylarks,  
Toward the morning sky take flight  
– Who hovers over life and understands with ease  
The language of flowers and silent things !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Elevation

Above the valleys and the lakes : beyond  
The woods, seas, clouds and mountain-ranges : far  
Above the sun, the aethers silver-swanned  
With nebulae, and the remotest star,  
My spirit ! with agility you move  
Like a strong swimmer with the seas to fight,  
Through the blue vastness furrowing your groove  
With an ineffable and male delight.  
Far from these foetid marshes, be made pure  
In the pure air of the superior sky,  
And drink, like some most exquisite liqueur,  
The fire that fills the lucid realms on high.  
Beyond where cares or boredom hold dominion,  
Which charge our fogged existence with their spleen,  
Happy is he who with a stalwart pinion  
Can seek those fields so shining and serene :  
Whose thoughts, like larks, rise on the freshening breeze

Who fans the morning with his tameless wings,  
Skims over life, and understands with ease  
The speech of flowers and other voiceless things.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# Correspondances

## Correspondances

La Nature est un temple où de vivants piliers  
Laissent parfois sortir de confuses paroles ;  
L'homme y passe à travers des forêts de symboles  
Qui l'observent avec des regards familiers.  
Comme de longs échos qui de loin se confondent  
Dans une ténébreuse et profonde unité,  
Vaste comme la nuit et comme la clarté,  
Les parfums, les couleurs et les sons se répondent.  
Il est des parfums frais comme des chairs d'enfants,  
Doux comme les hautbois, verts comme les prairies,  
– Et d'autres, corrompus, riches et triomphants,  
Ayant l'expansion des choses infinies,  
Comme l'ambre, le musc, le benjoin et l'encens,  
Qui chantent les transports de l'esprit et des sens.

– Charles Baudelaire

## Correspondences

Nature is a temple in which living pillars  
Sometimes give voice to confused words ;  
Man passes there through forests of symbols  
Which look at him with understanding eyes.  
Like prolonged echoes mingling in the distance  
In a deep and tenebrous unity,  
Vast as the dark of night and as the light of day,  
Perfumes, sounds, and colors correspond.  
There are perfumes as cool as the flesh of children,

Sweet as oboes, green as meadows  
– And others are corrupt, and rich, triumphant,  
With power to expand into infinity,  
Like amber and incense, musk, benzoin,  
That sing the ecstasy of the soul and senses.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Correspondences

Nature's a temple where each living column,  
At times, gives forth vague words. There Man advances  
Through forest-groves of symbols, strange and solemn,  
Who follow him with their familiar glances.  
As long-drawn echoes mingle and transfuse  
Till in a deep, dark unison they swoon,  
Vast as the night or as the vault of noon –  
So are commingled perfumes, sounds, and hues.  
There can be perfumes cool as children's flesh,  
Like fiddles, sweet, like meadows greenly fresh.  
Rich, complex, and triumphant, others roll  
With the vast range of all non-finite things –  
Amber, musk, incense, benjamin, each sings  
The transports of the senses and the soul.

– Roy Campbell, 1952



## J'aime le souvenir de ces époques nues

### J'aime le souvenir de ces époques nues

J'aime le souvenir de ces époques nues,  
Dont Phoebus se plaisait à dorer les statues.  
Alors l'homme et la femme en leur agilité  
Jouissaient sans mensonge et sans anxiété,  
Et, le ciel amoureux leur caressant l'échine,  
Exerçaient la santé de leur noble machine.  
Cybèle alors, fertile en produits généreux,  
Ne trouvait point ses fils un poids trop onéreux,  
Mais, louve au coeur gonflé de tendresses communes  
Abreuvait l'univers à ses tétines brunes.  
L'homme, élégant, robuste et fort, avait le droit  
D'être fier des beautés qui le nommaient leur roi ;  
Fruits purs de tout outrage et vierges de gerçures,  
Dont la chair lisse et ferme appelait les morsures !  
Le Poète aujourd'hui, quand il veut concevoir  
Ces natives grandeurs, aux lieux où se font voir  
La nudité de l'homme et celle de la femme,  
Sent un froid ténébreux envelopper son âme  
Devant ce noir tableau plein d'épouvantement.  
Ô monstruosité pleurant leur vêtement !  
Ô ridicules troncs ! torsos dignes des masques !  
Ô pauvres corps tordus, maigres, ventrus ou flasques,  
Que le dieu de l'Utile, implacable et serein,  
Enfants, emmaillota dans ses langes d'airain !  
Et vous, femmes, hélas ! pâles comme des cierges,  
Que ronge et que nourrit la débauche, et vous, vierges,  
Du vice maternel traînant l'hérédité

Et toutes les hideurs de la fécondité !  
Nous avons, il est vrai, nations corrompues,  
Aux peuples anciens des beautés inconnues :  
Des visages rongés par les chancres du coeur,  
Et comme qui dirait des beautés de langueur ;  
Mais ces inventions de nos muses tardives  
N'empêcheront jamais les races malades  
De rendre à la jeunesse un hommage profond,  
– À la sainte jeunesse, à l'air simple, au doux front,  
À l'oeil limpide et clair ainsi qu'une eau courante,  
Et qui va répandant sur tout, insouciant  
Comme l'azur du ciel, les oiseaux et les fleurs,  
Ses parfums, ses chansons et ses douces chaleurs !

– Charles Baudelaire

## I Love to Think of Those Naked Epochs

I love to think of those naked epochs  
Whose statues Phoebus liked to tinge with gold.  
At that time men and women, lithe and strong,  
Tasted the thrill of love free from care and prudery,  
And with the amorous sun caressing their loins  
They gloried in the health of their noble bodies.  
Then Cybele, generous with her fruits,  
Did not find her children too heavy a burden ;  
A she-wolf from whose heart flowed boundless love for all,  
She fed the universe from her tawny nipples.  
Man, graceful, robust, strong, was justly proud  
Of the beauties who proclaimed him their king ;  
Fruits unblemished and free from every scar,  
Whose smooth, firm flesh invited biting kisses !  
Today, when the Poet wishes to imagine  
This primitive grandeur, in places where  
Men and women show themselves in a state of nudity,  
He feels a gloomy cold enveloping his soul  
Before this dark picture full of terror.  
Monstrosities bewailing their clothing !  
Ridiculous torsos appropriate for masks !  
Poor bodies, twisted, thin, bulging or flabby,

That the god Usefulness, implacable and calm,  
Wrapped up at tender age in swaddling clothes of brass !  
And you, women, alas ! pale as candies,  
Whom Debauch gnaws and feeds, and you, virgins,  
Who trail the heritage of the maternal vice  
And all the hideousness of fecundity !  
Degenerate races, we have, it's true,  
Types of beauty unknown to the ancient peoples :  
Visages gnawed by cankers of the heart  
And what one might say were languor's marks of beauty ;  
But these inventions of our backward Muses  
Will never prevent unhealthy races  
From paying to their youth deep and sincere homage,  
– To holy youth, with serene brow and guileless air,  
With eyes bright and clear, like a running brook,  
Which goes spreading over all things, as free from care  
As the blue of the sky, the birds and the flowers,  
Its perfumes, its songs and its sweet ardor !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## **I Love the Thought of Those Old Naked Days**

I love the thought of those old naked days  
When Phoebus gilded torsos with his rays,  
When men and women sported, strong and fleet,  
Without anxiety or base deceit,  
And heaven caressed them, amorously keen  
To prove the health of each superb machine.  
Cybele then was lavish of her guerdon  
And did not find her sons too gross a burden :  
But, like a she-wolf, in her love great-hearted,  
Her full brown teats to all the world imparted.  
Bold, handsome, strong, Man, rightly, might evince  
Pride in the glories that proclaimed him prince –  
Fruits pure of outrage, by the blight unsmitten,  
With firm, smooth flesh that cried out to be bitten.  
Today the Poet, when he would assess  
Those native splendours in the nakedness  
Of man or woman, feels a sombre chill

Enveloping his spirit and his will.  
He meets a gloomy picture, which he loathes,  
Wherein deformity cries out for clothes.  
Oh comic runts ! Oh horror of burlesque !  
Lank, flabby, skewed, pot-bellied, and grotesque !  
Whom their smug god, Utility (poor brats !)  
Has swaddled in his brazen clouts "ersatz"  
As with cheap tinsel. Women tallow-pale,  
Both gnawed and nourished by debauch, who trail  
The heavy burden of maternal vice,  
Or of fecundity the hideous price.  
We have (corrupted nations) it is true  
Beauties the ancient people never knew –  
Sad faces gnawed by cancers of the heart  
And charms which morbid lassitudes impart.  
But these inventions of our tardy muse  
Can't force our ailing peoples to refuse  
Just tribute to the holiness of youth  
With its straightforward mien, its forehead couth,  
The limpid gaze, like running water bright,  
Diffusing, careless, through all things, like the light  
Of azure skies, the birds, the winds, the flowers,  
The songs, and perfumes, and heart-warming powers.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Les Phares

### Les Phares

Rubens, fleuve d'oubli, jardin de la paresse,  
Oreiller de chair fraîche où l'on ne peut aimer,  
Mais où la vie afflue et s'agite sans cesse,  
Comme l'air dans le ciel et la mer dans la mer ;  
Léonard de Vinci, miroir profond et sombre,  
Où des anges charmants, avec un doux souris  
Tout chargé de mystère, apparaissent à l'ombre  
Des glaciers et des pins qui ferment leur pays ;  
Rembrandt, triste hôpital tout rempli de murmures,  
Et d'un grand crucifix décoré seulement,  
Où la prière en pleurs s'exhale des ordures,  
Et d'un rayon d'hiver traversé brusquement ;  
Michel-Ange, lieu vague où l'on voit des Hercules  
Se mêler à des Christs, et se lever tout droits  
Des fantômes puissants qui dans les crépuscules  
Déchirent leur suaire en étirant leurs doigts ;  
Colères de boxeur, impudences de faune,  
Toi qui sus ramasser la beauté des goujats,  
Grand coeur gonflé d'orgueil, homme débile et jaune,  
Puget, mélancolique empereur des forçats ;  
Watteau, ce carnaval où bien des coeurs illustres,  
Comme des papillons, errent en flamboyant,  
Décors frais et légers éclairés par des lustres  
Qui versent la folie à ce bal tournoyant ;  
Goya, cauchemar plein de choses inconnues,  
De foetus qu'on fait cuire au milieu des sabbats,  
De vieilles au miroir et d'enfants toutes nues,  
Pour tenter les démons ajustant bien leurs bas ;

Delacroix, lac de sang hanté des mauvais anges,  
 Ombragé par un bois de sapins toujours vert,  
 Où, sous un ciel chagrin, des fanfares étranges  
 Passent, comme un soupir étouffé de Weber ;  
 Ces malédictions, ces blasphèmes, ces plaintes,  
 Ces extases, ces cris, ces pleurs, ces Te Deum,  
 Sont un écho redit par mille labyrinthes ;  
 C'est pour les coeurs mortels un divin opium !  
 C'est un cri répété par mille sentinelles,  
 Un ordre renvoyé par mille porte-voix ;  
 C'est un phare allumé sur mille citadelles,  
 Un appel de chasseurs perdus dans les grands bois !  
 Car c'est vraiment, Seigneur, le meilleur témoignage  
 Que nous puissions donner de notre dignité  
 Que cet ardent sanglot qui roule d'âge en âge  
 Et vient mourir au bord de votre éternité !

– Charles Baudelaire

## The Beacons

Rubens, river of oblivion, garden of indolence,  
 Pillow of cool flesh where one cannot love,  
 But where life moves and whirls incessantly  
 Like the air in the sky and the tide in the sea ;  
 Leonardo, dark, unfathomable mirror,  
 In which charming angels, with sweet smiles  
 Full of mystery, appear in the shadow  
 Of the glaciers and pines that enclose their country ;  
 Rembrandt, gloomy hospital filled with murmuring,  
 Ornamented only with a large crucifix,  
 Lit for a moment by a wintry sun,  
 Where from rot and ordure rise tearful prayers ;  
 Angelo, shadowy place where Hercules' are seen  
 Mingling with Christs, and rising straight up,  
 Powerful phantoms, which in the twilights  
 Rend their winding-sheets with outstretched fingers ;  
 Boxer's wrath, shamelessness of Fauns, you whose genius  
 Showed to us the beauty in a villain,

Great heart filled with pride, sickly, yellow man,  
Puget, melancholy emperor of galley slaves ;  
Watteau, carnival where the loves of many famous hearts  
Flutter capriciously like butterflies with gaudy wings ;  
Cool, airy settings where the candelabras' light  
Touches with madness the couples whirling in the dance  
Goya, nightmare full of unknown things,  
Of fetuses roasted in the midst of witches' sabbaths,  
Of old women at the mirror and of nude children,  
Tightening their hose to tempt the demons ;  
Delacroix, lake of blood haunted by bad angels,  
Shaded by a wood of fir-trees, ever green,  
Where, under a gloomy sky, strange fanfares  
Pass, like a stifled sigh from Weber ;  
These curses, these blasphemies, these lamentations,  
These Te Deums, these ecstasies, these cries, these tears,  
Are an echo repeated by a thousand labyrinths ;  
They are for mortal hearts a divine opium.  
They are a cry passed on by a thousand sentinels,  
An order re-echoed through a thousand megaphones ;  
They are a beacon lighted on a thousand citadels,  
A call from hunters lost deep in the woods !  
For truly, Lord, the clearest proofs  
That we can give of our nobility,  
Are these impassioned sobs that through the ages roll,  
And die away upon the shore of your Eternity.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Beacons

Rubens, the grove of ease, Nepenthe's river  
Couch of cool flesh, where Love may never be,  
But where life ever flows and seems to quiver  
As air in heaven, or, in the sea, the sea.  
Da Vinci, dusky mirror and profound,  
Where angels, smiling mystery, appear,  
Shaded by pines and glaciers, that surround  
And seem to shut their country in the rear.

Rembrandt, sad hospital of murmurs, where  
Adorned alone by one great crucifix,  
From offal-heaps exhales the weeping prayer  
That winter shoots a sunbeam to transfix.  
Vague region, Michelangelo, where Titans  
Are mixed with Christs : and strong ghosts rise, in crowds  
To stand bolt upright in the gloom that lightens,  
With gristly talons tearing through their shrouds.  
Rage of the boxer, mischief of the faun,  
Extracting beauty out of blackguards' looks –  
The heart how proud, the man how pinched and drawn –  
Puget the mournful emperor of crooks !  
Watteau, the carnival, where famous hearts  
Go flitting by like butterflies that burn,  
While through gay scenes each chandelier imparts  
A madness to the dancers as they turn.  
Goya's a nightmare full of things unguessed,  
Of foeti stewed on nights of witches' revels.  
Crones ogle mirrors ; children scarcely dressed,  
Adjust their hose to tantalise the devils.  
A lake of gore where fallen angels dwell  
Is Delacroix, by firwoods ever fair,  
Where under fretful skies strange fanfares swell  
Like Weber's sighs and heartbeats in the air.  
These curses, blasphemies, and lamentations,  
These ecstasies, tears, cries and soaring psalms –  
Through endless mazes, their reverberations  
Bring, to our mortal hearts, divinest balms.  
A thousand sentinels repeat the cry.  
A thousand trumpets echo. Beacon-tossed  
A thousand summits flare it through the sky,  
A call of hunters in the jungle lost.  
And certainly this is the most sublime  
Proof of our worth and value, Oh Divinity,  
That this great sob rolls on through ageless time  
To die upon the shores of your infinity.

– Roy Campbell, 1952



## La Muse malade

### La Muse malade

Ma pauvre muse, hélas ! qu'as-tu donc ce matin ?  
Tes yeux creux sont peuplés de visions nocturnes,  
Et je vois tour à tour réfléchis sur ton teint  
La folie et l'horreur, froides et taciturnes.  
Le succube verdâtre et le rose lutin  
T'ont-ils versé la peur et l'amour de leurs urnes ?  
Le cauchemar, d'un poing despotique et mutin  
T'a-t-il noyée au fond d'un fabuleux Minturnes ?  
Je voudrais qu'exhalant l'odeur de la santé  
Ton sein de pensers forts fût toujours fréquenté,  
Et que ton sang chrétien coulât à flots rythmiques,  
Comme les sons nombreux des syllabes antiques,  
Où règnent tour à tour le père des chansons,  
Phoebus, et le grand Pan, le seigneur des moissons.

– Charles Baudelaire

### The Sick Muse

My poor Muse, alas ! what ails you today ?  
Your hollow eyes are full of nocturnal visions ;  
I see in turn reflected on your face  
Horror and madness, cold and taciturn.  
Have the green succubus, the rosy elf,  
Poured out for you love and fear from their urns ?  
Has the hand of Nightmare, cruel and despotic,  
Plunged you to the bottom of some weird Minturnae ?  
I would that your bosom, fragrant with health,

Were constantly the dwelling place of noble thoughts,  
And that your Christian blood would flow in rhythmic waves  
Like the measured sounds of ancient verse,  
Over which reign in turn the father of all songs,  
Phoebus, and the great Pan, lord of harvest.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Sick Muse

Alas, poor Muse, what ails you so today?  
Your hollow eyes with midnight visions burn,  
And turn about, in your complexion play  
Madness and horror, cold and taciturn.  
Green succubus and rosy imp – have they  
Poured you both fear and love into one glass?  
Or with his tyrant fist the nightmare, say,  
Submerged you in some fabulous morass?  
I wish that, breathing health, your breast might nourish  
Ever robuster thoughts therein to flourish:  
And that your Christian blood, in rhythmic flow,  
With those old polysyllables would chime,  
Where, turn about, reigned Phoebus, sire of rhyme,  
And Pan, the lord of harvests long ago.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## La Muse vénale

### La Muse vénale

Ô muse de mon coeur, amante des palais,  
Auras-tu, quand Janvier lâchera ses Borées,  
Durant les noirs ennuis des neigeuses soirées,  
Un tison pour chauffer tes deux pieds violets ?  
Ranimeras-tu donc tes épaules marbrées  
Aux nocturnes rayons qui percent les volets ?  
Sentant ta bourse à sec autant que ton palais  
Récouteras-tu l'or des voûtes azurées ?  
Il te faut, pour gagner ton pain de chaque soir,  
Comme un enfant de choeur, jouer de l'encensoir,  
Chanter des Te Deum auxquels tu ne crois guère,  
Ou, saltimbanque à jeun, étaler tes appas  
Et ton rire trempé de pleurs qu'on ne voit pas,  
Pour faire épanouir la rate du vulgaire.

– Charles Baudelaire

### The Venal Muse

Muse of my heart, you who love palaces,  
When January frees his north winds, will you have,  
During the black ennui of snowy evenings,  
An ember to warm your two feet blue with cold ?  
Will you bring the warmth back to your mottled shoulders,  
With the nocturnal beams that pass through the shutters ?  
Knowing that your purse is as dry as your palate,  
Will you harvest the gold of the blue, vaulted sky ?  
To earn your daily bread you are obliged

To swing the censer like an altar boy,  
And to sing Te Deums in which you don't believe,  
Or, hungry mountebank, to put up for sale your charm,  
Your laughter wet with tears which people do not see,  
To make the vulgar herd shake with laughter.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Venal Muse

Muse of my heart, of palaces the lover,  
Where will you, when the blast of winter blows  
In the black boredom of snowed lights, discover  
A glowing brand to warm your violet toes?  
How will you there revive your marbled skin  
At the chill rays your shutters then disperse?  
The gold of azure heavens will you win  
When empty are your palate and your purse?  
You'll need each evening, then, to earn your bread,  
As choirboys swinging censers that are dead  
Who sing Te Deums which they disbelieve:  
Or, fasting pierrette, trade your loveliness  
And laughter, soaked in tears that none can guess,  
The boredom of the vulgar to relieve.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Le Mauvais Moine

### Le Mauvais Moine

Les cloîtres anciens sur leurs grandes murailles  
Étalaien en tableaux la sainte Vérité,  
Dont l'effet réchauffant les pieuses entrailles,  
Tempérait la froideur de leur austérité.  
En ces temps où du Christ florissaient les semailles,  
Plus d'un illustre moine, aujourd'hui peu cité,  
Prenant pour atelier le champ des funérailles,  
Glorifiait la Mort avec simplicité.  
– Mon âme est un tombeau que, mauvais cénobite,  
Depuis l'éternité je parcours et j'habite ;  
Rien n'embellit les murs de ce cloître odieux.  
Ô moine fainéant ! quand saurai-je donc faire  
Du spectacle vivant de ma triste misère  
Le travail de mes mains et l'amour de mes yeux ?

– Charles Baudelaire

### The Bad Monk

Cloisters in former times portrayed on their high walls  
The truths of Holy Writ with fitting pictures  
Which gladdened pious hearts and lessened the coldness,  
The austere appearance, of those monasteries.  
In those days the sowing of Christ's Gospel flourished,  
And more than one famed monk, seldom quoted today,  
Taking his inspiration from the graveyard,  
Glorified Death with naive simplicity.  
– My soul is a tomb where, bad cenobite,

I wander and dwell eternally ;  
Nothing adorns the walls of that loathsome cloister.  
O lazy monk ! When shall I learn to make  
Of the living spectacle of my bleak misery  
The labor of my hands and the love of my eyes ?

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Evil Monk

The walls of cloisters on their frescoed lath  
Displayed, in pictures, sacred truths of old,  
Whose sight would warm the entrails of one's faith  
To temper their austerity and cold.  
In times when every sowing flowered for Christ  
Lived famous monks, now out of memory's reach ;  
The graveyard for their library sufficed,  
And Death was glorified in simple speech.  
My soul's a grave, where, evil cenobite,  
To all eternity I have been banned.  
Nothing adorns this cloister fall of spite.  
O idle monk ! Say, to what end were planned  
The living spectacle of my sad plight,  
Love of my eye, or labour of my hand ?

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# L'Ennemi

## L'Ennemi

Ma jeunesse ne fut qu'un ténébreux orage,  
Traversé çà et là par de brillants soleils ;  
Le tonnerre et la pluie ont fait un tel ravage,  
Qu'il reste en mon jardin bien peu de fruits vermeils.  
Voilà que j'ai touché l'automne des idées,  
Et qu'il faut employer la pelle et les râteaux  
Pour rassembler à neuf les terres inondées,  
Où l'eau creuse des trous grands comme des tombeaux.  
Et qui sait si les fleurs nouvelles que je rêve  
Trouveront dans ce sol lavé comme une grève  
Le mystique aliment qui ferait leur vigueur ?  
– Ô douleur ! ô douleur ! Le Temps mange la vie,  
Et l'obscur Ennemi qui nous ronge le cœur  
Du sang que nous perdons croît et se fortifie !

– Charles Baudelaire

## The Enemy

My youth has been nothing but a tenebrous storm,  
Pierced now and then by rays of brilliant sunshine ;  
Thunder and rain have wrought so much havoc  
That very few ripe fruits remain in my garden.  
I have already reached the autumn of the mind,  
And I must set to work with the spade and the rake  
To gather back the inundated soil  
In which the rain digs holes as big as graves.  
And who knows whether the new flowers I dream of

Will find in this earth washed bare like the strand,  
The mystic aliment that would give them vigor?  
Alas! Alas! Time eats away our lives,  
And the hidden Enemy who gnaws at our hearts  
Grows by drawing strength from the blood we lose!

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Enemy

My youth was but a tempest, dark and savage,  
Through which, at times, a dazzling sun would shoot  
The thunder and the rain have made such ravage  
My garden is nigh bare of rosy fruit.  
Now I have reached the Autumn of my thought,  
And spade and rake must toil the land to save,  
That fragments of my flooded fields be sought  
From where the water sluices out a grave.  
Who knows if the new flowers my dreams prefigure,  
In this washed soil should find, as by a sluit,  
The mystic nourishment to give them vigour?  
Time swallows up our life, O ruthless rigour!  
And the dark foe that nibbles our heart's root,  
Grows on our blood the stronger and the bigger!

– Roy Campbell, 1952



# Le Guignon

## Le Guignon

Pour soulever un poids si lourd,  
Sisyphé, il faudrait ton courage !  
Bien qu'on ait du coeur à l'ouvrage,  
L'Art est long et le Temps est court.  
Loin des sépultures célèbres,  
Vers un cimetière isolé,  
Mon coeur, comme un tambour voilé,  
Va battant des marches funèbres.  
– Maint joyau dort enseveli  
Dans les ténèbres et l'oubli,  
Bien loin des pioches et des sondes ;  
Mainte fleur épanche à regret  
Son parfum doux comme un secret  
Dans les solitudes profondes.

– Charles Baudelaire

## Evil Fate

To lift a weight so heavy,  
Would take your courage, Sisyphus !  
Although one's heart is in the work,  
Art is long and Time is short.  
Far from famous sepulchers  
Toward a lonely cemetery  
My heart, like muffled drums,  
Goes beating funeral marches.  
Many a jewel lies buried

In darkness and oblivion,  
Far, far away from picks and drills ;  
Many a flower regretfully  
Exhales perfume soft as secrets  
In a profound solitude.

– William Aggeler, 1954

### **Ill Luck**

So huge a burden to support  
Your courage, Sisyphus, would ask ;  
Well though my heart attacks its task,  
Yet Art is long and Time is short.  
Far from the famed memorial arch  
Towards a lonely grave I come.  
My heart in its funereal march  
Goes beating like a muffled drum.  
– Yet many a gem lies hidden still  
Of whom no pick-axe, spade, or drill  
The lonely secrecy invades ;  
And many a flower, to heal regret,  
Pours forth its fragrant secret yet  
Amidst the solitary shades.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# La Vie antérieure

## La Vie antérieure

J'ai longtemps habité sous de vastes portiques  
Que les soleils marins teignaient de mille feux,  
Et que leurs grands piliers, droits et majestueux,  
Rendaient pareils, le soir, aux grottes basaltiques.  
Les houles, en roulant les images des cieux,  
Mêlaient d'une façon solennelle et mystique  
Les tout-puissants accords de leur riche musique  
Aux couleurs du couchant reflété par mes yeux.  
C'est là que j'ai vécu dans les voluptés calmes,  
Au milieu de l'azur, des vagues, des splendeurs  
Et des esclaves nus, tout imprégnés d'odeurs,  
Qui me rafraîchissaient le front avec des palmes,  
Et dont l'unique soin était d'approfondir  
Le secret douloureux qui me faisait languir.

– Charles Baudelaire

## My Former Life

For a long time I dwelt under vast porticos  
Which the ocean suns lit with a thousand colors,  
The pillars of which, tall, straight, and majestic,  
Made them, in the evening, like basaltic grottos.  
The billows which cradled the image of the sky  
Mingled, in a solemn, mystical way,  
The omnipotent chords of their rich harmonies  
With the sunsets' colors reflected in my eyes ;  
It was there that I lived in voluptuous calm,

In splendor, between the azure and the sea,  
And I was attended by slaves, naked, perfumed,  
Who fanned my brow with fronds of palms  
And whose sole task it was to fathom  
The dolorous secret that made me pine away.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Former Life

I've lived beneath huge portals where marine  
Suns coloured, with a myriad fires, the waves ;  
At eve majestic pillars made the scene  
Resemble those of vast basaltic caves.  
The breakers, rolling the reflected skies,  
Mixed, in a solemn, enigmatic way,  
The powerful symphonies they seem to play  
With colours of the sunset in my eyes.  
There did I live in a voluptuous calm  
Where breezes, waves, and splendours roved as vagrants ;  
And naked slaves, impregnated with fragrance,  
Would fan my forehead with their fronds of palm :  
Their only charge was to increase the anguish  
Of secret grief in which I loved to languish.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Bohémiens en voyage

### Bohémiens en voyage

La tribu prophétique aux prunelles ardentes  
Hier s'est mise en route, emportant ses petits  
Sur son dos, ou livrant à leurs fiers appétits  
Le trésor toujours prêt des mamelles pendantes.  
Les hommes vont à pied sous leurs armes luisantes  
Le long des chariots où les leurs sont blottis,  
Promenant sur le ciel des yeux appesantis  
Par le morne regret des chimères absentes.  
Du fond de son réduit sablonneux, le grillon,  
Les regardant passer, redouble sa chanson ;  
Cybèle, qui les aime, augmente ses verdure,  
Fait couler le rocher et fleurir le désert  
Devant ces voyageurs, pour lesquels est ouvert  
L'empire familial des ténèbres futures.

– Charles Baudelaire

### Gypsies Traveling

The prophetic tribe, that ardent eyed people,  
Set out last night, carrying their children  
On their backs, or yielding to those fierce appetites  
The ever ready treasure of pendulous breasts.  
The men travel on foot with their gleaming weapons  
Alongside the wagons where their kin are huddled,  
Surveying the heavens with eyes rendered heavy  
By a mournful regret for vanished illusions.  
The cricket from the depths of his sandy retreat

Watches them as they pass, and louder grows his song ;  
Cybele, who loves them, increases her verdure,  
Makes the desert blossom, water spurt from the rock  
Before these travelers for whom is opened wide  
The familiar domain of the future's darkness.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Gipsies on the Road

The tribe of seers, last night, began its march  
With burning eyes, and shouldering its young  
To whose ferocious appetites it swung  
The wealth of hanging breasts that nought can parch.  
The men, their weapons glinting in the rays,  
Walk by the convoy where their folks are carted,  
Sweeping the far-off skylines with a gaze  
Regretful of Chimeras long-departed.  
Out of his hole the cricket sees them pass  
And sings the louder. Greener grows the grass  
Because Cybele loves them, and has made  
The barren rock to gush, the sands to flower,  
To greet these travellers, before whose power  
Familiar futures open realms of shade.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## L'Homme et la mer

### L'Homme et la mer

Homme libre, toujours tu chériras la mer !  
La mer est ton miroir ; tu contemples ton âme  
Dans le déroulement infini de sa lame,  
Et ton esprit n'est pas un gouffre moins amer.  
Tu te plais à plonger au sein de ton image ;  
Tu l'embrasses des yeux et des bras, et ton cœur  
Se distrait quelquefois de sa propre rumeur  
Au bruit de cette plainte indomptable et sauvage.  
Vous êtes tous les deux ténébreux et discrets :  
Homme, nul n'a sondé le fond de tes abîmes ;  
Ô mer, nul ne connaît tes richesses intimes,  
Tant vous êtes jaloux de garder vos secrets !  
Et cependant voilà des siècles innombrables  
Que vous vous combattez sans pitié ni remords,  
Tellement vous aimez le carnage et la mort,  
Ô lutteurs éternels, ô frères implacables !

– Charles Baudelaire

### Man and the Sea

Free man, you will always cherish the sea !  
The sea is your mirror ; you contemplate your soul  
In the infinite unrolling of its billows ;  
Your mind is an abyss that is no less bitter.  
You like to plunge into the bosom of your image ;  
You embrace it with eyes and arms, and your heart  
Is distracted at times from its own clamoring

By the sound of this plaint, wild and untamable.  
Both of you are gloomy and reticent :  
Man, no one has sounded the depths of your being ;  
O Sea, no person knows your most hidden riches,  
So zealously do you keep your secrets !  
Yet for countless ages you have fought each other  
Without pity, without remorse,  
So fiercely do you love carnage and death,  
O eternal fighters, implacable brothers !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Man and the Sea

Free man, you'll always love the sea – for this,  
That it's a mirror, where you see your soul  
In its eternal waves that chafe and roll ;  
Nor is your soul less bitter an abyss.  
in your reflected image there to merge,  
You love to dive, its eyes and limbs to match.  
Sometimes your heart forgets its own, to catch  
The rhythm of that wild and tameless dirge.  
The two of you are shadowy, deep, and wide.  
Man! None has ever plummeted your floor –  
Sea! None has ever known what wealth you store –  
Both are so jealous of the things you hide !  
Yet age on age is ended, or begins,  
While you without remorse or pity fight.  
So much in death and carnage you delight,  
Eternal wrestlers! Unrelenting twins !

– Roy Campbell, 1952



## Don Juan aux enfers

### Don Juan aux enfers

Quand Don Juan descendit vers l'onde souterraine  
Et lorsqu'il eut donné son obole à Charon,  
Un sombre mendiant, l'oeil fier comme Antisthène,  
D'un bras vengeur et fort saisit chaque aviron.  
Montrant leurs seins pendants et leurs robes ouvertes,  
Des femmes se tordaient sous le noir firmament,  
Et, comme un grand troupeau de victimes offertes,  
Derrière lui traînaient un long mugissement.  
Sganarelle en riant lui réclamait ses gages,  
Tandis que Don Luis avec un doigt tremblant  
Montrait à tous les morts errant sur les rivages  
Le fils audacieux qui railla son front blanc.  
Frissonnant sous son deuil, la chaste et maigre Elvire,  
Près de l'époux perfide et qui fut son amant,  
Semblait lui réclamer un suprême sourire  
Où brillât la douceur de son premier serment.  
Tout droit dans son armure, un grand homme de pierre  
Se tenait à la barre et coupait le flot noir ;  
Mais le calme héros, courbé sur sa rapière,  
Regardait le sillage et ne daignait rien voir.

– Charles Baudelaire

### Don Juan in Hades

When Don Juan descended to the underground sea,  
And when he had given his obolus to Charon,  
That gloomy mendicant, with Antisthenes' proud look,

Seized the two oars with strong, revengeful hands.  
Showing their pendent breasts and their unfastened gowns  
Women writhed and twisted under the black heavens,  
And like a great flock of sacrificial victims,  
A continuous groan trailed along in the wake.  
Sganarelle with a laugh was demanding his wage,  
While Don Luis with a trembling finger  
Was showing to the dead, wandering along the shores,  
The impudent son who had mocked his white brow.  
Shuddering in her grief, Elvira, chaste and thin,  
Near her treacherous spouse who was once her lover,  
Seemed to implore of him a final, parting smile  
That would shine with the sweetness of his first promises.  
Erect in his armor, a tall man carved from stone  
Was standing at the helm and cutting the black flood ;  
But the hero unmoved, leaning on his rapier,  
Kept gazing at the wake and deigned not look aside.

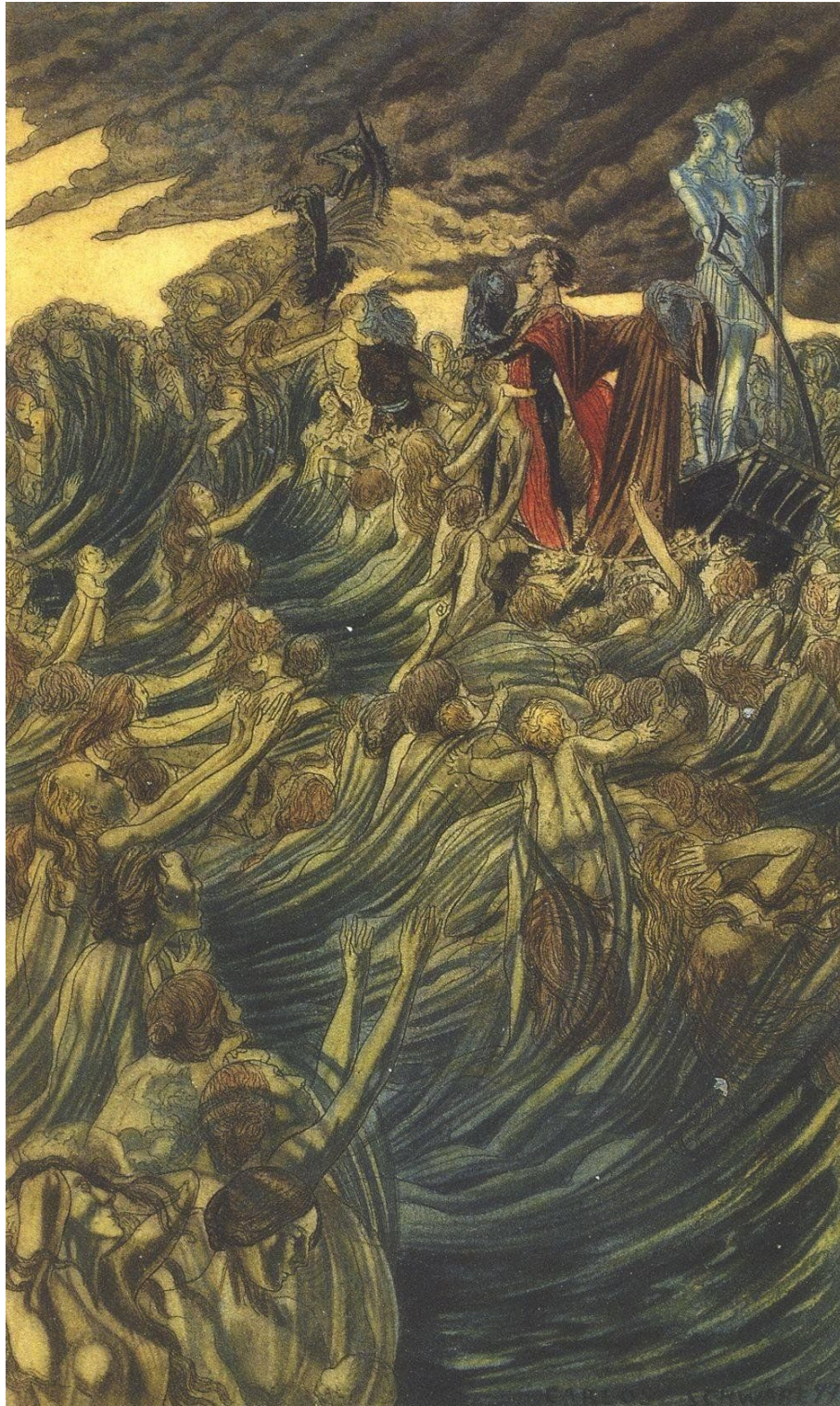
– William Aggeler, 1954

## Don Juan in Hell

When, having reached the subterranean wave,  
Don Juan paid his passage from the shore,  
Proud as Antisthenes, a surly knave  
With vengeful arms laid hold of either oar.  
With hanging breasts between their mantles showing  
Sad women, writhing under the black sky,  
Made, as they went, the sound of cattle lowing  
As from a votive herd that's led to die.  
Sganarelle for his wages seemed to linger,  
And laughed ; while to the dead assembled there,  
Don Luis pointed out with trembling finger  
The son who dared to flout his silver hair.  
Chilled in her crepe, the chaste and thin Elvira,  
Standing up close to her perfidious spouse,  
Seemed to be pleading from her old admirer  
For that which thrilled his first, unbroken vows.  
A great stone man in armour leaped aboard ;

Seizing the helm, the coal-black wave he cleft.  
But the calm hero, leaning on his sword,  
Had eyes for nothing but the wake they left.

– Roy Campbell, 1952



## À Théodore de Banville (1868)

### À Théodore de Banville

Vous avez empoigné les cries de la Déesse  
Avec un tel poignet, qu'on vous eût pris, à voir  
Et cet air de maîtrise et ce beau nonchaloir,  
Pour un jeune ruffian terrassant sa maîtresse.  
L'oeil clair et plein du feu de la précocité,  
Vous avez prélassé votre orgueil d'architecte  
Dans des constructions dont l'audace correcte  
Fait voir quelle sera votre maturité.  
Poète, notre sang nous fuit par chaque pore ;  
Est-ce que par hasard la robe du Centaure  
Qui changeait toute veine en funèbre ruisseau  
Était teinte trois fois dans les baves subtiles  
De ces vindicatifs et monstrueux reptiles  
Que le petit Hercule étranglait au berceau ?

– Charles Baudelaire

### To Théodore de Banville

So roughly did you seize the Goddess by her hair  
That, seeing your imperious, nonchalant look,  
One would have taken you to be  
A young ruffian manhandling his mistress.  
Your bright eye filled with the fire of precocity,  
You indulged the pride of an architect  
In your phrasing, correct in spite of its daring ;  
You showed what you will be in your maturity.  
Poet, our blood escapes from every pore ;

Was it merely by chance the robe of the Centaur  
Which transformed every vein into a fatal stream  
Was dyed three times in the subtle froth  
Of those reptiles, monstrous and vindictive  
That little Hercules strangled in his cradle ?

– William Aggeler, 1954

## To Théodore de Banville, 1842

Your hands have seized the goddess by the hair  
In such a grasp, so finally and fully,  
One thinks of some Herculean young Bully  
Flooring his mistress with a lordly air.  
With clear eyes radiant with precocious fire,  
You've shown such pride in architecture fine  
And such a pure audacity of line –  
One knows to what your manhood will aspire.  
Poet ! Our blood, through every pore outpressed,  
Escapes from us as if the Centaur's vest  
Made a funereal rill of every vein ;  
One thinks that vest was dyed in vengeful spittle  
Of the two snakes that Hercules, when little,  
Throttled in his two fists till they were slain.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# Châtiment de l'Orgueil

## Châtiment de l'Orgueil

En ces temps merveilleux où la Théologie  
Fleurit avec le plus de sève et d'énergie,  
On raconte qu'un jour un docteur des plus grands,  
– Après avoir forcé les coeurs indifférents ;  
Les avoir remués dans leurs profondeurs noires ;  
Après avoir franchi vers les célestes gloires  
Des chemins singuliers à lui-même inconnus,  
Où les purs Esprits seuls peut-être étaient venus, –  
Comme un homme monté trop haut, pris de panique,  
S'écria, transporté d'un orgueil satanique :  
« Jésus, petit Jésus ! je t'ai poussé bien haut !  
Mais, si j'avais voulu t'attaquer au défaut  
De l'armure, ta honte égalerait ta gloire,  
Et tu ne serais plus qu'un foetus dérisoire ! »  
Immédiatement sa raison s'en alla.  
L'éclat de ce soleil d'un crêpe se voila  
Tout le chaos roula dans cette intelligence,  
Temple autrefois vivant, plein d'ordre et d'opulence,  
Sous les plafonds duquel tant de pompe avait lui.  
Le silence et la nuit s'installèrent en lui,  
Comme dans un caveau dont la clef est perdue.  
Dès lors il fut semblable aux bêtes de la rue,  
Et, quand il s'en allait sans rien voir, à travers  
Les champs, sans distinguer les étés des hivers,  
Sale, inutile et laid comme une chose usée,  
Il faisait des enfants la joie et la risée.

– Charles Baudelaire

## Punishment for Pride

In that marvelous time in which Theology  
Flourished with the greatest energy and vigor,  
It is said that one day a most learned doctor  
– After winning by force the indifferent hearts,  
Having stirred them in the dark depths of their being ;  
After crossing on the way to celestial glory,  
Singular and strange roads, even to him unknown,  
Which only pure Spirits, perhaps, had reached, –  
Panic-stricken, like one who has clambered too high,  
He cried, carried away by a satanic pride :  
“Jesus, little jesus ! I raised you very high !  
But had I wished to attack you through the defect  
In your armor, your shame would equal your glory,  
And you would be no more than a despised fetus !”  
At that very moment his reason departed.  
A crape of mourning veiled the brilliance of that sun ;  
Complete chaos rolled in and filled that intellect,  
A temple once alive, ordered and opulent,  
Within whose walls so much pomp had glittered.  
Silence and darkness took possession of it  
Like a cellar to which the key is lost.  
Henceforth he was like the beasts in the street,  
And when he went along, seeing nothing, across  
The fields, distinguishing nor summer nor winter,  
Dirty, useless, ugly, like a discarded thing,  
He was the laughing-stock, the joke, of the children.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Punishment of Pride

When first Theology in her young prime  
Flourished with vigour, in that wondrous time,  
Of an illustrious Doctor it was said  
That, having forced indifferent hearts to shed  
Tears of emotion, moved to depths profound :  
And having to celestial glory found  
Marvellous paths, to his own self unknown,



Where only purest souls had fared alone –  
Like a man raised too high, as in a panic,  
Crazed with a vertigo of pride satanic,  
He cried “Poor Christ, I’ve raised you to renown!  
But had I wished to bring you crashing down  
Probing your flaws, your shame would match your pride  
And you’d be but a foetus to deride!”  
Immediately he felt his wits escape,  
That flash of sunlight veiled itself in crepe.  
All chaos through his intellect was rolled,  
A temple once, containing hoards of gold,  
By opulence and order well controlled,  
And topped with ceilings splendid to behold.  
Silence and night installed their reign in him.  
It seemed he was a cellar dank and dim,  
To which no living man could find the key;  
And from that day a very beast was he.  
And while he wandered senseless on his way,  
Not knowing spring from summer, night from day,  
Foul, dirty, useless, and with no hereafter,  
He served the children as a butt for laughter.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## La Beauté

### La Beauté

Je suis belle, ô mortels ! comme un rêve de pierre,  
Et mon sein, où chacun s'est meurtri tour à tour,  
Est fait pour inspirer au poète un amour  
Eternel et muet ainsi que la matière.  
Je trône dans l'azur comme un sphinx incompris ;  
J'unis un coeur de neige à la blancheur des cygnes ;  
Je hais le mouvement qui déplace les lignes,  
Et jamais je ne pleure et jamais je ne ris.  
Les poètes, devant mes grandes attitudes,  
Que j'ai l'air d'emprunter aux plus fiers monuments,  
Consumeront leurs jours en d'austères études ;  
Car j'ai, pour fasciner ces dociles amants,  
De purs miroirs qui font toutes choses plus belles :  
Mes yeux, mes larges yeux aux clartés éternelles !

– Charles Baudelaire

### Beauty

I am fair, O mortals ! like a dream carved in stone,  
And my breast where each one in turn has bruised himself  
Is made to inspire in the poet a love  
As eternal and silent as matter.  
On a throne in the sky, a mysterious sphinx,  
I join a heart of snow to the whiteness of swans ;  
I hate movement for it displaces lines,  
And never do I weep and never do I laugh.  
Poets, before my grandiose poses,

Which I seem to assume from the proudest statues,  
Will consume their lives in austere study ;  
For I have, to enchant those submissive lovers,  
Pure mirrors that make all things more beautiful :  
My eyes, my large, wide eyes of eternal brightness !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Beauty

I'm fair, O mortals, as a dream of stone ;  
My breasts whereon, in turn, your wrecks you shatter,  
Were made to wake in poets' hearts alone  
A love as indestructible as matter.  
A sky-throned sphinx, unknown yet, I combine  
The cygnet's whiteness with a heart of snow.  
I loathe all movement that displaces line,  
And neither tears nor laughter do I know.  
Poets before my postures, which I seem  
To learn from masterpieces, love to dream  
And there in austere thought consume their days.  
I have, these docile lovers to subject,  
Mirrors that glorify all they reflect –  
These eyes, great eyes, eternal in their blaze !

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## L'Idéal

### L'Idéal

Ce ne seront jamais ces beautés de vignettes,  
Produits avariés, nés d'un siècle vaurien,  
Ces pieds à brodequins, ces doigts à castagnettes,  
Qui sauront satisfaire un coeur comme le mien.  
Je laisse à Gavarni, poète des chloroses,  
Son troupeau gazouillant de beautés d'hôpital,  
Car je ne puis trouver parmi ces pâles roses  
Une fleur qui ressemble à mon rouge idéal.  
Ce qu'il faut à ce coeur profond comme un abîme,  
C'est vous, Lady Macbeth, âme puissante au crime,  
Rêve d'Eschyle éclos au climat des autans ;  
Ou bien toi, grande Nuit, fille de Michel-Ange,  
Qui tors paisiblement dans une pose étrange  
Tes appas façonnés aux bouches des Titans !

– Charles Baudelaire

### The Ideal

It will never be the beauties that vignettes show,  
Those damaged products of a good-for-nothing age,  
Their feet shod with high shoes, hands holding castanets,  
Who can ever satisfy any heart like mine.  
I leave to Gavarni, poet of chlorosis,  
His prattling troop of consumptive beauties,  
For I cannot find among those pale roses  
A flower that is like my red ideal.  
The real need of my heart, profound as an abyss,

Is you, Lady Macbeth, soul so potent in crime,  
The dream of Aeschylus, born in the land of storms ;  
Or you, great Night, daughter of Michelangelo,  
Who calmly contort, reclining in a strange pose  
Your charms molded by the mouths of Titans !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Ideal

It's not with smirking beauties of vignettes,  
The shopsoiled products of a worthless age,  
With buskined feet and hands for castanets –  
A heart like mine its longing could assuage.  
I leave Gavarni, poet of chloroses,  
His twittering flock, anaemic and unreal.  
I could not find among such bloodless roses,  
A flower to match my crimson-hued ideal.  
To this heart deeper than the deepest canyon,  
Lady Macbeth would be a fit companion,  
Crime-puissant dream of Aeschylus ; or you,  
Daughter of Buonarroti, stately Night !  
Whose charms to suit a Titan's appetite,  
You twist, so strange, yet peaceful, to the view.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## La Géante

### La Géante

Du temps que la Nature en sa verve puissante  
Concevait chaque jour des enfants monstrueux,  
J'eusse aimé vivre auprès d'une jeune géante,  
Comme aux pieds d'une reine un chat voluptueux.  
J'eusse aimé voir son corps fleurir avec son âme  
Et grandir librement dans ses terribles jeux ;  
Deviner si son coeur couve une sombre flamme  
Aux humides brouillards qui nagent dans ses yeux ;  
Parcourir à loisir ses magnifiques formes ;  
Ramper sur le versant de ses genoux énormes,  
Et parfois en été, quand les soleils malsains,  
Lasse, la font s'étendre à travers la campagne,  
Dormir nonchalamment à l'ombre de ses seins,  
Comme un hameau paisible au pied d'une montagne.

– Charles Baudelaire

### The Giantess

At the time when Nature with a lusty spirit  
Was conceiving monstrous children each day,  
I should have liked to live near a young giantess,  
Like a voluptuous cat at the feet of a queen.  
I should have liked to see her soul and body thrive  
And grow without restraint in her terrible games ;  
To divine by the mist swimming within her eyes  
If her heart harbored a smoldering flame ;  
To explore leisurely her magnificent form ;

To crawl upon the slopes of her enormous knees,  
And sometimes in summer, when the unhealthy sun  
Makes her stretch out, weary, across the countryside,  
To sleep nonchalantly in the shade of her breasts,  
Like a peaceful hamlet below a mountainside.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Giantess

Of old when Nature, in her verve defiant,  
Conceived each day some birth of monstrous mien,  
I would have lived near some young female giant  
Like a voluptuous cat beside a queen ;  
To see her body flowering with her soul  
Freely develop in her mighty games,  
And in the mists that through her gaze would roll  
Guess that her heart was hatching sombre flames ;  
To roam her mighty contours as I please,  
Ramp on the cliff of her tremendous knees,  
And in the solstice, when the suns that kill  
Make her stretch out across the land and rest,  
To sleep beneath the shadow of her breast  
Like a hushed village underneath a hill.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Les Bijoux (1857)

### Les Bijoux

La très chère était nue, et, connaissant mon coeur,  
Elle n'avait gardé que ses bijoux sonores,  
Dont le riche attirail lui donnait l'air vainqueur  
Qu'ont dans leurs jours heureux les esclaves des Mores.  
Quand il jette en dansant son bruit vif et moqueur,  
Ce monde rayonnant de métal et de pierre  
Me ravit en extase, et j'aime à la fureur  
Les choses où le son se mêle à la lumière.  
Elle était donc couchée et se laissait aimer,  
Et du haut du divan elle souriait d'aise  
À mon amour profond et doux comme la mer,  
Qui vers elle montait comme vers sa falaise.  
Les yeux fixés sur moi, comme un tigre dompté,  
D'un air vague et rêveur elle essayait des poses,  
Et la candeur unie à la lubricité  
Donnait un charme neuf à ses métamorphoses ;  
Et son bras et sa jambe, et sa cuisse et ses reins,  
Polis comme de l'huile, onduleux comme un cygne,  
Passaient devant mes yeux clairvoyants et sereins ;  
Et son ventre et ses seins, ces grappes de ma vigne,  
S'avançaient, plus câlins que les Anges du mal,  
Pour troubler le repos où mon âme était mise,  
Et pour la déranger du rocher de cristal  
Où, calme et solitaire, elle s'était assise.  
Je croyais voir unis par un nouveau dessin  
Les hanches de l'Antiope au buste d'un imberbe,  
Tant sa taille faisait ressortir son bassin.  
Sur ce teint fauve et brun, le fard était superbe !



– Et la lampe s'étant résignée à mourir,  
Comme le foyer seul illuminait la chambre  
Chaque fois qu'il poussait un flamboyant soupir,  
Il inondait de sang cette peau couleur d'ambre !

– Charles Baudelaire

## The Jewels

My darling was naked, and knowing my heart well,  
She was wearing only her sonorous jewels,  
Whose opulent display made her look triumphant  
Like Moorish concubines on their fortunate days.  
When it dances and flings its lively, mocking sound,  
This radiant world of metal and of gems  
Transports me with delight ; I passionately love  
All things in which sound is mingled with light.  
She had lain down ; and let herself be loved  
From the top of the couch she smiled contentedly  
Upon my love, deep and gentle as the sea,  
Which rose toward her as toward a cliff.  
Her eyes fixed upon me, like a tamed tigress,  
With a vague, dreamy air she was trying poses,  
And by blending candor with lechery,  
Her metamorphoses took on a novel charm ;  
And her arm and her leg, and her thigh and her loins,  
Shiny as oil, sinuous as a swan,  
Passed in front of my eyes, clear-sighted and serene ;  
And her belly, her breasts, grapes of my vine,  
Advanced, more cajoling than angels of evil,  
To trouble the quiet that had possessed my soul,  
To dislodge her from the crag of crystal,  
Where calm and alone she had taken her seat.  
I thought I saw blended in a novel design  
Antiope's haunches and the breast of a boy,  
Her waist set off so well the fullness of her hips.  
On that tawny brown skin the rouge stood out superb !  
– And when at last the lamp allowed itself to die,  
Since the fire alone lighted the room,

Each time that it uttered a flaming sigh,  
It drenched with blood that amber colored skin!

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Jewels

My well-beloved was stripped. Knowing my whim,  
She wore her tinkling gems, but naught besides :  
And showed such pride as, while her luck betides,  
A sultan's favoured slave may show to him.  
When it lets off its lively, crackling sound,  
This blazing blend of metal crossed with stone,  
Gives me an ecstasy I've only known  
Where league of sound and lustre can be found.  
She let herself be loved : then, drowsy-eyed,  
Smiled down from her high couch in languid ease.  
My love was deep and gentle as the seas  
And rose to her as to a cliff the tide.  
My own approval of each dreamy pose,  
Like a tamed tiger, cunningly she sighted :  
And candour, with lubricity united,  
Gave piquancy to every one she chose,  
Her limbs and hips, burnished with changing lustres,  
Before my eyes clairvoyant and serene,  
Swarmed themselves, undulating in their sheen ;  
Her breasts and belly, of my vine the clusters,  
Like evil angels rose, my fancy twitting,  
To kill the peace which over me she'd thrown,  
And to disturb her from the crystal throne  
Where, calm and solitary, she was sitting.  
So swerved her pelvis that, in one design,  
Antiope's white rump it seemed to graft  
To a boy's torso, merging fore and aft.  
The talc on her brown tan seemed half-divine.  
The lamp resigned its dying flame. Within,  
The hearth alone lit up the darkened air,  
And every time it sighed a crimson flare  
It drowned in blood that amber-coloured skin.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# Le Masque (1861)

## Le Masque

Statue allégorique dans le goût de la Renaissance  
À Ernest Christophe, statuaire.

Contemplons ce trésor de grâces florentines ;  
Dans l'ondulation de ce corps musculeux  
L'Élégance et la Force abondent, soeurs divines.  
Cette femme, morceau vraiment miraculeux,  
Divinement robuste, adorablement mince,  
Est faite pour trôner sur des lits somptueux  
Et charmer les loisirs d'un pontife ou d'un prince.  
– Aussi, vois ce souris fin et voluptueux  
Où la Fatuité promène son extase ;  
Ce long regard sournois, langoureux et moqueur ;  
Ce visage mignard, tout encadré de gaze,  
Dont chaque trait nous dit avec un air vainqueur :  
« La Volupté m'appelle et l'Amour me couronne ! »  
À cet être doué de tant de majesté  
Vois quel charme excitant la gentillesse donne !  
Approchons, et tournons autour de sa beauté.  
Ô blasphème de l'art ! ô surprise fatale !  
La femme au corps divin, promettant le bonheur,  
Par le haut se termine en monstre bicéphale !  
– Mais non ! ce n'est qu'un masque, un décor suborneur,  
Ce visage éclairé d'une exquise grimace,  
Et, regarde, voici, crispée atrocement,  
La véritable tête, et la sincère face  
Renversée à l'abri de la face qui ment  
Pauvre grande beauté ! le magnifique fleuve  
De tes pleurs aboutit dans mon coeur soucieux

Ton mensonge m'enivre, et mon âme s'abreuve  
 Aux flots que la Douleur fait jaillir de tes yeux !  
 – Mais pourquoi pleure-t-elle ? Elle, beauté parfaite,  
 Qui mettrait à ses pieds le genre humain vaincu,  
 Quel mal mystérieux ronge son flanc d'athlète ?  
 – Elle pleure insensé, parce qu'elle a vécu !  
 Et parce qu'elle vit ! Mais ce qu'elle déplore  
 Surtout, ce qui la fait frémir jusqu'aux genoux,  
 C'est que demain, hélas ! il faudra vivre encore !  
 Demain, après-demain et toujours ! – comme nous !

– Charles Baudelaire

## The Mask

Allegorical Statue in the Style of the Renaissance  
 To Ernest Christophe, Sculptor

Let us gaze at this gem of Florentine beauty ;  
 In the undulation of this brawny body  
 Those divine sisters, Gracefulness and Strength, abound.  
 This woman, a truly miraculous marble,  
 Adorably slender, divinely robust,  
 Is made to be enthroned upon sumptuous beds  
 And to charm the leisure of a Pope or a Prince.  
 – And see that smile, voluptuous and delicate,  
 Where self-conceit displays its ecstasy ;  
 That sly, lingering look, mocking and languorous ;  
 That dainty face, framed in a veil of gauze,  
 Whose every feature says, with a triumphant air :  
 "Pleasure calls me and Love gives me a crown !"  
 To that being endowed with so much majesty  
 See what exciting charm is lent by prettiness !  
 Let us draw near, and walk around its loveliness.  
 O blasphemy of art ! Fatal surprise !  
 That exquisite body, that promise of delight,  
 At the top turns into a two-headed monster !  
 Why no ! it's but a mask, a lying ornament,  
 That visage enlivened by a dainty grimace,  
 And look, here is, atrociously shriveled,

The real, true head, the sincere countenance  
 Reversed and hidden by the lying face.  
 Poor glamorous beauty ! the magnificent stream  
 Of your tears flows into my anguished heart ;  
 Your falsehood makes me drunk and my soul slakes its thirst  
 At the flood from your eyes, which Suffering causes !  
 – But why is she weeping ? She, the perfect beauty,  
 Who could put at her feet the conquered human race,  
 What secret malady gnaws at those sturdy flanks ?  
 – She is weeping, fool, because she has lived !  
 And because she lives ! But what she deploras  
 Most, what makes her shudder down to her knees,  
 Is that tomorrow, alas ! she will still have to live !  
 Tomorrow, after tomorrow, always ! – like us !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Mask

(An allegoric statue in Renaissance style)  
 To Ernest Christophe, sculptor

Study with me this Florentinian treasure,  
 Whose undulous and muscular design  
 Welds Grace with Strength in sisterhood divine ;  
 A marvel only wonderment can measure,  
 Divinely strong, superbly slim and fine,  
 She's formed to reign upon a bed of pleasure  
 And charm some prince or pontiff in his leisure.  
 See, too, her smile voluptuously shine,  
 Where sheer frivolity displays its sign :  
 That lingering look of languor, guile, and cheek,  
 The dainty face, which veils of gauze enshrine,  
 That seems in conquering accents thus to speak :  
 "Pleasure commands me. Love my brow has crowned !"  
 Enamouring our thoughts in humble duty,  
 True majesty with merriment is found.  
 Approach, let's take a turn about her beauty.  
 O blasphemy ! Dread shock ! Our hopes to pique,  
 This lovely body, promising delight,

Ends at the top in a two-headed freak.  
But no ! it's just a mask that tricked our sight,  
Fooling us with that exquisite grimace :  
On the reverse you see her proper face,  
Fiercely convulsed, in its true self revealed,  
Which from our sight that lying mask concealed.  
– O sad great beauty ! The grand river, fed  
By your rich tears, debouches in my heart.  
Though I am rapt with your deceptive art,  
My soul is slaked upon the tears you shed.  
And yet why does she weep ? Such peerless grace  
Could trample down the conquered human race.  
What evil gnaws her flank so strong and sleek ?  
She weeps because she's lived, and that she lives.  
Madly she weeps for that. But more she grieves  
(And at the knees she trembles and goes weak)  
Because tomorrow she must live, and then  
The next day, and forever – like us men.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Hymne à la Beauté (1861)

### Hymne à la Beauté

Viens-tu du ciel profond ou sors-tu de l'abîme,  
O Beauté ? ton regard, infernal et divin,  
Verse confusément le bienfait et le crime,  
Et l'on peut pour cela te comparer au vin.  
Tu contiens dans ton oeil le couchant et l'aurore ;  
Tu répands des parfums comme un soir orageux ;  
Tes baisers sont un philtre et ta bouche une amphore  
Qui font le héros lâche et l'enfant courageux.  
Sors-tu du gouffre noir ou descends-tu des astres ?  
Le Destin charmé suit tes jupons comme un chien ;  
Tu sèmes au hasard la joie et les désastres,  
Et tu gouvernes tout et ne réponds de rien.  
Tu marches sur des morts, Beauté, dont tu te moques ;  
De tes bijoux l'Horreur n'est pas le moins charmant,  
Et le Meurtre, parmi tes plus chères breloques,  
Sur ton ventre orgueilleux danse amoureusement.  
L'éphémère ébloui vole vers toi, chandelle,  
Crépète, flambe et dit : Bénissons ce flambeau !  
L'amoureux pantelant incliné sur sa belle  
A l'air d'un moribond caressant son tombeau.  
Que tu viennes du ciel ou de l'enfer, qu'importe,  
Ô Beauté ! monstre énorme, effrayant, ingénu !  
Si ton oeil, ton souris, ton pied, m'ouvrent la porte  
D'un Infini que j'aime et n'ai jamais connu ?  
De Satan ou de Dieu, qu'importe ? Ange ou Sirène,  
Qu'importe, si tu rends, – fée aux yeux de velours,  
Rythme, parfum, lueur, ô mon unique reine ! –  
L'univers moins hideux et les instants moins lourds ?  
– Charles Baudelaire

## Hymn to Beauty

Do you come from Heaven or rise from the abyss,  
Beauty? Your gaze, divine and infernal,  
Pours out confusedly benevolence and crime,  
And one may for that, compare you to wine.  
You contain in your eyes the sunset and the dawn;  
You scatter perfumes like a stormy night;  
Your kisses are a philtre, your mouth an amphora,  
Which make the hero weak and the child courageous.  
Do you come from the stars or rise from the black pit?  
Destiny, bewitched, follows your skirts like a dog;  
You sow at random joy and disaster,  
And you govern all things but answer for nothing.  
You walk upon corpses which you mock, O Beauty!  
Of your jewels Horror is not the least charming,  
And Murder, among your dearest trinkets,  
Dances amorously upon your proud belly.  
The dazzled moth flies toward you, O candle!  
Crepitates, flames and says: "Blessed be this flambeau!"  
The panting lover bending o'er his fair one  
Looks like a dying man caressing his own tomb,  
Whether you come from heaven or from hell, who cares,  
O Beauty! Huge, fearful, ingenuous monster!  
If your regard, your smile, your foot, open for me  
An Infinite I love but have not ever known?  
From God or Satan, who cares? Angel or Siren,  
Who cares, if you make, – fay with the velvet eyes,  
Rhythm, perfume, glimmer; my one and only queen!  
The world less hideous, the minutes less laden?

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Hymn to Beauty

Did you spring out of heaven or the abyss,  
Beauty? Your gaze infernal, yet divine,  
Spreads infamy and glory, grief and bliss,  
And therefore you can be compared to wine.



Your eyes contain both sunset and aurora :  
You give off scents, like evenings storm-deflowered :  
Your kisses are a philtre : an amphora  
Your mouth, that cows the brave, and spurs the coward.  
Climb you from gulfs, or from the stars descend ?  
Fate, like a fawning hound, to heel you've brought ;  
You scatter joy and ruin without end,  
Ruling all things, yet answering for naught.  
You trample men to death, and mock their clamour.  
Amongst your gauds pale Horror gleams and glances,  
And Murder, not the least of them in glamour,  
On your proud belly amorously dances.  
The dazzled insect seeks your candle-rays,  
Crackles, and burns, and seems to bless his doom.  
The groom bent o'er his bride as in a daze,  
Seems, like a dying man, to stroke his tomb.  
What matter if from hell or heaven born,  
Tremendous monster, terrible to view ?  
Your eyes and smile reveal to me, like morn,  
The Infinite I love but never knew.  
From God or Fiend ? Siren or Sylph ? Invidious  
The answer – Fay with eyes of velvet, ray,  
Rhythm, and perfume ! – if you make less hideous  
Our universe, less tedious leave our day.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# Parfum exotique

## Parfum exotique

Quand, les deux yeux fermés, en un soir chaud d'automne,  
Je respire l'odeur de ton sein chaleureux,  
Je vois se dérouler des rivages heureux  
Qu'éblouissent les feux d'un soleil monotone ;  
Une île paresseuse où la nature donne  
Des arbres singuliers et des fruits savoureux ;  
Des hommes dont le corps est mince et vigoureux,  
Et des femmes dont l'oeil par sa franchise étonne.  
Guidé par ton odeur vers de charmants climats,  
Je vois un port rempli de voiles et de mâts  
Encor tout fatigués par la vague marine,  
Pendant que le parfum des verts tamariniers,  
Qui circule dans l'air et m'enfle la narine,  
Se mêle dans mon âme au chant des mariniers.

– Charles Baudelaire

## Exotic Perfume

When, with both my eyes closed, on a hot autumn night,  
I inhale the fragrance of your warm breast  
I see happy shores spread out before me,  
On which shines a dazzling and monotonous sun ;  
A lazy isle to which nature has given  
Singular trees, savory fruits,  
Men with bodies vigorous and slender,  
And women in whose eyes shines a startling candor.  
Guided by your fragrance to these charming countries,

I see a port filled with sails and rigging  
Still utterly wearied by the waves of the sea,  
While the perfume of the green tamarinds,  
That permeates the air, and elates my nostrils,  
Is mingled in my soul with the sailors' chanteys.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Exotic Perfume

When I, with eyes shut, on warm autumn eves,  
The fragrance of your warmer breast respire,  
I see a country bathed in solar fire  
Whose happy shores its lustre never leaves ;  
An isle of indolence, where nature raises  
Singular trees and fruits both sweet and tender,  
Where men have bodies vigorous and slender  
And women's eyes a candour that amazes.  
Led by your scent to fairer climes at last,  
I see a port of sails, where every mast  
Seems weary of the labours of its cruise ;  
While scents of tamarind, blown here and there,  
Swelling my nostrils as they rinse the air,  
Are mingled with the chanties of the crews.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## La Chevelure (1861)

### La Chevelure

Ô toison, moutonnant jusque sur l'encolure !  
Ô boucles ! Ô parfum chargé de nonchaloir !  
Extase ! Pour peupler ce soir l'alcôve obscure  
Des souvenirs dormant dans cette chevelure,  
Je la veux agiter dans l'air comme un mouchoir !  
La langoureuse Asie et la brûlante Afrique,  
Tout un monde lointain, absent, presque défunt,  
Vit dans tes profondeurs, forêt aromatique !  
Comme d'autres esprits voguent sur la musique,  
Le mien, ô mon amour ! nage sur ton parfum.  
J'irai lagrave-bas où l'arbre et l'homme, pleins de sève,  
Se pâment longuement sous l'ardeur des climats ;  
Fortes tresses, soyez la houle qui m'enlève !  
Tu contiens, mer d'ébène, un éblouissant rêve  
De voiles, de rameurs, de flammes et de mâts :  
Un port retentissant où mon âme peut boire  
À grands flots le parfum, le son et la couleur  
Où les vaisseaux, glissant dans l'or et dans la moire  
Ouvrent leurs vastes bras pour embrasser la gloire  
D'un ciel pur où frémit l'éternelle chaleur.  
Je plongerai ma tête amoureuse d'ivresse  
Dans ce noir océan où l'autre est enfermé ;  
Et mon esprit subtil que le roulis caresse  
Saura vous retrouver, ô féconde paresse,  
Infinis bercements du loisir embaumé !  
Cheveux bleus, pavillon de ténèbres tendues  
Vous me rendez l'azur du ciel immense et rond ;  
Sur les bords duvetés de vos mèches tordues

Je m'enivre ardemment des senteurs confondues  
De l'huile de coco, du musc et du goudron.  
Longtemps ! toujours ! ma main dans ta crinière lourde  
Sèmera le rubis, la perle et le saphir,  
Afin qu'à mon désir tu ne sois jamais sourde !  
N'es-tu pas l'oasis où je rêve, et la gourde  
Où je hume à longs traits le vin du souvenir ?

– Charles Baudelaire

## Head of Hair

O fleecy hair, falling in curls to the shoulders !  
O black locks ! O perfume laden with nonchalance !  
Ecstasy ! To people the dark alcove tonight  
With memories sleeping in that thick head of hair.  
I would like to shake it in the air like a scarf !  
Sweltering Africa and languorous Asia,  
A whole far-away world, absent, almost defunct,  
Dwells in your depths, aromatic forest !  
While other spirits glide on the wings of music,  
Mine, O my love ! floats upon your perfume.  
I shall go there, where trees and men, full of vigor,  
Are plunged in a deep swoon by the heat of the land ;  
Heady tresses be the billows that carry me away !  
Ebony sea, you hold a dazzling dream  
Of rigging, of rowers, of pennons and of masts :  
A clamorous harbor where my spirit can drink  
In great draughts the perfume, the sound and the color ;  
Where the vessels gliding through the gold and the moire  
Open wide their vast arms to embrace the glory  
Of a clear sky shimmering with everlasting heat.  
I shall bury my head enamored with rapture  
In this black sea where the other is imprisoned ;  
And my subtle spirit caressed by the rolling  
Will find you once again, O fruitful indolence,  
Endless lulling of sweet-scented leisure !  
Blue-black hair, pavilion hung with shadows,  
You give back to me the blue of the vast round sky ;

In the downy edges of your curling tresses  
I ardently get drunk with the mingled odors  
Of oil of coconut, of musk and tar.  
A long time ! Forever ! my hand in your thick mane  
Will scatter sapphires, rubies and pearls,  
So that you will never be deaf to my desire !  
Aren't you the oasis of which I dream, the gourd  
From which I drink deeply, the wine of memory ?

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Her Hair

O fleece that down her nape rolls, plume on plume !  
O curls ! O scent of nonchalance and ease !  
What ecstasy ! To populate this room  
With memories it harbours in its gloom,  
I'd shake it like a banner on the breeze.  
Hot Africa and languid Asia play  
(An absent world, defunct, and far away)  
Within that scented forest, dark and dim.  
As other souls on waves of music swim,  
Mine on its perfume sails, as on the spray.  
I'll journey there, where man and sap-filled tree  
Swoon in hot light for hours. Be you my sea,  
Strong tresses ! Be the breakers and gales  
That waft me. Your black river holds, for me,  
A dream of masts and rowers, flames and sails.  
A port, resounding there, my soul delivers  
With long deep draughts of perfumes, scent, and clamour,  
Where ships, that glide through gold and purple rivers,  
Fling wide their vast arms to embrace the glamour  
Of skies wherein the heat forever quivers.  
I'll plunge my head in it, half drunk with pleasure –  
In this black ocean that engulfs her form.  
My soul, caressed with wavelets there may measure  
Infinite rocking in embalmed leisure,  
Creative idleness that fears no storm !  
Blue tresses, like a shadow-stretching tent,

You shed the blue of heavens round and far.  
Along its downy fringes as I went  
I reeled half-drunken to confuse the scent  
Of oil of coconuts, with musk and tar.  
My hand forever in your mane so dense,  
Rubies and pearls and sapphires there will sow,  
That you to my desire be never slow –  
Oasis of my dreams, and gourd from whence  
Deep-draughted wines of memory will flow.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Je t'adore à l'égal de la voûte nocturne

### Je t'adore à l'égal de la voûte nocturne

Je t'adore à l'égal de la voûte nocturne,  
Ô vase de tristesse, ô grande taciturne,  
Et t'aime d'autant plus, belle, que tu me fuis,  
Et que tu me parais, ornement de mes nuits,  
Plus ironiquement accumuler les lieues  
Qui séparent mes bras des immensités bleues.  
Je m'avance à l'attaque, et je grimpe aux assauts,  
Comme après un cadavre un chœur de vermisseaux,  
Et je chéris, ô bête implacable et cruelle !  
Jusqu'à cette froideur par où tu m'es plus belle !

– Charles Baudelaire

### I Adore You as Much as the Nocturnal Vault...

I adore you as much as the nocturnal vault,  
O vase of sadness, most taciturn one,  
I love you all the more because you flee from me,  
And because you appear, ornament of my nights,  
More ironically to multiply the leagues  
That separate my arms from the blue infinite.  
I advance to attack, and I climb to assault,  
Like a swarm of maggots after a cadaver,  
And I cherish, implacable and cruel beast,  
Even that coldness which makes you more beautiful.

– William Aggeler, 1954



## More Than Night's Vault, It's You That I Adore

More than night's vault, it's you that I adore,  
Vessel of sorrow, silent one, the more  
Because you flee from me, and seem to place,  
Ornament of my nights ! more leagues of space  
Ironically between me and you  
Than part me from these vastitudes of blue.  
I charge, attack, and mount to the assault  
As worms attack a corpse within a vault.  
And cherish even the coldness that you boast,  
By which, harsh beast, you subjugate me most.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Tu mettrais l'univers entier dans ta ruelle

### Tu mettrais l'univers entier dans ta ruelle

Tu mettrais l'univers entier dans ta ruelle,  
Femme impure ! L'ennui rend ton âme cruelle.  
Pour exercer tes dents à ce jeu singulier,  
Il te faut chaque jour un coeur au râtelier.  
Tes yeux, illuminés ainsi que des boutiques  
Et des ifs flamboyants dans les fêtes publiques,  
Usent insolemment d'un pouvoir emprunté,  
Sans connaître jamais la loi de leur beauté.  
Machine aveugle et sourde, en cruautés féconde !  
Salutaire instrument, buveur du sang du monde,  
Comment n'as-tu pas honte et comment n'as-tu pas  
Devant tous les miroirs vu pâlir tes appas ?  
La grandeur de ce mal où tu te crois savante  
Ne t'a donc jamais fait reculer d'épouvante,  
Quand la nature, grande en ses desseins cachés  
De toi se sert, ô femme, ô reine des péchés,  
– De toi, vil animal, – pour pétrir un génie ?  
Ô fangeuse grandeur ! sublime ignominie !

– Charles Baudelaire

### You Would Take the Whole World to Bed with You

You would take the whole world to bed with you,  
Impure woman ! Ennui makes your soul cruel ;  
To exercise your teeth at this singular game,

You need a new heart in the rack each day.  
Your eyes, brilliant as shop windows  
Or as blazing lamp-stands at public festivals,  
Insolently use a borrowed power  
Without ever knowing the law of their beauty.  
Blind, deaf machine, fecund in cruelties!  
Remedial instrument, drinker of the world's blood,  
Why are you not ashamed and why have you not seen  
In every looking-glass how your charms are fading?  
Why have you never shrunk at the enormity  
Of this evil at which you think you are expert,  
When Nature, resourceful in her hidden designs,  
Makes use of you, woman, O queen of sin,  
Of you, vile animal, – to fashion a genius?  
O foul magnificence! Sublime ignominy!

– William Aggeler, 1954

## **You'd Stick the World into Your Bedside Lane**

You'd stick the world into your bedside lane.  
It's boredom makes you callous to all pain.  
To exercise your teeth for this strange task,  
A heart upon a rake, each day, you'd ask.  
Your eyes lit up like shopfronts, or the trees  
With lanterns on the night of public sprees,  
Make insolent misuse of borrowed power  
And scorn the law of beauty that's their dower.  
Oh deaf-and-dumb machine, harm-breeding fool  
World sucking leech, yet salutary tool!  
Have you not seen your beauties blanch to pass  
Before their own reflection in the glass?  
Before this pain, in which you think you're wise,  
Does not its greatness shock you with surprise,  
To think that Nature, deep in projects hidden,  
Has chosen you, vile creature of the midden,  
To knead a genius for succeeding time.  
O sordid grandeur! Infamy sublime!

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Sed non satiata

### Sed non satiata

Bizarre déité, brune comme les nuits,  
 Au parfum mélangé de musc et de havane,  
 Oeuvre de quelque obi, le Faust de la savane,  
 Sorcière au flanc d'ébène, enfant des noirs minuits,  
 Je préfère au constance, à l'opium, au nuits,  
 L'élixir de ta bouche où l'amour se pavane ;  
 Quand vers toi mes désirs partent en caravane,  
 Tes yeux sont la citerne où boivent mes ennuis.  
 Par ces deux grands yeux noirs, soupiraux de ton âme,  
 Ô démon sans pitié ! verse-moi moins de flamme ;  
 Je ne suis pas le Styx pour t'embrasser neuf fois,  
 Hélas ! et je ne puis, Mégère libertine,  
 Pour briser ton courage et te mettre aux abois,  
 Dans l'enfer de ton lit devenir Proserpine !

– Charles Baudelaire

### Unslakeable Lust

Singular deity, brown as the nights,  
 Scented with the perfume of Havana and musk,  
 Work of some obeah, Faust of the savanna,  
 Witch with ebony flanks, child of the black midnight,  
 I prefer to *constance*, to opium, to *nuits*,  
 The nectar of your mouth upon which love parades ;  
 When toward you my desires set out in caravan,  
 Your eyes are the cistern that gives drink to my cares.  
 Through those two great black eyes, the outlets of your soul,

O pitiless demon ! pour upon me less flame ;  
I'm not the River Styx to embrace you nine times,  
Alas ! and I cannot, licentious Megaera,  
To break your spirit and bring you to bay  
In the hell of your bed turn into Proserpine !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## **Sed non Satiata**

Strange goddess, brown as evening to the sight,  
Whose scent is half of musk, half of havanah,  
Work of some obi, Faust of the Savanah,  
Ebony witch, and daughter of the night.  
By far preferred to troth, or drugs, or sleep,  
Love vaunts the red elixir of your mouth.  
My caravan of longings seeks in drouth  
Your eyes, the wells at which my cares drink deep.  
Through those black eyes, by which your soul respire,  
Pitiless demon ! pour less scorching fires.  
I am no Styx nine times with flame to wed.  
Nor can I turn myself to Proserpine  
To break your spell, Megera libertine !  
Within the dark inferno of your bed.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## **Avec ses vêtements ondoyants et nacrés**

### **Avec ses vêtements ondoyants et nacrés**

Avec ses vêtements ondoyants et nacrés,  
Même quand elle marche on croirait qu'elle danse,  
Comme ces longs serpents que les jongleurs sacrés  
Au bout de leurs bâtons agitent en cadence.  
Comme le sable morne et l'azur des déserts,  
Insensibles tous deux à l'humaine souffrance  
Comme les longs réseaux de la houle des mers  
Elle se développe avec indifférence.  
Ses yeux polis sont faits de minéraux charmants,  
Et dans cette nature étrange et symbolique  
Où l'ange inviolé se mêle au sphinx antique,  
Où tout n'est qu'or, acier, lumière et diamants,  
Resplendit à jamais, comme un astre inutile,  
La froide majesté de la femme stérile.

– Charles Baudelaire

### **With Her Pearly, Undulating Dresses**

With her pearly, undulating dresses,  
Even when she's walking, she seems to be dancing  
Like those long snakes which the holy fakirs  
Set swaying in cadence on the end of their staffs.  
Like the dull sand and the blue of deserts,  
Both of them unfeeling toward human suffering,  
Like the long web of the ocean's billows,

She unfurls herself with unconcern.  
Her glossy eyes are made of charming minerals  
And in that nature, symbolic and strange,  
Where pure angel is united with ancient sphinx,  
Where everything is gold, steel, light and diamonds,  
There glitters forever, like a useless star,  
The frigid majesty of the sterile woman.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## With Waving Opalescence in Her Gown

With waving opalescence in her gown,  
Even when she walks along, you think she's dancing.  
Like those long snakes which charmers, while entrancing,  
Wave with their wands, in cadence, up and down.  
Like the sad sands of deserts and their skies,  
By human sufferings untouched and free,  
Or like the surfy curtains of the sea,  
She flaunts a cold indifference. Her eyes  
Are made of charming minerals well-burnished.  
Her nature, both by sphynx and angel furnished,  
Is old, intact, symbolic, and bizarre :  
She seems, made all of gems, steel, light, and gold,  
In barrenness, majestic, hard, and cold,  
To blaze forever, like a useless star.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# Le Serpent qui danse

## Le Serpent qui danse

Que j'aime voir, chère indolente,  
De ton corps si beau,  
Comme une étoffe vacillante,  
Miroiter la peau !  
Sur ta chevelure profonde  
Aux âcres parfums,  
Mer odorante et vagabonde  
Aux flots bleus et bruns,  
Comme un navire qui s'éveille  
Au vent du matin,  
Mon âme rêveuse appareille  
Pour un ciel lointain.  
Tes yeux, où rien ne se révèle  
De doux ni d'amer,  
Sont deux bijoux froids où se mêle  
L'or avec le fer.  
À te voir marcher en cadence,  
Belle d'abandon,  
On dirait un serpent qui danse  
Au bout d'un bâton.  
Sous le fardeau de ta paresse  
Ta tête d'enfant  
Se balance avec la mollesse  
D'un jeune éléphant,  
Et ton corps se penche et s'allonge  
Comme un fin vaisseau  
Qui roule bord sur bord et plonge  
Ses vergues dans l'eau.



Comme un flot grossi par la fonte  
Des glaciers grondants,  
Quand l'eau de ta bouche remonte  
Au bord de tes dents,  
Je crois boire un vin de Bohême,  
Amer et vainqueur,  
Un ciel liquide qui parsème  
D'étoiles mon coeur !

– Charles Baudelaire

## The Dancing Serpent

Indolent darling, how I love  
To see the skin  
Of your body so beautiful  
Shimmer like silk !  
Upon your heavy head of hair  
With its acrid scents,  
Adventurous, odorant sea  
With blue and brown waves,  
Like a vessel that awakens  
To the morning wind,  
My dreamy soul sets sail  
For a distant sky.  
Your eyes where nothing is revealed  
Of bitter or sweet,  
Are two cold jewels where are mingled  
Iron and gold.  
To see you walking in cadence  
With fine abandon,  
One would say a snake which dances  
On the end of a staff.  
Under the weight of indolence  
Your child-like head sways  
Gently to and fro like the head  
Of a young elephant,  
And your body stretches and leans  
Like a slender ship

That rolls from side to side and dips  
Its yards in the sea.  
Like a stream swollen by the thaw  
Of rumbling glaciers,  
When the water of your mouth rises  
To the edge of your teeth,  
It seems I drink Bohemian wine,  
Bitter and conquering,  
A liquid sky that scatters  
Stars in my heart!

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Snake that Dances

I love to watch, while you are lazing,  
Your skin. It iridescens  
Like silk or satin, smoothly-glazing  
The light that it caresses.  
Under your tresses dark and deep  
Where acrid perfumes drown,  
A fragrant sea whose breakers sweep  
In mazes blue or brown,  
My soul, a ship, to the attraction  
Of breezes that bedizen  
Its swelling canvas, clears for action  
And seeks a far horizon.  
Your eyes where nothing can be seen  
Either of sweet or bitter  
But gold and iron mix their sheen,  
Seem frosty gems that glitter.  
To see you rhythmically advancing  
Seems to my fancy fond  
As if it were a serpent dancing  
Waved by the charmer's wand.  
Under the languorous moods that weigh it,  
Your childish head bows down :  
Like a young elephant's you sway it  
With motions soft as down.

Your body leans upon the hips  
Like a fine ship that laves  
Its hull from side to side, and dips  
Its yards into the waves.  
When, as by glaciers ground, the spate  
Swells hissing from beneath,  
The water of your mouth, elate,  
Rises between your teeth –  
It seems some old Bohemian vintage  
Triumphant, fierce, and tart,  
A liquid heaven that showers a mintage  
Of stars across my heart.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# Une Charogne

## Une Charogne

Rappelez-vous l'objet que nous vîmes, mon âme,  
Ce beau matin d'été si doux :  
Au détour d'un sentier une charogne infâme  
Sur un lit semé de cailloux,  
Les jambes en l'air, comme une femme lubrique,  
Brûlante et suant les poisons,  
Ouvrait d'une façon nonchalante et cynique  
Son ventre plein d'exhalaisons.  
Le soleil rayonnait sur cette pourriture,  
Comme afin de la cuire à point,  
Et de rendre au centuple à la grande Nature  
Tout ce qu'ensemble elle avait joint ;  
Et le ciel regardait la carcasse superbe  
Comme une fleur s'épanouir.  
La puanteur était si forte, que sur l'herbe  
Vous crûtes vous évanouir.  
Les mouches bourdonnaient sur ce ventre putride,  
D'où sortaient de noirs bataillons  
De larves, qui coulaient comme un épais liquide  
Le long de ces vivants haillons.  
Tout cela descendait, montait comme une vague  
Ou s'élançait en pétillant ;  
On eût dit que le corps, enflé d'un souffle vague,  
Vivait en se multipliant.  
Et ce monde rendait une étrange musique,  
Comme l'eau courante et le vent,  
Ou le grain qu'un vanneur d'un mouvement rythmique  
Agite et tourne dans son van.

Les formes s'effaçaient et n'étaient plus qu'un rêve,  
Une ébauche lente à venir  
Sur la toile oubliée, et que l'artiste achève  
Seulement par le souvenir.  
Derrière les rochers une chienne inquiète  
Nous regardait d'un oeil fâché,  
Espionnant le moment de reprendre au squelette  
Le morceau qu'elle avait lâché.  
– Et pourtant vous serez semblable à cette ordure,  
À cette horrible infection,  
Etoile de mes yeux, soleil de ma nature,  
Vous, mon ange et ma passion !  
Oui ! telle vous serez, ô la reine des grâces,  
Après les derniers sacrements,  
Quand vous irez, sous l'herbe et les floraisons grasses,  
Moisir parmi les ossements.  
Alors, ô ma beauté ! dites à la vermine  
Qui vous mangera de baisers,  
Que j'ai gardé la forme et l'essence divine  
De mes amours décomposés !

– Charles Baudelaire

## A Carcass

My love, do you recall the object which we saw,  
That fair, sweet, summer morn !  
At a turn in the path a foul carcass  
On a gravel strewn bed,  
Its legs raised in the air, like a lustful woman,  
Burning and dripping with poisons,  
Displayed in a shameless, nonchalant way  
Its belly, swollen with gases.  
The sun shone down upon that putrescence,  
As if to roast it to a turn,  
And to give back a hundredfold to great Nature  
The elements she had combined ;  
And the sky was watching that superb cadaver  
Blossom like a flower.

So frightful was the stench that you believed  
You'd faint away upon the grass.  
The blow-flies were buzzing round that putrid belly,  
From which came forth black battalions  
Of maggots, which oozed out like a heavy liquid  
All along those living tatters.  
All this was descending and rising like a wave,  
Or poured out with a crackling sound ;  
One would have said the body, swollen with a vague breath,  
Lived by multiplication.  
And this world gave forth singular music,  
Like running water or the wind,  
Or the grain that winnowers with a rhythmic motion  
Shake in their winnowing baskets.  
The forms disappeared and were no more than a dream,  
A sketch that slowly falls  
Upon the forgotten canvas, that the artist  
Completes from memory alone.  
Crouched behind the boulders, an anxious dog  
Watched us with angry eye,  
Waiting for the moment to take back from the carcass  
The morsel he had left.  
– And yet you will be like this corruption,  
Like this horrible infection,  
Star of my eyes, sunlight of my being,  
You, my angel and my passion !  
Yes ! thus will you be, queen of the Graces,  
After the last sacraments,  
When you go beneath grass and luxuriant flowers,  
To molder among the bones of the dead.  
Then, O my beauty ! say to the worms who will  
Devour you with kisses,  
That I have kept the form and the divine essence  
Of my decomposed love !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Carcase

The object that we saw, let us recall,

This summer morn when warmth and beauty mingle –  
At the path's turn, a carcass lay asprawl  
Upon a bed of shingle.  
Legs raised, like some old whore far-gone in passion,  
The burning, deadly, poison-sweating mass  
Opened its paunch in careless, cynic fashion,  
Ballooned with evil gas.  
On this putrescence the sun blazed in gold,  
Cooking it to a turn with eager care –  
So to repay to Nature, hundredfold,  
What she had mingled there.  
The sky, as on the opening of a flower,  
On this superb obscenity smiled bright.  
The stench drove at us, with such fearsome power  
You thought you'd swoon outright.  
Flies trumpeted upon the rotten belly  
Whence larvae poured in legions far and wide,  
And flowed, like molten and liquescent jelly,  
Down living rags of hide.  
The mass ran down, or, like a wave elated  
Rolled itself on, and crackled as if frying :  
You'd think that corpse, by vague breath animated,  
Drew life from multiplying.  
Through that strange world a rustling rumour ran  
Like rushing water or a gust of air,  
Or grain that winnowers, with rhythmic fan,  
Sweep simmering here and there.  
It seemed a dream after the forms grew fainter,  
Or like a sketch that slowly seems to dawn  
On a forgotten canvas, which the painter  
From memory has drawn.  
Behind the rocks a restless cur that slunk  
Eyed us with fretful greed to recommence  
His feast, amidst the bonework, on the chunk  
That he had torn from thence.  
Yet you'll resemble this infection too  
One day, and stink and sprawl in such a fashion,  
Star of my eyes, sun of my nature, you,  
My angel and my passion!  
Yes, you must come to this, O queen of graces,

At length, when the last sacraments are over,  
And you go down to moulder in dark places  
Beneath the grass and clover.

Then tell the vermin as it takes its pleasance  
And feasts with kisses on that face of yours,  
I've kept intact in form and godlike essence  
Our decomposed amours !

– Roy Campbell, 1952



## De profundis clamavi

### De profundis clamavi

J'implore ta pitié, Toi, l'unique que j'aime,  
Du fond du gouffre obscur où mon cœur est tombé.  
C'est un univers morne à l'horizon plombé,  
Où nagent dans la nuit l'horreur et le blasphème ;  
Un soleil sans chaleur plane au-dessus six mois,  
Et les six autres mois la nuit couvre la terre ;  
C'est un pays plus nu que la terre polaire  
– Ni bêtes, ni ruisseaux, ni verdure, ni bois !  
Or il n'est pas d'horreur au monde qui surpasse  
La froide cruauté de ce soleil de glace  
Et cette immense nuit semblable au vieux Chaos ;  
Je jalouse le sort des plus vils animaux  
Qui peuvent se plonger dans un sommeil stupide,  
Tant l'écheveau du temps lentement se dévide !

– Charles Baudelaire

### Out of the Depths Have I Cried

I beg pity of Thee, the only one I love,  
From the depths of the dark pit where my heart has fallen,  
It's a gloomy world with a leaden horizon,  
Where through the night swim horror and blasphemy ;  
A frigid sun floats overhead six months,  
And the other six months darkness covers the land ;  
It's a land more bleak than the polar wastes  
– Neither beasts, nor streams, nor verdure, nor woods !  
But no horror in the world can surpass

The cold cruelty of that glacial sun  
And this vast night which is like old Chaos ;  
I envy the lot of the lowest animals  
Who are able to sink into a stupid sleep,  
So slowly does the skein of time unwind !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## **De Profundis Clamavi**

Have pity, my one love and sole delight !  
Down to a dark abyss my heart has sounded,  
A mournful world, by grey horizons bounded,  
Where blasphemy and horror swim by night.  
For half the year a heatless sun gives light,  
The other half the night obscures the earth.  
The arctic regions never knew such dearth.  
No woods, nor streams, nor creatures meet the sight.  
No horror in the world could match in dread  
The cruelty of that dire sun of frost,  
And that huge night like primal chaos spread.  
I envy creatures of the vilest kind  
That they in stupid slumber can be lost –  
So slowly does the skein of time unwind !

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# Le Vampire

## Le Vampire

Toi qui, comme un coup de couteau,  
Dans mon coeur plaintif es entrée ;  
Toi qui, forte comme un troupeau  
De démons, vins, folle et parée,  
De mon esprit humilié  
Faire ton lit et ton domaine ;  
– Infâme à qui je suis lié  
Comme le forçat à la chaîne,  
Comme au jeu le joueur têtu,  
Comme à la bouteille l'ivrogne,  
Comme aux vermines la charogne  
– Maudite, maudite sois-tu !  
J'ai prié le glaive rapide  
De conquérir ma liberté,  
Et j'ai dit au poison perfide  
De secourir ma lâcheté.  
Hélas ! le poison et le glaive  
M'ont pris en dédain et m'ont dit :  
« Tu n'es pas digne qu'on t'enlève  
À ton esclavage maudit,  
Imbécile ! – de son empire  
Si nos efforts te délivraient,  
Tes baisers ressusciteraient  
Le cadavre de ton vampire ! »

– Charles Baudelaire

## The Vampire

You who, like the stab of a knife,  
Entered my plaintive heart ;  
You who, strong as a herd  
Of demons, came, ardent and adorned,  
To make your bed and your domain  
Of my humiliated mind  
– Infamous bitch to whom I'm bound  
Like the convict to his chain,  
Like the stubborn gambler to the game,  
Like the drunkard to his wine,  
Like the maggots to the corpse,  
– Accurst, accurst be you !  
I begged the swift poniard  
To gain for me my liberty,  
I asked perfidious poison  
To give aid to my cowardice.  
Alas ! both poison and the knife  
Contemptuously said to me :  
"You do not deserve to be freed  
From your accursed slavery,  
Fool ! – if from her domination  
Our efforts could deliver you,  
Your kisses would resuscitate  
The cadaver of your vampire !"

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Vampire

You, who like a dagger ploughed  
Into my heart with deadly thrill :  
You who, stronger than a crowd  
Of demons, mad, and dressed to kill,  
Of my dejected soul have made  
Your bed, your lodging, and domain :  
To whom I'm linked (Unseemly jade !)  
As is a convict to his chain,

Or as the gamester to his dice,  
Or as the drunkard to his dram,  
Or as the carrion to its lice –  
I curse you. Would my curse could damn !  
I have besought the sudden blade  
To win for me my freedom back.  
Perfidious poison I have prayed  
To help my cowardice. Alack !  
Both poison and the sword disdained  
My cowardice, and seemed to say  
“You are not fit to be unchained  
From your damned servitude. Away,  
You imbecile ! since if from her empire  
We were to liberate the slave,  
You’d raise the carrion of your vampire,  
By your own kisses, from the grave.”

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Le L  th   (1857)

### Le L  th  

Viens sur mon coeur,   me cruelle et sourde,  
Tigre ador  , monstre aux airs indolents ;  
Je veux longtemps plonger mes doigts tremblants  
Dans l'  paisseur de ta crini  re lourde ;

Dans tes jupons remplis de ton parfum  
Ensevelir ma t  te endolorie,  
Et respirer, comme une fleur fl  trie,  
Le doux relent de mon amour d  funt.

Je veux dormir ! dormir plut  t que vivre !  
Dans un sommeil aussi doux que la mort,  
J'  talerai mes baisers sans remords  
Sur ton beau corps poli comme le cuivre.

Pour engloutir mes sanglots apais  s  
Rien ne me vaut l'ab  me de ta couche ;  
L'oubli puissant habite sur ta bouche,  
Et le L  th   coule dans tes baisers.

   mon destin, d  sormais mon d  lice,  
J'ob  irai comme un pr  destin   ;  
Martyr docile, innocent condamn  ,  
Dont la ferveur attise le supplice,

Je sucera  , pour noyer ma rancoeur,  
Le n  penth  s et la bonne cigu    
Aux bouts charmants de cette gorge aigu    
Qui n'a jamais emprisonn   de coeur.

– Charles Baudelaire

## Lethe

Come, lie upon my breast, cruel, insensitive soul,  
Adored tigress, monster with the indolent air ;  
I want to plunge trembling fingers for a long time  
In the thickness of your heavy mane,  
To bury my head, full of pain  
In your skirts redolent of your perfume,  
To inhale, as from a withered flower,  
The moldy sweetness of my defunct love.  
I wish to sleep ! to sleep rather than live !  
In a slumber doubtful as death,  
I shall remorselessly cover with my kisses  
Your lovely body polished like copper.  
To bury my subdued sobbing  
Nothing equals the abyss of your bed,  
Potent oblivion dwells upon your lips  
And Lethe flows in your kisses.  
My fate, hereafter my delight,  
I'll obey like one predestined ;  
Docile martyr, innocent man condemned,  
Whose fervor aggravates the punishment.  
I shall suck, to drown my rancor,  
Nepenthe and the good hemlock  
From the charming tips of those pointed breasts  
That have never guarded a heart.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Lethe

Rest on my heart, deaf, cruel soul, adored  
Tigress, and monster with the lazy air.  
I long, in the black jungles of your hair,  
To force each finger thrilling like a sword :  
Within wide skirts, filled with your scent, to hide  
My bruised and battered forehead hour by hour,  
And breathe, like dampness from a withered flower,  
The pleasant mildew of a love that died.

Rather than live, I wish to sleep, alas !  
Lulled in a slumber soft and dark as death,  
In ruthless kisses lavishing my breath  
Upon your body smooth as burnished brass.  
To swallow up my sorrows in eclipse,  
Nothing can match your couch's deep abysses ;  
The stream of Lethe issues from your kisses  
And powerful oblivion from your lips.  
Like a predestined victim I submit :  
My doom, to me, henceforth, is my delight,  
A willing martyr in my own despite  
Whose fervour fans the faggots it has lit.  
To drown my rancour and to heal its smart,  
Nepenthe and sweet hemlock, peace and rest,  
I'll drink from the twin summits of a breast  
That never lodged the semblance of a heart.

– Roy Campbell, 1952



## Une nuit que j'étais près d'une affreuse Juive

### Une nuit que j'étais près d'une affreuse Juive

Une nuit que j'étais près d'une affreuse Juive,  
Comme au long d'un cadavre un cadavre étendu,  
Je me pris à songer près de ce corps vendu  
À la triste beauté dont mon désir se prive.  
Je me représentai sa majesté native,  
Son regard de vigueur et de grâces armé,  
Ses cheveux qui lui font un casque parfumé,  
Et dont le souvenir pour l'amour me ravive.  
Car j'eusse avec ferveur baisé ton noble corps,  
Et depuis tes pieds frais jusqu'à tes noires tresses  
Déroulé le trésor des profondes caresses,  
Si, quelque soir, d'un pleur obtenu sans effort  
Tu pouvais seulement, ô reine des cruelles !  
Obscurcir la splendeur de tes froides prunelles.

– Charles Baudelaire

### One Night I Lay with a Frightful Jewess

One night I lay with a frightful Jewess,  
Like a cadaver stretched out beside a cadaver,  
And I began to muse, by that peddled body,  
About the sad beauty my desire forgoes.  
I pictured to myself her native majesty,  
Her gaze with power and with grace endowed,  
The hair which forms for her a perfumed casque,

And whose souvenir awakens love's desire.  
For I would fervently have kissed your fair body  
And spread out the treasure of soulful caresses  
From your cool feet up to your tresses black,  
If, some night, with a tear evoked without effort  
You could only, queen of cruel women!  
Soften the brilliancy of your cold eyes.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## One Night When, near a Fearful Jewess Lying

One night when, near a fearful Jewess lying,  
As one corpse by another corpse, I sprawled –  
Beside the venal body I was buying,  
The beauty that was absent I recalled.  
I pictured you in native majesty  
With glances full of energy and grace,  
Your hair, a perfumed casque, whose memory  
Revives me for the amorous embrace,  
For madly I'd have kissed your noble frame,  
And from your cool feet to your great black tresses,  
Unleashed the treasure of profound caresses,  
If with a single tear that gently came  
You could have quenched, O queen of all the cruel!  
The blazing of your eyes, their icy fuel.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Remords posthume

### Remords posthume

Lorsque tu dormiras, ma belle ténébreuse,  
Au fond d'un monument construit en marbre noir,  
Et lorsque tu n'auras pour alcôve et manoir  
Qu'un caveau pluvieux et qu'une fosse creuse ;  
Quand la pierre, opprimant ta poitrine peureuse  
Et tes flancs qu'assouplit un charmant nonchaloir,  
Empêchera ton cœur de battre et de vouloir,  
Et tes pieds de courir leur course aventureuse,  
Le tombeau, confident de mon rêve infini  
(Car le tombeau toujours comprendra le poète),  
Durant ces grandes nuits d'où le somme est banni,  
Te dira : « Que vous sert, courtisane imparfaite,  
De n'avoir pas connu ce que pleurent les morts ? »  
– Et le vers rongera ta peau comme un remords.

– Charles Baudelaire

### Posthumous Remorse

When you will sleep, O dusky beauty mine,  
Beneath a monument fashioned of black marble,  
When you will have for bedroom and mansion  
Only a rain-swept vault and a hollow grave,  
When the slab of stone, oppressing your frightened breast  
And your flanks now supple with charming nonchalance,  
Will keep your heart from beating, from wishing,  
And your feet from running their adventurous course,  
The tomb, confidant of my infinite dreams

(For the tomb will always understand the poet)  
Through those long nights from which all sleep is banned, will  
say :  
“What does it profit you, imperfect courtesan,  
Not to have known why the dead weep ?”  
– And like remorse the worm will gnaw your skin.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Posthumous Remorse

When you're asleep, dear shadow-coloured wench,  
Within a coal-black, marble monument :  
When, for your room and mansion, you are pent  
In a wet cellar and a hollow trench :  
When the stone, pressing on your startled breast  
And flanks in fluent suppleness competing,  
Prevents your heart from wishing or from beating,  
Your feet from racing on their reckless quest.  
The tomb that shares my deathless recollection  
(For poets best are understood by tombs)  
On those long nights, when never sleep presumes,  
Will say, “What boots, frail vase of imperfection,  
Not to have known what pains with death begin ?” –  
And, like remorse, the worm will gnaw your skin.

– Roy Campbell, 1952



## Le Chat

### Le Chat

Viens, mon beau chat, sur mon coeur amoureux ;  
Retiens les griffes de ta patte,  
Et laisse-moi plonger dans tes beaux yeux,  
Mêlés de métal et d'agate.  
Lorsque mes doigts caressent à loisir  
Ta tête et ton dos élastique,  
Et que ma main s'enivre du plaisir  
De palper ton corps électrique,  
Je vois ma femme en esprit. Son regard,  
Comme le tien, aimable bête  
Profond et froid, coupe et fend comme un dard,  
Et, des pieds jusques à la tête,  
Un air subtil, un dangereux parfum  
Nagent autour de son corps brun.

– Charles Baudelaire

### The Cat

Come, superb cat, to my amorous heart ;  
Hold back the talons of your paws,  
Let me gaze into your beautiful eyes  
Of metal and agate.  
When my fingers leisurely caress you,  
Your head and your elastic back,  
And when my hand tingles with the pleasure  
Of feeling your electric body,  
In spirit I see my woman. Her gaze

Like your own, amiable beast,  
Profound and cold, cuts and cleaves like a dart,  
And, from her head down to her feet,  
A subtle air, a dangerous perfume  
Floats about her dusky body.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Cat

Come, my fine cat, against my loving heart ;  
Sheathe your sharp claws, and settle.  
And let my eyes into your pupils dart  
Where agate sparks with metal.  
Now while my fingertips caress at leisure  
Your head and wiry curves,  
And that my hand's elated with the pleasure  
Of your electric nerves,  
I think about my woman – how her glances  
Like yours, dear beast, deep-down  
And cold, can cut and wound one as with lances ;  
Then, too, she has that vagrant  
And subtle air of danger that makes fragrant  
Her body, lithe and brown.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Duellum (1861)

### Duellum

Deux guerriers ont couru l'un sur l'autre, leurs armes  
 Ont éclaboussé l'air de lueurs et de sang.  
 Ces jeux, ces cliquetis du fer sont les vacarmes  
 D'une jeunesse en proie à l'amour vagissant.  
 Les glaives sont brisés ! comme notre jeunesse,  
 Ma chère ! Mais les dents, les ongles acérés,  
 Vengent bientôt l'épée et la dague traîtresse.  
 – Ô fureur des coeurs mûrs par l'amour ulcérés !  
 Dans le ravin hanté des chats-pards et des onces  
 Nos héros, s'étreignant méchamment, ont roulé,  
 Et leur peau fleurira l'aridité des ronces.  
 – Ce gouffre, c'est l'enfer, de nos amis peuplé !  
 Roulons-y sans remords, amazone inhumaine,  
 Afin d'éterniser l'ardeur de notre haine !

– Charles Baudelaire

### The Duel

Two warriors rushed upon each other ; their arms  
 Spattered the air with sparks and blood.  
 This fencing, this clashing of steel, are the uproar  
 Of youth when it becomes a prey to puling love.  
 The blades are broken ! like our youth  
 My darling ! But the teeth, the steely fingernails,  
 Soon avenge the sword and the treacherous dagger.  
 – O Fury of mature hearts embittered by love !  
 In the ravine haunted by lynxes and panthers,



Our heroes viciously clasping each other, rolled,  
And their skin will put blooms on the barren brambles.  
This abyss, it is hell, thronged with our friends!  
Let us roll there without remorse, cruel amazon,  
So the ardor of our hatred will be immortalized!

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Duel

Two fighters rushed together : sabres bleak  
With crimson blood-gouts lit the air above.  
That clinking swordplay was the tender squeak  
Of youth , when it's a prey to bleating love.  
The swords are splintered, like our youth, my darling,  
And now it's teeth and talons are the fashion.  
The clash of swords is child's play to the snarling  
Of hearts adult in ulcerated passion.  
In the ravine by lynx and leopard haunted,  
Our heroes, wrestling heroes, roll undaunted.  
Rags of their skin flower red upon the gorse.  
This gulf is hell, and peopled by our friends.  
Here, hellcat! Come, let's roll without remorse  
To celebrate a feud that never ends!

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# Le Balcon

## Le Balcon

Mère des souvenirs, maîtresse des maîtresses,  
Ô toi, tous mes plaisirs ! ô toi, tous mes devoirs !  
Tu te rappelleras la beauté des caresses,  
La douceur du foyer et le charme des soirs,  
Mère des souvenirs, maîtresse des maîtresses !  
Les soirs illuminés par l'ardeur du charbon,  
Et les soirs au balcon, voilés de vapeurs roses.  
Que ton sein m'était doux ! que ton cœur m'était bon !  
Nous avons dit souvent d'impérissables choses  
Les soirs illuminés par l'ardeur du charbon.  
Que les soleils sont beaux dans les chaudes soirées !  
Que l'espace est profond ! que le cœur est puissant !  
En me penchant vers toi, reine des adorées,  
Je croyais respirer le parfum de ton sang.  
Que les soleils sont beaux dans les chaudes soirées !  
La nuit s'épaississait ainsi qu'une cloison,  
Et mes yeux dans le noir devinaient tes prunelles,  
Et je buvais ton souffle, ô douceur ! ô poison !  
Et tes pieds s'endormaient dans mes mains fraternelles.  
La nuit s'épaississait ainsi qu'une cloison.  
Je sais l'art d'évoquer les minutes heureuses,  
Et revis mon passé blotti dans tes genoux.  
Car à quoi bon chercher tes beautés langoureuses  
Ailleurs qu'en ton cher corps et qu'en ton cœur si doux ?  
Je sais l'art d'évoquer les minutes heureuses !  
Ces serments, ces parfums, ces baisers infinis,  
Renaîtront-ils d'un gouffre interdit à nos sondes,  
Comme montent au ciel les soleils rajeunis

Après s'être lavés au fond des mers profondes ?  
– Ô serments ! ô parfums ! ô baisers infinis !

– Charles Baudelaire

## The Balcony

Mother of memories, mistress of mistresses,  
O you, all my pleasure, O you, all my duty !  
You'll remember the sweetness of our caresses,  
The peace of the fireside, the charm of the evenings.  
Mother of memories, mistress of mistresses !  
The evenings lighted by the glow of the coals,  
The evenings on the balcony, veiled with rose mist ;  
How soft your breast was to me ! how kind was your heart !  
We often said imperishable things,  
The evenings lighted by the glow of the coals.  
How splendid the sunsets are on warm evenings !  
How deep space is ! how potent is the heart !  
In bending over you, queen of adored women,  
I thought I breathed the perfume in your blood.  
How splendid the sunsets are on warm evenings !  
The night was growing dense like an encircling wall,  
My eyes in the darkness felt the fire of your gaze  
And I drank in your breath, O sweetness, O poison !  
And your feet nestled soft in my brotherly hands.  
The night was growing dense like an encircling wall.  
I know the art of evoking happy moments,  
And live again our past, my head laid on your knees,  
For what's the good of seeking your languid beauty  
Elsewhere than in your dear body and gentle heart ?  
I know the art of evoking happy moments.  
Those vows, those perfumes, those infinite kisses,  
Will they be reborn from a gulf we may not sound,  
As rejuvenated suns rise in the heavens  
After being bathed in the depths of deep seas ?  
– O vows ! O perfumes ! O infinite kisses !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Balcony

Mother of memories, queen of paramours,  
Yourself are all my pleasure, all my duty ;  
You will recall caresses that were yours  
And fireside evenings in their warmth and beauty.  
Mother of memories, queen of paramours.  
On eyes illumined by the light of coal,  
The balcony beneath a rose-veiled sky,  
Your breast how soft ! Your heart how good and whole !  
We spoke eternal things that cannot die –  
On eyes illumined by the light of coal !  
How splendid sets the sun of a warm evening !  
How deep is space ! the heart how full of power !  
When, queen of the adored, towards you leaning,  
I breathed the perfume of your blood in flower.  
How splendid sets the sun of a warm evening !  
The evening like an alcove seemed to thicken,  
And as my eyes astrologised your own,  
Drinking your breath, I felt sweet poisons quicken,  
And in my hands your feet slept still as stone.  
The evening like an alcove seemed to thicken.  
I know how to resuscitate dead minutes.  
I see my past, its face hid in your knees.  
How can I seek your languorous charm save in its  
Own source, your heart and body formed to please.  
I know how to resuscitate dead minutes.  
These vows, these perfumes, and these countless kisses,  
Reborn from gulfs that we could never sound,  
Will they, like suns, once bathed in those abysses,  
Rejuvenated from the deep, rebound –  
These vows, these perfumes, and these countless kisses ?

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Le Possédé (1861)

### Le Possédé

Le soleil s'est couvert d'un crêpe. Comme lui,  
Ô Lune de ma vie ! emmitoufle-toi d'ombre  
Dors ou fume à ton gré ; sois muette, sois sombre,  
Et plonge tout entière au gouffre de l'Ennui ;  
Je t'aime ainsi ! Pourtant, si tu veux aujourd'hui,  
Comme un astre éclipsé qui sort de la pénombre,  
Te pavaner aux lieux que la Folie encombre  
C'est bien ! Charmant poignard, jaillis de ton étui !  
Allume ta prunelle à la flamme des lustres !  
Allume le désir dans les regards des rustres !  
Tout de toi m'est plaisir, morbide ou pétulant ;  
Sois ce que tu voudras, nuit noire, rouge aurore ;  
Il n'est pas une fibre en tout mon corps tremblant  
Qui ne crie : *Ô mon cher Belzébuth, je t'adore !*

– Charles Baudelaire

### The One Possessed

The sun was covered with a crape. Like him,  
Moon of my life ! swathe yourself with darkness ;  
Sleep or smoke as you will ; be silent, be somber,  
And plunge your whole being into Ennui's abyss ;  
I love you thus ! However, if today you wish,  
Like an eclipsed star that leaves the half-light,  
To strut in the places which Madness encumbers,  
That is fine ! Charming poniard spring out of your sheath !  
Light your eyes at the flame of the lusters !

Kindle passion in the glances of churls !  
To me you're all pleasure, morbid or petulant ;  
Be what you will, black night, red dawn ;  
There is no fiber in my whole trembling body  
That does not cry : "Dear Beelzebub, I adore you !"

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Possessed

The sun in crepe has muffled up his fire.  
Moon of my life ! Half shade yourself like him.  
Slumber or smoke. Be silent and be dim,  
And in the gulf of boredom plunge entire ;  
I love you thus ! However, if you like,  
Like some bright star from its eclipse emerging,  
To flaunt with Folly where the crowds are surging –  
Flash, lovely dagger, from your sheath and strike !  
Light up your eyes from chandeliers of glass !  
Light up the lustful looks of louts that pass !  
Morbid or petulant, I thrill before you.  
Be what you will, black night or crimson dawn ;  
No fibre of my body tautly-drawn,  
But cries : "Beloved demon, I adore you !"

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# Un Fantôme (1861)

## Un Fantôme

### I LES TÉNÈBRES

Dans les caveaux d'insondable tristesse  
Où le Destin m'a déjà relégué ;  
Où jamais n'entre un rayon rose et gai ;  
Où, seul avec la Nuit, maussade hôtesse,  
Je suis comme un peintre qu'un Dieu moqueur  
Condamne à peindre, hélas ! sur les ténèbres ;  
Où, cuisinier aux appétits funèbres,  
Je fais bouillir et je mange mon coeur,  
Par instants brille, et s'allonge, et s'étale  
Un spectre fait de grâce et de splendeur.  
À sa rêveuse allure orientale,  
Quand il atteint sa totale grandeur,  
Je reconnais ma belle visiteuse :  
C'est Elle ! noire et pourtant lumineuse.

### II LE PARFUM

Lecteur, as-tu quelquefois respiré  
Avec ivresse et lente gourmandise  
Ce grain d'encens qui remplit une église,  
Ou d'un sachet le musc invétéré ?  
Charme profond, magique, dont nous grise  
Dans le présent le passé restauré !  
Ainsi l'amant sur un corps adoré  
Du souvenir cueille la fleur exquise.  
De ses cheveux élastiques et lourds,  
Vivant sachet, encensoir de l'alcôve,  
Une senteur montait, sauvage et fauve,

Et des habits, mousseline ou velours,  
Tout imprégnés de sa jeunesse pure,  
Se dégageait un parfum de fourrure.

### III LE CADRE

Comme un beau cadre ajoute à la peinture,  
Bien qu'elle soit d'un pinceau très-vanté,  
Je ne sais quoi d'étrange et d'enchanté  
En l'isolant de l'immense nature,  
Ainsi bijoux, meubles, métaux, dorure,  
S'adaptaient juste à sa rare beauté ;  
Rien n'offusquait sa parfaite clarté,  
Et tout semblait lui servir de bordure.  
Même on eût dit parfois qu'elle croyait  
Que tout voulait l'aimer ; elle noyait  
Sa nudité voluptueusement  
Dans les baisers du satin et du linge,  
Et, lente ou brusque, à chaque mouvement  
Montrait la grâce enfantine du singe.

### IV LE PORTRAIT

La Maladie et la Mort font des cendres  
De tout le feu qui pour nous flamboya.  
De ces grands yeux si fervents et si tendres,  
De cette bouche où mon coeur se noya,  
De ces baisers puissants comme un dictame,  
De ces transports plus vifs que des rayons,  
Que reste-t-il ? C'est affreux, ô mon âme !  
Rien qu'un dessin fort pâle, aux trois crayons,  
Qui, comme moi, meurt dans la solitude,  
Et que le Temps, injurieux vieillard,  
Chaque jour frotte avec son aile rude...  
Noir assassin de la Vie et de l'Art,  
Tu ne tueras jamais dans ma mémoire  
Celle qui fut mon plaisir et ma gloire !

– Charles Baudelaire



## A Phantom

### I THE DARKNESS

In the mournful vaults of fathomless gloom  
To which Fate has already banished me,  
Where a bright, rosy beam never enters ;  
Where, alone with Night, that sullen hostess,  
I'm like a painter whom a mocking God  
Condemns to paint, alas ! upon darkness ;  
Where, a cook with a woeful appetite,  
I boil and I eat my own heart ;  
At times there shines, and lengthens, and broadens  
A specter made of grace and of splendor ;  
By its dreamy, oriental manner,  
When it attains its full stature,  
I recognize my lovely visitor ;  
It's She ! dark and yet luminous.

### II THE PERFUME

Reader, have you at times inhaled  
With rapture and slow greediness  
That grain of incense which pervades a church,  
Or the inveterate musk of a sachet ?  
Profound, magical charm, with which the past,  
Restored to life, makes us inebriate !  
Thus the lover from an adored body  
Plucks memory's exquisite flower.  
From her tresses, heavy and elastic,  
Living sachet, censer for the bedroom,  
A wild and savage odor rose,  
And from her clothes, of muslin or velvet,  
All redolent of her youth's purity,  
There emanated the odor of furs.

### III THE FRAME

As a lovely frame adds to a painting,  
Even though it's from a master's brush,  
An indefinable strangeness and charm  
By isolating it from vast nature,  
Thus jewels, metals, gilding, furniture,

Suited her rare beauty to perfection ;  
Nothing dimmed its flawless splendor ;  
All seemed to form for her a frame.  
One would even have said that she believed  
That everything wished to love her ; she drowned  
Her nudity voluptuously  
In the kisses of the satin and linen,  
And, with each movement, slow or brusque,  
She showed the child-like grace of a monkey.

#### IV THE PORTRAIT

Disease and Death make ashes  
Of all the fire that flamed for us.  
Of those wide eyes, so fervent and tender,  
Of that mouth in which my heart was drowned,  
Of those kisses potent as dittany,  
Of those transports more vivid than sunbeams,  
What remains ? It is frightful, O my soul !  
Nothing but a faint sketch, in three colors,  
Which, like me, is dying in solitude,  
And which Time, that contemptuous old man,  
Grazes each day with his rough wing...  
Black murderer of Life and Art,  
You will never kill in my memory  
The one who was my glory and my joy !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## A Phantom

#### I THE SHADES

My fate confines me, dark and shady,  
In vaults of lone unfathomed grief.  
No rosy sunbeams bring relief.  
Alone with Night, my grim landlady,  
I'm like a painter whom God spites  
To paint on shades, and cook and eat  
My own poor heart, the only meat  
Of my funereal appetites.

Sometimes a spectre dim, reclining  
In grace and glory, can be seen.  
With dreamy oriental mien.  
When fully its own form defining,  
I recognise who it must be,  
Sombre yet luminous, it's She!

## II THE PERFUME

Reader, say, have you ever breathed,  
With lazy greed and joy, the dusk  
Of an old church with incense wreathed,  
Or smelt an ancient bag of musk?  
It's by such charms the Nevermore  
Intoxicates us in the Now –  
As lovers to Remembrance bow  
Over the bodies they adore.  
From her thick tresses as they fume  
(Scent-sack and censer of the room)  
A feline, tawny perfume springs.  
Her muslins and her velvets smooth  
Give off, made pregnant with her youth,  
Scents of the fur of prowling things.

## III THE FRAME

As a fine frame improves a plate  
Although the graver needs no vaunting –  
I know not what of strange and haunting  
(From nature vast to isolate  
Her beauty) was conferred by gems,  
Metals, and gear. She mingled with them,  
And swirled them all into her rhythm  
As in her skirts the flouncing hems.  
They say she thought all things were stung  
With love for her. Her naked flesh  
She loved to drown in kisses fresh  
Of flax or satin. To her clung,  
In all the movements of her shape,  
The childish graces of the ape.

## IV THE PORTRAIT

Sickness and death will form the ash and dust  
Of all the fire we blazed with in such splendour,  
Of those great eyes so fervent and so tender,  
The mouth wherein my heart would drown its lust,  
The kisses strong as marum, the delightful,  
Fierce transports livelier than the solar rays.  
What can remain? My soul, the truth is frightful!  
A fading sketch, a faint three-coloured haze,  
Which (like myself unfriended) wanes away,  
While Time, insulting dotard, every day,  
Brushes it fainter with his heedless wing...  
Killer of life and art! black, evil King!  
You'll never kill, within my soul, the story  
Of that which was my rapture and my glory.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Je te donne ces vers afin que si mon nom

### Je te donne ces vers afin que si mon nom

Je te donne ces vers afin que si mon nom  
Aborde heureusement aux époques lointaines,  
Et fait rêver un soir les cervelles humaines,  
Vaisseau favorisé par un grand aquilon,  
Ta mémoire, pareille aux fables incertaines,  
Fatigue le lecteur ainsi qu'un tympanon,  
Et par un fraternel et mystique chaînon  
Reste comme pendue à mes rimes hautaines ;  
Être maudit à qui, de l'abîme profond  
Jusqu'au plus haut du ciel, rien, hors moi, ne répond !  
– Ô toi qui, comme une ombre à la trace éphémère,  
Foules d'un pied léger et d'un regard serein  
Les stupides mortels qui t'ont jugée amère,  
Statue aux yeux de jais, grand ange au front d'airain !

– Charles Baudelaire

### I Give You These Verses So That If My Name

I give you these verses so that if my name,  
A vessel favored by a strong north wind,  
Fortunately reaches the distant future's shore,  
And some night sets the minds of men to dreaming,  
Your memory, like fables shrouded in the past,  
Will weary the reader like a dulcimer,  
And by a mystical, brotherly bond

Remain suspended from my haughty verse ;  
Accurst being to whom, from the deep abysm  
To the highest heaven, nothing responds, save me !  
– O you who, like an ephemeral ghost,  
Trample lightly and with a serene look  
Upon the dull mortals who found you repugnant,  
Jet eyed statue, tall angel with a brow of bronze !

– William Aggeler, 1954

### **For You This Poem : If My Name Should Reach**

For you this poem : if my name should reach  
Favoured by mighty gales, to far-off times,  
Like a proud vessel sailing to the beach,  
To stir the brains of humans with my rhymes –  
Your memory, uncertain as a myth,  
Will tire the reader like an endless gong,  
And be a mystic, kindred chain wherewith  
He'll hang suspended to my towering song :  
Curs'd soul to whom (from the supernal sky  
To hell's abysm) none responds but I !  
O you, who like a fleeting shadow pass,  
Spurn with light foot and with serenest gaze  
The stupid mortals who have grudged you praise,  
O jade-eyed statue, angel browed with brass !

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Semper eadem (1861)

### Semper eadem

« D'où vous vient, disiez-vous, cette tristesse étrange,  
Montant comme la mer sur le roc noir et nu ? »  
– Quand notre coeur a fait une fois sa vendange  
Vivre est un mal. C'est un secret de tous connu,  
Une douleur très simple et non mystérieuse  
Et, comme votre joie, éclatante pour tous.  
Cessez donc de chercher, ô belle curieuse !  
Et, bien que votre voix soit douce, taisez-vous !  
Taisez-vous, ignorante ! âme toujours ravie !  
Bouche au rire enfantin ! Plus encor que la Vie,  
La Mort nous tient souvent par des liens subtils.  
Laissez, laissez mon coeur s'enivrer d'un *mensonge*,  
Plonger dans vos beaux yeux comme dans un beau songe  
Et sommeiller longtemps à l'ombre de vos cils !

– Charles Baudelaire

### Ever the Same

“Whence comes to you, you asked, this singular sadness  
That rises like the sea on the naked, black rock ?”  
– Once our heart has gathered the grapes from its vineyard,  
Living is an evil. That's a secret known to all,  
A simple pain, with no mystery,  
As obvious to all men as your gaiety.  
So abandon your search, inquisitive beauty ;  
And though your voice is sweet, be still !  
Be silent, ignorant ! ever enraptured soul !

Mouth with the child-like laugh ! Still more than Life,  
Death holds us frequently with subtle bonds.  
Let, let my heart become drunk with a *lie* ; let it  
Plunge into your fair eyes as into a fair dream  
And slumber long in the shadow of your lashes.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Semper Eadem

“Whence,” ask you, “does this strange new sadness flow  
Like rising tides on rocks, black, bare, and vast ?”  
For human hearts, when vintage-time is past,  
To live is bad. That secret all men know –  
An obvious sorrow, with no mystery, shown,  
Clear as your joy, to everyone around.  
O curious one, seek nothing more profound,  
And speak not, though your voice be sweet in tone.  
Hush, ignorant ! Hush, soul that’s still enraptured,  
And mouth of childish laughter ! Neatly captured,  
Death pulls us, more than life, with subtle wile.  
Oh let my thought get drunk upon a *lie*,  
And plunge, as in a dream, in either eye,  
And in their lashes’ shadow sleep awhile !

– Roy Campbell, 1952



## Tout entière

### Tout entière

Le Démon, dans ma chambre haute  
Ce matin est venu me voir,  
Et, tâchant à me prendre en faute  
Me dit : « Je voudrais bien savoir  
Parmi toutes les belles choses  
Dont est fait son enchantement,  
Parmi les objets noirs ou roses  
Qui composent son corps charmant,  
Quel est le plus doux. »– Ô mon âme !  
Tu répondis à l'Abhorré :  
« Puisqu'en Elle tout est dictame  
Rien ne peut être préféré.  
Lorsque tout me ravit, j'ignore  
Si quelque chose me séduit.  
Elle éblouit comme l'Aurore  
Et console comme la Nuit ;  
Et l'harmonie est trop exquise,  
Qui gouverne tout son beau corps,  
Pour que l'impuissante analyse  
En note les nombreux accords.  
Ô métamorphose mystique  
De tous mes sens fondus en un !  
Son haleine fait la musique,  
Comme sa voix fait le parfum ! »

## All of Her

The Devil into my high room  
This morning came to pay a call,  
And trying to find me in fault  
Said : "I should like to know,  
Among all the beautiful things  
Which make her an enchantress,  
Among the objects black or rose  
That compose her charming body,  
Which is the sweetest." – O my soul !  
You answered the loathsome Creature :  
"Since in Her all is dittany,  
No single thing can be preferred.  
When all delights me, I don't know  
If some one thing entrances me.  
She dazzles like the Dawn  
And consoles like the Night ;  
And the harmony that governs  
Her whole body is too lovely  
For impotent analysis  
To note its numerous accords.  
O mystic metamorphosis  
Of all my senses joined in one !  
Her breath makes music,  
And her voice makes perfume !"

– William Aggeler, 1954

## All in One

The Demon called on me this morning,  
In my high room. As is his way,  
Thinking to catch me without warning,  
He put this question : "Tell me, pray,  
Of all the beauties that compose,  
The strange enchantment of her ways,  
Amongst the wonders black or rose,  
Which object most excites your praise,

And is the climax in her litany?"  
My soul, you answered the Abhorred,  
"Since she is fashioned, all, of dittany,  
No part is most to be adored.  
Since I am ravished, I ignore a  
Degree of difference in delight.  
She dazzles me like the aurora  
And she consoles me like the night.  
The harmony's so exquisite  
That governs her, it is in vain  
Analysis would try to split  
The unity of such a strain.  
O mystic fusion that, enwreathing  
My senses, fuses each in each,  
To hear the music of her breathing  
And breathe the perfume of her speech."

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Que diras-tu ce soir, pauvre âme solitaire

### Que diras-tu ce soir, pauvre âme solitaire

Que diras-tu ce soir, pauvre âme solitaire,  
Que diras-tu, mon coeur, coeur autrefois flétri,  
À la très belle, à la très bonne, à la très chère,  
Dont le regard divin t'a soudain refléuri ?  
– Nous mettrons notre orgueil à chanter ses louanges :  
Rien ne vaut la douceur de son autorité  
Sa chair spirituelle a le parfum des Anges  
Et son oeil nous revêt d'un habit de clarté.  
Que ce soit dans la nuit et dans la solitude  
Que ce soit dans la rue et dans la multitude  
Son fantôme dans l'air danse comme un flambeau.  
Parfois il parle et dit : « Je suis belle, et j'ordonne  
Que pour l'amour de moi vous n'aimiez que le Beau ;  
Je suis l'Ange gardien, la Muse et la Madone. »

– Charles Baudelaire

### What Will You Say Tonight, Poor Solitary Soul

What will you say tonight, poor solitary soul,  
What will you say, my heart, heart once so withered,  
To the kindest, dearest, the fairest of women,  
Whose divine glance suddenly revived you ?  
– We shall try our pride in singing her praises :  
There is nothing sweeter than to do her bidding ;  
Her spiritual flesh has the fragrance of Angels,

And when she looks upon us we are clothed with light.  
Be it in the darkness of night, in solitude,  
Or in the city street among the multitude,  
Her image in the air dances like a torch flame.  
Sometimes it speaks and says : "I am fair, I command  
That for your love of me you love only Beauty ;  
I am your guardian Angel, your Muse and Madonna."

– William Aggeler, 1954

## What Can You Say, Poor Lonely Soul of Mine

What can you say, poor lonely soul of mine,  
Or you, poor heart, so long ago turned sour,  
To the best, dearest, loveliest, whose divine  
Regard has made you open like a flower ?  
We'll set our pride to sing her highest praise  
Naught to her sweet authority compares :  
Her psychic flesh is formed of fragrant airs.  
Her glances clothe us in a suit of rays.  
Be it in solitude at dead of night,  
Or in the crowded streets of glaring light,  
Her phantom like a torch before me streams.  
It speaks : "I'm beautiful. These orders take.  
Love naught but Beauty, always, for my sake,  
Madonna, guardian Angel, Muse of dreams."

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Le Flambeau vivant

### Le Flambeau vivant

Ils marchent devant moi, ces Yeux pleins de lumières,  
Qu'un Ange très savant a sans doute aimantés  
Ils marchent, ces divins frères qui sont mes frères,  
Secouant dans mes yeux leurs feux diamantés.  
Me sauvant de tout piège et de tout péché grave,  
Ils conduisent mes pas dans la route du Beau  
Ils sont mes serviteurs et je suis leur esclave  
Tout mon être obéit à ce vivant flambeau.  
Charmants Yeux, vous brillez de la clarté mystique  
Qu'ont les cierges brûlant en plein jour ; le soleil  
Rougit, mais n'éteint pas leur flamme fantastique ;  
Ils célèbrent la Mort, vous chantez le Réveil  
Vous marchez en chantant le réveil de mon âme,  
Astres dont nul soleil ne peut flétrir la flamme !

– Charles Baudelaire

### The Living Torch

They walk in front of me, those eyes aglow with light  
Which a learned Angel has rendered magnetic ;  
They walk, divine brothers who are my brothers too,  
Casting into my eyes diamond scintillations.  
They save me from all snares and from all grievous sin ;  
They guide my steps along the pathway of Beauty ;  
They are my servitors, I am their humble slave ;  
My whole being obeys this living torch.  
Bewitching eyes, you shine like mystical candles

That burn in broad daylight ; the sun  
Reddens, but does not quench their eerie flame ;  
While they celebrate Death, you sing the Awakening ;  
You walk, singing the awakening of my soul,  
Bright stars whose flame no sun can pale !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Living Torch

Those lit eyes go before me, in full view,  
(Some cunning angel magnetised their light) –  
Heavenly twins, yet my own brothers too,  
Shaking their diamond blaze into my sight.  
My steps from every trap or sin to save,  
In the strait road of Beauty they conduct me.  
They are my servants, and I am their slave,  
Obedient in whatever they instruct me.  
Delightful eyes, you burn with mystic rays  
Like candles in broad day ; red suns may blaze,  
But cannot quench their still, fantastic light.  
Those candles burn for death, but you for waking :  
You sing the dawn that in my soul is breaking,  
Stars which no sun could ever put to flight !

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## À Celle qui est trop gaie (1857)

### À Celle qui est trop gaie

Ta tête, ton geste, ton air  
Sont beaux comme un beau paysage ;  
Le rire joue en ton visage  
Comme un vent frais dans un ciel clair.

Le passant chagrin que tu frôles  
Est ébloui par la santé  
Qui jaillit comme une clarté  
De tes bras et de tes épaules.

Les retentissantes couleurs  
Dont tu parsèmes tes toilettes  
Jettent dans l'esprit des poètes  
L'image d'un ballet de fleurs.

Ces robes folles sont l'emblème  
De ton esprit bariolé ;  
Folle dont je suis affolé,  
Je te hais autant que je t'aime !

Quelquefois dans un beau jardin  
Où je traînais mon atonie,  
J'ai senti, comme une ironie,  
Le soleil déchirer mon sein,  
Et le printemps et la verdure  
Ont tant humilié mon cœur,  
Que j'ai puni sur une fleur  
L'insolence de la Nature.

Ainsi je voudrais, une nuit,  
Quand l'heure des voluptés sonne,  
Vers les trésors de ta personne,  
Comme un lâche, ramper sans bruit,



Pour châtier ta chair joyeuse,  
Pour meurtrir ton sein pardonné,  
Et faire à ton flanc étonné  
Une blessure large et creuse,  
Et, vertigineuse douceur !  
À travers ces lèvres nouvelles,  
Plus éclatantes et plus belles,  
T'infuser mon venin, ma soeur !

– Charles Baudelaire

## To One Who Is Too Gay

Your head, your bearing, your gestures  
Are fair as a fair countryside ;  
Laughter plays on your face  
Like a cool wind in a clear sky.  
The gloomy passer-by you meet  
Is dazzled by the glow of health  
Which radiates resplendently  
From your arms and shoulders.  
The touches of sonorous color  
That you scatter on your dresses  
Cast into the minds of poets  
The image of a flower dance.  
Those crazy frocks are the emblem  
Of your multi-colored nature ;  
Mad woman whom I'm mad about,  
I hate and love you equally !  
At times in a lovely garden  
Where I dragged my atony,  
I have felt the sun tear my breast,  
As though it were in mockery ;  
Both the springtime and its verdure  
So mortified my heart  
That I punished a flower  
For the insolence of Nature.  
Thus I should like, some night,  
When the hour for pleasure sounds,

To creep softly, like a coward,  
Toward the treasures of your body,  
To whip your joyous flesh  
And bruise your pardoned breast,  
To make in your astonished flank  
A wide and gaping wound,  
And, intoxicating sweetness!  
Through those new lips,  
More bright, more beautiful,  
To infuse my venom, my sister!

– William Aggeler, 1954

## To One Who Is Too Gay

Your head, your gestures, and your air  
Are lovely as a landscape; smiles  
Rimple upon your face at whiles  
Like winds in the clear sky up there.  
The grumpy passers that you graze  
Are dazzled by the radiant health,  
And the illimitable wealth  
Your arms and shoulders seem to blaze.  
The glaring colours that, in showers,  
Clash in your clothes with such commotion,  
In poets' minds suggest the notion  
Of a mad ballet-dance of flowers.  
These garish dresses illustrate  
Your spirit, striped with every fad.  
O madwoman, whom, quite as mad,  
I love as madly as I hate.  
Sometimes in gardens, seeking rest,  
Where I have dragged my soul atonic,  
I've felt the sun with gaze ironic  
Tearing the heart within my breast.  
The spring and verdure, dressed to stagger,  
Humiliate me with such power  
That I have punished, in a flower,  
The insolence of Nature's swagger.

And so, one night, I'd like to sneak,  
When night has tolled the hour of pleasure,  
A craven thief, towards the treasure  
Which is your person, plump and sleek.  
To punish your bombastic flesh,  
To bruise your breast immune to pain,  
To farrow down your flank a lane  
Of gaping crimson, deep and fresh.  
And, most vertiginous delight!  
Into those lips, so freshly striking  
And daily lovelier to my liking –  
Infuse the venom of my sprite.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# Réversibilité

## Réversibilité

Ange plein de gaieté, connaissez-vous l'angoisse,  
La honte, les remords, les sanglots, les ennuis,  
Et les vagues terreurs de ces affreuses nuits  
Qui compriment le coeur comme un papier qu'on froisse ?  
Ange plein de gaieté, connaissez-vous l'angoisse ?

Ange plein de bonté, connaissez-vous la haine,  
Les poings crispés dans l'ombre et les larmes de fiel,  
Quand la Vengeance bat son infernal rappel,  
Et de nos facultés se fait le capitaine ?  
Ange plein de bonté connaissez-vous la haine ?

Ange plein de santé, connaissez-vous les Fièvres,  
Qui, le long des grands murs de l'hospice blafard,  
Comme des exilés, s'en vont d'un pied traînard,  
Cherchant le soleil rare et remuant les lèvres ?  
Ange plein de santé, connaissez-vous les Fièvres ?

Ange plein de beauté, connaissez-vous les rides,  
Et la peur de vieillir, et ce hideux tourment  
De lire la secrète horreur du dévouement  
Dans des yeux où longtemps burent nos yeux avide !  
Ange plein de beauté, connaissez-vous les rides ?

Ange plein de bonheur, de joie et de lumières,  
David mourant aurait demandé la santé  
Aux émanations de ton corps enchanté ;  
Mais de toi je n'implore, ange, que tes prières,  
Ange plein de bonheur, de joie et de lumières !

– Charles Baudelaire

## Reversibility

Angel full of gaiety, do you know anguish,  
Shame, remorse, sobs, vexations,  
And the vague terrors of those frightful nights  
That compress the heart like a paper one crumples ?  
Angel full of gaiety, do you know anguish ?  
Angel full of kindness, do you know hatred,  
The clenched fists in the darkness and the tears of gall,  
When Vengeance beats out his hellish call to arms,  
And makes himself the captain of our faculties ?  
Angel full of kindness, do you know hatred ?  
Angel full of health, do you know Fever,  
Walking like an exile, moving with dragging steps,  
Along the high, wan walls of the charity ward,  
And with muttering lips seeking the rare sunlight ?  
Angel full of health, do you know Fever ?  
Angel full of beauty, do you know wrinkles,  
The fear of growing old, and the hideous torment  
Of reading in the eyes of her he once adored  
Horror at seeing love turning to devotion ?  
Angel full of beauty, do you know wrinkles ?  
Angel full of happiness, of joy and of light,  
David on his death-bed would have appealed for health  
To the emanations of your enchanted flesh ;  
But of you, angel, I beg only prayers,  
Angel full of happiness, of joy and of light !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Reversibility

Angel of gaiety, have you known anguish,  
Shame and remorse, tears, boredom, and dismay,  
Vague horrors of the nights in which we languish,  
Which crumple hearts like papers thrown away ?  
Angel of gaiety, have you known anguish ?  
Angel of kindness, have you met with hate ?  
Fists clenched in gloom, eyes running tears of gall,  
When Vengeance beats his drum to subjugate

Our faculties, the captain of them all?  
Angel of kindness, have you met with hate?  
Angel of health, have you beheld the Fevers?  
Across pale walls of wards they limp and stumble,  
Like exiles wan, with agues, chills, and shivers,  
Seeking the scanty sun with lips that mumble.  
Angel of health, have you beheld the Fevers?  
Angel of beauty, do you know Old Age,  
The fear of wrinkles, and the dire emotion,  
In eyes we've pierced too long, as on a page,  
To read the secret horror of devotion?  
Angel of beauty do you know Old Age?  
Angel of goodness, radiance, and delight,  
The dying David would have begged to share  
The emanations of your body bright.  
But all I wish to ask of you is prayer,  
Angel of goodness, radiance, and delight.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# Confession

## Confession

Une fois, une seule, aimable et douce femme,  
À mon bras votre bras poli  
S'appuya (sur le fond ténébreux de mon âme  
Ce souvenir n'est point pâli) ;  
Il était tard ; ainsi qu'une médaille neuve  
La pleine lune s'étalait,  
Et la solennité de la nuit, comme un fleuve,  
Sur Paris dormant ruisselait.

Et le long des maisons, sous les portes cochères,  
Des chats passaient furtivement  
L'oreille au guet, ou bien, comme des ombres chères,  
Nous accompagnaient lentement.

Tout à coup, au milieu de l'intimité libre  
Eclose à la pâle clarté  
De vous, riche et sonore instrument où ne vibre  
Que la radieuse gaieté,  
De vous, claire et joyeuse ainsi qu'une fanfare  
Dans le matin étincelant  
Une note plaintive, une note bizarre  
S'échappa, tout en chancelant

Comme une enfant chétive, horrible, sombre, immonde,  
Dont sa famille rougirait,  
Et qu'elle aurait longtemps, pour la cacher au monde,  
Dans un caveau mise au secret.

Pauvre ange, elle chantait, votre note criarde :  
« Que rien ici-bas n'est certain,  
Et que toujours, avec quelque soin qu'il se farde,  
Se trahit l'égoïsme humain ;

Que c'est un dur métier que d'être belle femme,  
 Et que c'est le travail banal  
 De la danseuse folle et froide qui se pâme  
 Dans son sourire machinal ;  
 Que bâtir sur les coeurs est une chose sotté ;  
 Que tout craque, amour et beauté,  
 Jusqu'à ce que l'Oubli les jette dans sa hotte  
 Pour les rendre à l'Eternité ! »  
 J'ai souvent évoqué cette lune enchantée,  
 Ce silence et cette langueur,  
 Et cette confidence horrible chuchotée  
 Au confessionnal du coeur.

– Charles Baudelaire

## Confession

One time, once only, sweet, amiable woman,  
 On my arm your smooth arm  
 Rested (on the tenebrous background of my soul  
 That memory is not faded) ;  
 It was late ; like a newly struck medal  
 The full moon spread its rays,  
 And the solemnity of the night streamed  
 Like a river over sleeping Paris.  
 And along the houses, under the porte-cocheres,  
 Cats passed by furtively,  
 With ears pricked up, or else, like beloved shades,  
 Slowly escorted us.  
 Suddenly, in the midst of that frank intimacy  
 Born in the pale moonlight,  
 From you, sonorous, rich instrument which vibrates  
 Only with radiant gaiety,  
 From you, clear and joyful as a fanfare  
 In the glistening morning light,  
 A plaintive note, a bizarre note  
 Escaped, faltering  
 Like a puny, filthy, sullen, horrible child,  
 Who would make his family blush,



And whom they have hidden for a long time  
In a secret cellar.  
Poor angel, it sang, your discordant note :  
"That naught is certain here below,  
That always, though it paint its face with utmost care  
Man's selfishness reveals itself,  
That it's a hard calling to be a lovely woman,  
And that it is the banal task  
Of the cold and silly danseuse who faints away  
With a mechanical smile,  
That to build on hearts is a foolish thing,  
That all things break, love, and beauty,  
Till Oblivion tosses them into his dossier  
To give them back to Eternity!"  
I've often evoked that enchanted moon,  
The silence and the languidness,  
And that horrible confidence whispered  
In the heart's confessional.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Confession

Once, and once only, kind and gentle lady,  
Your polished arm on mine you placed  
(Deep down within my spirit, dark and shady,  
I keep the memory uneffaced).  
A medal, newly-coined, of flashing silver,  
The full moon shone. The night was old.  
Its solemn grandeur, like a mighty river,  
Through sleeping Paris softly rolled.  
Along the streets, by courtyard doors, cats darted  
And passed in furtive, noiseless flight  
With cars pricked ; or, like shades of friends departed,  
Followed us slowly through the night.  
Cutting this easy intimacy through,  
That hatched from out that pearly light –  
O rich resounding instrument, from you,  
Who'd always thrilled with loud delight,

From you, till then as joyful as a peal  
Of trumpets on a sparkling morn,  
A cry so plaintive that it seemed unreal,  
Was staggeringly torn.  
Like some misborn, deformed, and monstrous kid  
Who puts his family to the blush,  
Whose presence in a cellar must be hid  
And his existence in a hush !  
Poor angel ! that harsh note was meant to sing  
"That nothing in this world is certain,  
And human egotism is the thing  
Which all existence serves to curtain.  
That it's an irksome task to be a beauty,  
A boring job one has to face –  
Like frigid dancers, smiling as a duty  
With hard, mechanical grimace :  
That building upon hearts is idiotic :  
All cracks, love, beauty, and fraternity  
Until Oblivion puts them in his pocket  
To pawn them on to old Eternity !"  
I often have recalled that moon of magic,  
That languid hush on quays and marts,  
And then this confidence, so grim and tragic,  
In the confessional of hearts.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## L'Aube spirituelle

### L'Aube spirituelle

Quand chez les débauchés l'aube blanche et vermeille  
Entre en société de l'Idéal rongeur,  
Par l'opération d'un mystère vengeur  
Dans la brute assoupie un ange se réveille.  
Des Cieux Spirituels l'inaccessible azur,  
Pour l'homme terrassé qui rêve encore et souffre,  
S'ouvre et s'enfonce avec l'attirance du gouffre.  
Ainsi, chère Déesse, Etre lucide et pur,  
Sur les débris fumeux des stupides orgies  
Ton souvenir plus clair, plus rose, plus charmant,  
À mes yeux agrandis voltige incessamment.  
Le soleil a noirci la flamme des bougies ;  
Ainsi, toujours vainqueur, ton fantôme est pareil,  
Ame resplendissante, à l'immortel soleil !

– Charles Baudelaire

### Spiritual Dawn

When debauchees are roused by the white, rosy dawn,  
Escorted by the Ideal which gnaws at their hearts  
Through the action of a mysterious, vengeful law,  
In the somnolent brute an Angel awakens.  
The inaccessible blue of Spiritual Heavens,  
For the man thrown to earth who suffers and still dreams,  
Opens and yawns with the lure of the abyss.  
Thus, dear Goddess, Being, lucid and pure,  
Over the smoking ruins of stupid orgies,

Your memory, clearer, more rosy, more charming,  
Hovers incessantly before my widened eyes.  
The sunlight has darkened the flame of the candles ;  
Thus, ever triumphant, resplendent soul !  
Your phantom is like the immortal sun !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Spiritual Dawn

When in the company of the Ideal  
(That gnawing tooth) Dawn enters, white and pink,  
The rooms of rakes – each sated beast can feel  
An Angel waking through the fumes of drink.  
For downcast Man, who dreams and suffers still,  
The azure of the mystic heaven above,  
With gulf-like vertigo, attracts his will.  
So, Goddess, lucid Being of pure love,  
Over the smoking wreck of feasts and scandals,  
Your phantom, rosy and enchanting, flies  
And still returns to my dilated eyes.  
The sun has blackened out the flame of candles.  
So your victorious phantom seems as one,  
O blazing spirit, with the deathless Sun !

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Harmonie du soir

### Harmonie du soir

Voici venir les temps où vibrant sur sa tige  
Chaque fleur s'évapore ainsi qu'un encensoir ;  
Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir ;  
Valse mélancolique et langoureux vertige !  
Chaque fleur s'évapore ainsi qu'un encensoir ;  
Le violon frémit comme un cœur qu'on afflige ;  
Valse mélancolique et langoureux vertige !  
Le ciel est triste et beau comme un grand reposoir.  
Le violon frémit comme un cœur qu'on afflige,  
Un cœur tendre, qui hait le néant vaste et noir !  
Le ciel est triste et beau comme un grand reposoir ;  
Le soleil s'est noyé dans son sang qui se fige.  
Un cœur tendre, qui hait le néant vaste et noir,  
Du passé lumineux recueille tout vestige !  
Le soleil s'est noyé dans son sang qui se fige...  
Ton souvenir en moi luit comme un ostensor !

– Charles Baudelaire

### Evening Harmony

The season is at hand when swaying on its stem  
Every flower exhales perfume like a censer ;  
Sounds and perfumes turn in the evening air ;  
Melancholy waltz and languid vertigo !  
Every flower exhales perfume like a censer ;  
The violin quivers like a tormented heart ;  
Melancholy waltz and languid vertigo !

The sky is sad and beautiful like an immense altar.  
The violin quivers like a tormented heart,  
A tender heart, that hates the vast, black void !  
The sky is sad and beautiful like an immense altar ;  
The sun has drowned in his blood which congeals...  
A tender heart that hates the vast, black void  
Gathers up every shred of the luminous past !  
The sun has drowned in his blood which congeals...  
Your memory in me glitters like a monstrance !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Evening Harmony

Now comes the eve, when on its stem vibrates  
Each flower, evaporating like a censor ;  
When sounds and scents in the dark air grow denser ;  
Drowsed swoon through which a mournful waltz pulsates !  
Each flower evaporates as from a censor ;  
The fiddle like a hurt heart palpitates ;  
Drowsed swoon through which a mournful waltz pulsates ;  
The sad, grand sky grows, altar-like, immenser.  
The fiddle, like a hurt heart, palpitates,  
A heart that hates oblivion, ruthless censor.  
The sad, grand sky grows, altar-like, immenser.  
The sun in its own blood coagulates...  
A heart that hates oblivion, ruthless censor,  
The whole of the bright past resuscitates.  
The sun in its own blood coagulates...  
And, monstrance-like, your memory flames intenser !

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# Le Flacon

## Le Flacon

Il est de forts parfums pour qui toute matière  
Est poreuse. On dirait qu'ils pénètrent le verre.  
En ouvrant un coffret venu de l'Orient  
Dont la serrure grince et rechigne en criant,  
Ou dans une maison déserte quelque armoire  
Pleine de l'âcre odeur des temps, poudreuse et noire,  
Parfois on trouve un vieux flacon qui se souvient,  
D'où jaillit toute vive une âme qui revient.  
Mille pensers dormaient, chrysalides funèbres,  
Frémissant doucement dans les lourdes ténèbres,  
Qui dégagent leur aile et prennent leur essor,  
Teintés d'azur, glacés de rose, lamés d'or.  
Voilà le souvenir enivrant qui voltige  
Dans l'air troublé ; les yeux se ferment ; le Vertige  
Saisit l'âme vaincue et la pousse à deux mains  
Vers un gouffre obscurci de miasmes humains ;  
Il la terrasse au bord d'un gouffre séculaire,  
Où, Lazare odorant déchirant son suaire,  
Se meut dans son réveil le cadavre spectral  
D'un vieil amour ranci, charmant et sépulcral.  
Ainsi, quand je serai perdu dans la mémoire  
Des hommes, dans le coin d'une sinistre armoire  
Quand on m'aura jeté, vieux flacon désolé,  
Décrépit, poudreux, sale, abject, visqueux, fêlé,  
Je serai ton cercueil, aimable pestilence !  
Le témoin de ta force et de ta virulence,  
Cher poison préparé par les anges ! liqueur  
Qui me ronge, ô la vie et la mort de mon cœur !

– Charles Baudelaire

## The Perfume Flask

There are strong perfumes for which all matter  
Is porous. One would say they go through glass.  
On opening a coffer that has come from the East,  
Whose creaking lock resists and grates,  
Or in a deserted house, some cabinet  
Full of the Past's acrid odor, dusty and black,  
Sometimes one finds an antique phial which remembers,  
Whence gushes forth a living soul returned to life.  
Many thoughts were sleeping, death-like chrysalides,  
Quivering softly in the heavy shadows,  
That free their wings and rise in flight,  
Tinged with azure, glazed with rose, spangled with gold.  
That is the bewitching souvenir which flutters  
In the troubled air ; the eyes close ; Dizziness  
Seizes the vanquished soul, pushes it with both hands  
Toward a darkened abyss of human pollution :  
He throws it down at the edge of an ancient abyss,  
Where, like stinking Lazarus tearing wide his shroud,  
There moves as it wakes up, the ghostly cadaver  
Of a rancid old love, charming and sepulchral.  
Thus, when I'll be lost to the memory  
Of men, when I shall be tossed into the corner  
Of a dismal wardrobe, a desolate old phial,  
Decrepit, cracked, slimy, dirty, dusty, abject,  
Delightful pestilence ! I shall be your coffin,  
The witness of your strength and of your virulence,  
Beloved poison prepared by the angels ! Liqueur  
That consumes me, O the life and death of my heart !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Flask

Perfumes there are which through all things can pass  
And make all matter porous, even glass ;  
Old coffers from the Orient brought, whose locks  
Grind sullenly when opening the box,



Or, in an empty house, some ancient chest,  
Where time and dust and gloom were long compressed,  
May yield a flask where memory survives,  
And a soul flashes into future lives.

A thousand thoughts, funereal larvae, laid  
Shuddering softly under palls of shade,  
May suddenly their soaring wings unfold,  
Stained azure, glazed with rose, or filmed with gold.

Intoxicating memory now flies  
Into the dusk, and makes us close our eyes :

Vertigo draws the spirit which it grips  
Towards some dark miasma of eclipse :

Beside an ancient pit he makes her fall,  
Where Lazarus, sweet-scented, tears his pall  
And wakes the spectral corpse of some now-cold,  
Rancid, sepulchral love he knew of old.

So when I'm lost to human memory, thrown  
In some old gloomy chest to lie alone,  
A poor decrepit flask, cracked, abject, crusty  
With dirt, opaque and sticky, damp and dusty,  
I'll be your pall and shroud, beloved pest !  
The witness of your venom, and its test,  
Dear poison, angel-brewed with deadly art –  
Life, death, and dear corrosion of my heart.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# Le Poison

## Le Poison

Le vin sait revêtir le plus sordide bouge  
D'un luxe miraculeux,  
Et fait surgir plus d'un portique fabuleux  
Dans l'or de sa vapeur rouge,  
Comme un soleil couchant dans un ciel nébuleux.  
L'opium agrandit ce qui n'a pas de bornes,  
Allonge l'illimité,  
Approfondit le temps, creuse la volupté,  
Et de plaisirs noirs et mornes  
Remplit l'âme au delà de sa capacité.  
Tout cela ne vaut pas le poison qui découle  
De tes yeux, de tes yeux verts,  
Lacs où mon âme tremble et se voit à l'envers...  
Mes songes viennent en foule  
Pour se désaltérer à ces gouffres amers.  
Tout cela ne vaut pas le terrible prodige  
De ta salive qui mord,  
Qui plonge dans l'oubli mon âme sans remords,  
Et charriant le vertige,  
La roule défaillante aux rives de la mort !

– Charles Baudelaire

## Poison

Wine knows how to adorn the most sordid hovel  
With marvelous luxury  
And make more than one fabulous portal appear

In the gold of its red mist  
Like a sun setting in a cloudy sky.  
Opium magnifies that which is limitless,  
Lengthens the unlimited,  
Makes time deeper, hollows out voluptuousness,  
And with dark, gloomy pleasures  
Fills the soul beyond its capacity.  
All that is not equal to the poison which flows  
From your eyes, from your green eyes,  
Lakes where my soul trembles and sees its evil side...  
My dreams come in multitude  
To slake their thirst in those bitter gulfs.  
All that is not equal to the awful wonder  
Of your biting saliva,  
Charged with madness, that plunges my remorseless soul  
Into oblivion  
And rolls it in a swoon to the shores of death.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Poisons

Wine can conceal a sordid room  
In rich, miraculous disguise,  
And make such porticoes arise  
Out of its flushed and crimson fume  
As makes the sunset in the skies.  
Opium the infinite enlarges,  
And lengthens all that is past measure.  
It deepens time, and digs its treasure,  
With sad, black raptures it o'ercharges  
The soul, and surfeits it with pleasure.  
Neither are worth the drug so strong  
That you distil from your green eyes,  
Lakes where I see my soul capsize  
Head downwards : and where, in one throng,  
I slake my dreams, and quench my sighs.  
But to your spittle these seem naught –  
It stings and burns. It steepes my thought

And spirit in oblivious gloom,  
And, in its dizzy onrush caught,  
Dashes it on the shores of doom.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Ciel brouillé

### Ciel brouillé

On dirait ton regard d'une vapeur couvert ;  
Ton oeil mystérieux (est-il bleu, gris ou vert ?)  
Alternativement tendre, rêveur, cruel,  
Réfléchit l'indolence et la pâleur du ciel.  
Tu rappelles ces jours blancs, tièdes et voilés,  
Qui font se fondre en pleurs les coeurs ensorcelés,  
Quand, agités d'un mal inconnu qui les tord,  
Les nerfs trop éveillés raillent l'esprit qui dort.  
Tu ressembles parfois à ces beaux horizons  
Qu'allument les soleils des brumeuses saisons...  
Comme tu resplendis, paysage mouillé  
Qu'enflamment les rayons tombant d'un ciel brouillé !  
Ô femme dangereuse, ô séduisants climats !  
Adorerai-je aussi ta neige et vos frimas,  
Et saurai-je tirer de l'implacable hiver  
Des plaisirs plus aigus que la glace et le fer ?

– Charles Baudelaire

### Cloudy Sky

One would say that your gaze was veiled with mist ;  
Your mysterious eyes (are they blue, gray or green ?)  
Alternately tender, dreamy, cruel,  
Reflect the indolence and pallor of the sky.  
You call to mind those days, white, soft, and mild,  
That make enchanted hearts burst into tears,  
When, shaken by a mysterious, wracking pain,

The nerves, too wide-awake, jeer at the sleeping mind.  
You resemble at times those gorgeous horizons  
That the sun sets ablaze in the seasons of mist...  
How resplendent you are, landscape drenched with rain,  
Aflame with rays that fall from a cloudy sky !  
O dangerous woman, O alluring climates !  
Will I also adore your snow and your hoar-frost,  
And can I draw from your implacable winter  
Pleasures keener than iron or ice ?

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Misty Sky

One would have thought your eyes were veiled in haze  
Strange eyes ! (Grey, green, or azure is their gaze ?)  
It seems they would reflect, in each renewal,  
The changing skies, dull, dreamy, fond, or cruel.  
You know those days both warm and hazy, which  
Melt into tears the hearts that they bewitch :  
And when the nerves, uneasy to control,  
Too-wide awake, upbraid the sleeping soul.  
You, too, resemble such a lit horizon  
As suns of misty seasons now bedizen...  
As you shine out, a landscape fresh with rain  
With misty sunbeams sparkling on the plain.  
Dangerous girl, seductive as the weather !  
Shall I adore your snows and frosts together ?  
In your relentless winter shall I feel  
A kiss more sharp than that of ice and steel ?

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# Le Chat

## Le Chat

### I

Dans ma cervelle se promène,  
Ainsi qu'en son appartement,  
Un beau chat, fort, doux et charmant.  
Quand il miaule, on l'entend à peine,  
Tant son timbre est tendre et discret ;  
Mais que sa voix s'apaise ou gronde,  
Elle est toujours riche et profonde.  
C'est là son charme et son secret.  
Cette voix, qui perle et qui filtre  
Dans mon fonds le plus ténébreux,  
Me remplit comme un vers nombreux  
Et me réjouit comme un philtre.  
Elle endort les plus cruels maux  
Et contient toutes les extases ;  
Pour dire les plus longues phrases,  
Elle n'a pas besoin de mots.  
Non, il n'est pas d'archet qui morde  
Sur mon coeur, parfait instrument,  
Et fasse plus royalement  
Chanter sa plus vibrante corde,  
Que ta voix, chat mystérieux,  
Chat séraphique, chat étrange,  
En qui tout est, comme en un ange,  
Aussi subtil qu'harmonieux !

### II

De sa fourrure blonde et brune

Sort un parfum si doux, qu'un soir  
J'en fus embaumé, pour l'avoir  
Caressée une fois, rien qu'une.  
C'est l'esprit familier du lieu ;  
Il juge, il préside, il inspire  
Toutes choses dans son empire ;  
peut-être est-il fée, est-il dieu ?  
Quand mes yeux, vers ce chat que j'aime  
Tirés comme par un aimant,  
Se retournent docilement  
Et que je regarde en moi-même,  
Je vois avec étonnement  
Le feu de ses prunelles pâles,  
Clairs fanaux, vivantes opales  
Qui me contemplant fixement.

– Charles Baudelaire

## The Cat

I

In my brain there walks about,  
As though he were in his own home,  
A lovely cat, strong, sweet, charming.  
When he mews, one scarcely hears him,  
His tone is so discreet and soft ;  
But purring or growling, his voice  
Is always deep and rich ;  
That is his charm and secret.  
That voice forms into drops, trickles  
Into the depths of my being,  
Fills me like harmonious verse  
And gladdens me like a philtre.  
It lulls to sleep the sharpest pains,  
Contains all ecstasies ;  
To say the longest sentences,  
It has no need of words,  
No, there's no bow that plays upon  
My heart, that perfect instrument,



And makes its most vibrant chord  
Sing more gloriously  
Than your voice, mysterious cat,  
Seraphic cat, singular cat,  
In whom, as in angels, all is  
As subtle as harmonious !

## II

From his brown and yellow fur  
Comes such sweet fragrance that one night  
I was perfumed with it because  
I caressed him once, once only.  
A familiar figure in the place,  
He presides, judges, inspires  
Everything within his province ;  
Perhaps he is a fay, a god ?  
When my gaze, drawn as by a magnet,  
Turns in a docile way  
Toward that cat whom I love,  
And when I look within myself,  
I see with amazement  
The fire of his pale pupils,  
Clear signal-lights, living opals,  
That contemplate me fixedly.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Cat

## I

A fine strong gentle cat is prowling  
As in his bedroom, in my brain ;  
So soft his voice, so smooth its strain,  
That you can scarcely hear him miowling.  
But should he venture to complain  
Or scold, the voice is rich and deep :  
And thus he manages to keep  
The charm of his untroubled reign.  
This voice, which seems to pearl and filter

Through my soul's inmost shady nook,  
Fills me with poems, like a book,  
And fortifies me, like a philtre.  
His voice can cure the direst pain  
And it contains the rarest raptures.  
The deepest meanings, which it captures,  
It needs no language to explain.  
There is no bow that can so sweep  
That perfect instrument, my heart :  
Or make more sumptuous music start  
From its most vibrant cord and deep,  
Than can the voice of this strange elf,  
This cat, bewitching and seraphic,  
Subtly harmonious in his traffic  
With all things else, and with himself.

## II

So sweet a perfume seems to swim  
Out of his fur both brown and bright,  
I nearly was embalmed one night  
From (only once) caressing him.  
Familiar Lar of where I stay,  
He rules, presides, inspires and teaches  
All things to which his empire reaches.  
Perhaps he is a god, or fay.  
When to a cherished cat my gaze  
Is magnet-drawn and then returns  
Back to itself, it there discerns,  
With strange excitement and amaze,  
Deep down in my own self, the rays  
Of living opals, torch-like gleams  
And pallid fire of eyes, it seems,  
That fixedly return my gaze.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# Le Beau Navire

## Le Beau Navire

Je veux te raconter, ô molle enchanteresse !  
Les diverses beautés qui parent ta jeunesse ;  
Je veux te peindre ta beauté,  
Où l'enfance s'allie à la maturité.

Quand tu vas balayant l'air de ta jupe large,  
Tu fais l'effet d'un beau vaisseau qui prend le large,  
Chargé de toile, et va roulant  
Suivant un rythme doux, et paresseux, et lent.

Sur ton cou large et rond, sur tes épaules grasses,  
Ta tête se pavane avec d'étranges grâces ;  
D'un air placide et triomphant  
Tu passes ton chemin, majestueuse enfant.

Je veux te raconter, ô molle enchanteresse !  
Les diverses beautés qui parent ta jeunesse ;  
Je veux te peindre ta beauté,  
Où l'enfance s'allie à la maturité.

Ta gorge qui s'avance et qui pousse la moire,  
Ta gorge triomphante est une belle armoire  
Dont les panneaux bombés et clairs  
Comme les boucliers accrochent des éclairs ;  
Boucliers provoquants, armés de pointes roses !  
Armoire à doux secrets, pleine de bonnes choses,  
De vins, de parfums, de liqueurs  
Qui feraient délirer les cerveaux et les coeurs !

Quand tu vas balayant l'air de ta jupe large  
Tu fais l'effet d'un beau vaisseau qui prend le large,  
Chargé de toile, et va roulant  
Suivant un rythme doux, et paresseux, et lent.

Tes nobles jambes, sous les volants qu'elles chassent,  
 Tourmentent les désirs obscurs et les agacent,  
 Comme deux sorcières qui font  
 Tourner un philtre noir dans un vase profond.  
 Tes bras, qui se joueraient des précoces hercules,  
 Sont des boas luisants les solides émules,  
 Faits pour serrer obstinément,  
 Comme pour l'imprimer dans ton coeur, ton amant.  
 Sur ton cou large et rond, sur tes épaules grasses,  
 Ta tête se pavane avec d'étranges grâces ;  
 D'un air placide et triomphant  
 Tu passes ton chemin, majestueuse enfant.

– Charles Baudelaire

## The Beautiful Ship

I want to name for you, indolent sorceress !  
 The divers marks of beauty which adorn your youth ;  
 I want to describe your beauty,  
 In which are blended childhood and maturity.  
 When you go sweeping by in your full, flowing skirts,  
 You resemble a trim ship as it puts to sea  
 Under full sail and goes rolling  
 Lazily, to a slow and easy rhythm.  
 On your large, round neck, on your plump shoulders,  
 Your head moves proudly and with a strange grace ;  
 With a placid, triumphant air  
 You go your way, majestic child.  
 I want to name for you, indolent sorceress !  
 The divers marks of beauty which adorn your youth ;  
 I want to describe your beauty,  
 In which are blended childhood and maturity.  
 Your exuberant breast which swells your silken gown,  
 Your triumphant breast is a lovely cabinet  
 Whose panels, round and bright,  
 Catch each flash of light like bucklers,  
 Exciting bucklers, armed with rosy points !  
 Cabinet of sweet secrets, crowded with good things,

With wines, with perfumes, with liqueurs  
That would make delirious the minds and hearts of men!  
When you go sweeping by in your full, flowing skirts,  
You resemble a trim ship as it puts to sea  
Under full sail and goes rolling  
Lazily, to a slow and easy rhythm.  
Your shapely legs beneath the flounces they pursue  
Arouse and torment obscure desires  
Like two sorceresses who stir  
A black philtre in a deep vessel.  
Your arms which would scorn precocious Hercules  
Are the worthy rivals of glistening boas,  
Made to clasp stubbornly  
Your lover, as if to imprint him on your heart.  
On your large, round neck, on your plump shoulders,  
Your head moves proudly and with a strange grace ;  
With a placid, triumphant air  
You go your way, majestic child.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Splendid Ship

Oh soft enchantress, I'll record with truth  
The diverse beauties that adorn your youth.  
Yes, I will paint your charm  
Of womanhood with childhood arm in arm.  
When you go sweeping your wide skirts, to me  
You seem a splendid ship that out to sea  
Spreads its full sails, and with them  
Goes rolling in a soft, slow, lazy rhythm.  
Over your tall, round neck and those plump shoulders,  
Your head swans forth its pride to all beholders,  
With grace triumphant, mild,  
And strange, you go your way, majestic child.  
Oh soft enchantress, I'll record with truth  
The diverse beauties that adorn your youth.  
Yes, I will paint your charm  
Of womanhood with childhood arm in arm.

Your bosom juts and stretches every stitch,  
Triumphant bosom, like a coffer rich  
With bosses round and rare,  
Like shields that draw the lightning from the air.  
Provoking shields, with rosy points uplifted !  
Coffer of secret charms, superbly gifted,  
Whose scents, liqueurs, and wine  
Turn heart and brain deliriously thine.  
When you go sweeping your wide skirts, to me  
You seem a splendid ship that out to sea  
Spreads its full sails, and with them  
Goes rolling in a soft, slow, lazy rhythm.  
Your noble thighs, beneath the silks they swirl,  
Torment obscure desires and tease me, girl ;  
Like sorcerers they are  
That stir black philtres in a deep, cool jar.  
Your arms precocious Hercules would grace  
And vie with pythons in their bright embrace :  
The pressure they impart  
Would print your lovers' image on your heart.  
Over your tall, round neck and those plump shoulders  
Your head swans forth its pride to all beholders,  
With grace triumphant, mild,  
And strange, you go your way, majestic child.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# L'invitation au voyage

## L'invitation au voyage

Mon enfant, ma soeur,  
Songe à la douceur  
D'aller là-bas vivre ensemble !  
Aimer à loisir,  
Aimer et mourir  
Au pays qui te ressemble !  
Les soleils mouillés  
De ces ciels brouillés  
Pour mon esprit ont les charmes  
Si mystérieux  
De tes traîtres yeux,  
Brillant à travers leurs larmes.  
Là, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté,  
Luxe, calme et volupté.  
Des meubles luisants,  
Polis par les ans,  
Décoreraient notre chambre ;  
Les plus rares fleurs  
Mêlant leurs odeurs  
Aux vagues senteurs de l'ambre,  
Les riches plafonds,  
Les miroirs profonds,  
La splendeur orientale,  
Tout y parlerait  
À l'âme en secret  
Sa douce langue natale.  
Là, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté,  
Luxe, calme et volupté.  
Vois sur ces canaux

Dormir ces vaisseaux  
Dont l'humeur est vagabonde ;  
C'est pour assouvir  
Ton moindre désir  
Qu'ils viennent du bout du monde.  
– Les soleils couchants  
Revêtent les champs,  
Les canaux, la ville entière,  
D'hyacinthe et d'or ;  
Le monde s'endort  
Dans une chaude lumière.  
Là, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté,  
Luxe, calme et volupté.

– Charles Baudelaire

## Invitation to the Voyage

My child, my sister,  
Think of the rapture  
Of living together there !  
Of loving at will,  
Of loving till death,  
In the land that is like you !  
The misty sunlight  
Of those cloudy skies  
Has for my spirit the charms,  
So mysterious,  
Of your treacherous eyes,  
Shining brightly through their tears.  
There all is order and beauty,  
Luxury, peace, and pleasure.  
Gleaming furniture,  
Polished by the years,  
Will ornament our bedroom ;  
The rarest flowers  
Mingling their fragrance  
With the faint scent of amber,  
The ornate ceilings,  
The limpid mirrors,



The oriental splendor,  
All would whisper there  
Secretly to the soul  
In its soft, native language.  
There all is order and beauty,  
Luxury, peace, and pleasure.  
See on the canals  
Those vessels sleeping.  
Their mood is adventurous ;  
It's to satisfy  
Your slightest desire  
That they come from the ends of the earth.  
– The setting suns  
Adorn the fields,  
The canals, the whole city,  
With hyacinth and gold ;  
The world falls asleep  
In a warm glow of light.  
There all is order and beauty,  
Luxury, peace, and pleasure.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Invitation to the Voyage

My daughter, my sister,  
Consider the vista  
Of living out there, you and I,  
To love at our leisure,  
Then, ending our pleasure,  
In climes you resemble to die.  
There the suns, rainy-wet,  
Through clouds rise and set  
With the selfsame enchantment to charm me  
That my senses receive  
From your eyes, that deceive,  
When they shine through your tears to disarm me.  
There'll be nothing but beauty, wealth, pleasure,  
With all things in order and measure.  
With old treasures furnished,

By centuries burnished,  
To gleam in the shade of our chamber,  
While the rarest of flowers  
Vaguely mix through the hours  
Their own with the perfume of amber :  
Each sumptuous ceiling,  
Each mirror revealing  
The wealth of the East, will be hung  
So the part and the whole  
May speak to the soul  
In its native, indigenous tongue.  
There'll be nothing but beauty, wealth, pleasure,  
With all things in order and measure.  
On the channels and streams  
See each vessel that dreams  
In its whimsical vagabond way,  
Since its for your least whim  
The oceans they swim  
From the ends of the night and the day.  
The sun, going down, With its glory will crown  
Canals, fields, and cities entire,  
While the whole earth is rolled  
In the jacinth and gold  
Of its warming and radiant fire.  
There'll be nothing but beauty, wealth, pleasure  
With all things in order and measure.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# L'Irréparable

## L'Irréparable

Pouvons-nous étouffer le vieux, le long Remords,  
Qui vit, s'agite et se tortille  
Et se nourrit de nous comme le ver des morts,  
Comme du chêne la chenille ?  
Pouvons-nous étouffer l'implacable Remords ?  
Dans quel philtre, dans quel vin, dans quelle tisane,  
Noierons-nous ce vieil ennemi,  
Destructeur et gourmand comme la courtisane,  
Patient comme la fourmi ?  
Dans quel philtre ? – dans quel vin ? – dans quelle tisane ?  
Dis-le, belle sorcière, oh ! dis, si tu le sais,  
À cet esprit comblé d'angoisse  
Et pareil au mourant qu'écrasent les blessés,  
Que le sabot du cheval froisse,  
Dis-le, belle sorcière, oh ! dis, si tu le sais,  
À cet agonisant que le loup déjà flaire  
Et que surveille le corbeau,  
À ce soldat brisé ! s'il faut qu'il désespère  
D'avoir sa croix et son tombeau ;  
Ce pauvre agonisant que déjà le loup flaire !  
Peut-on illuminer un ciel bourbeux et noir ?  
Peut-on déchirer des ténèbres  
Plus denses que la poix, sans matin et sans soir,  
Sans astres, sans éclairs funèbres ?  
Peut-on illuminer un ciel bourbeux et noir ?  
L'Espérance qui brille aux carreaux de l'Auberge  
Est soufflée, est morte à jamais !  
Sans lune et sans rayons, trouver où l'on héberge

Les martyrs d'un chemin mauvais !  
 Le Diable a tout éteint aux carreaux de l'Auberge !  
 Adorable sorcière, aimes-tu les damnés ?  
 Dis, connais-tu l'irrémissible ?  
 Connais-tu le Remords, aux traits empoisonnés,  
 À qui notre coeur sert de cible ?  
 Adorable sorcière, aimes-tu les damnés ?  
 L'Irréparable ronge avec sa dent maudite  
 Notre âme, piteux monument,  
 Et souvent il attaque ainsi que le termite,  
 Par la base le bâtiment.  
 L'Irréparable ronge avec sa dent maudite !  
 – J'ai vu parfois, au fond d'un théâtre banal  
 Qu'enflammait l'orchestre sonore,  
 Une fée allumer dans un ciel infernal  
 Une miraculeuse aurore ;  
 J'ai vu parfois au fond d'un théâtre banal  
 Un être, qui n'était que lumière, or et gaze,  
 Terrasser l'énorme Satan ;  
 Mais mon coeur, que jamais ne visite l'extase,  
 Est un théâtre où l'on attend  
 Toujours. toujours en vain, l'Être aux ailes de gaze !

– Charles Baudelaire

## The Irreparable

Can we stifle the old, the lingering Remorse,  
 That lives, quivers and writhes,  
 And feeds on us like the worm on the dead,  
 Like the grub on the oak ?  
 Can we stifle implacable Remorse ?  
 In what philtre, in what potion, what wine,  
 Shall we drown this old enemy,  
 Destructive and greedy as a harlot,  
 Patient as the ant ?  
 In what philtre, in what potion, what wine ?  
 Tell it, fair sorceress, O ! tell it, if you know,  
 To this spirit filled with anguish,

So like a dying man crushed beneath the wounded,  
Who is struck by the horses' shoes ;  
Tell it, fair sorceress, O! tell it, if you know,  
To this dying man whom the wolf already scents  
And whom the crow watches,  
To this broken soldier! if he must despair  
Of having his cross and his grave,  
This poor, dying man whom the wolf already scents!  
Can one illuminate a black and miry sky?  
Can one tear asunder darkness  
Thicker than pitch, without morning, without evening,  
Without stars, without ominous lightning?  
Can one illuminate a black and miry sky?  
Hope that shines in the windows of the Inn  
Is snuffed out, dead forever!  
Without the moon, without light, to find where they lodge  
The martyrs of an evil road!  
The Devil has put out all the lights at the Inn!  
Adorable sorceress, do you love the damned?  
Say, do you know the irremissible?  
Do you know Remorse, with the poisoned darts,  
For whom our hearts serve as targets?  
Adorable sorceress, do you love the damned?  
The Irreparable gnaws with his accurst teeth  
Our soul, pitiful monument,  
And often he attacks like the termite  
The foundations of the building.  
The Irreparable gnaws with his accurst teeth!  
– Sometimes I have seen at the back of a trite stage  
Enlivened by a deep-toned orchestra,  
A fairy set ablaze a miraculous dawn  
In an infernal sky ;  
Sometimes I have been at the back of a trite stage  
A being who was only light, gold and gauze,  
Throw down the enormous Satan ;  
But my heart, which rapture never visits,  
Is a playhouse where one awaits  
Always, always in vain, the Being with gauze wings!

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Irreparable

How can we choke the old and long Remorse  
Which lives, and squirms, and fights  
And feeds on us as worms upon a corse,  
Or, on the oak, its mites ?  
How can we choke the old and long Remorse ?  
What subtle philtre, wine, or drowsy draught  
Will drown that ancient foe,  
Greedy as whores in his disastrous craft,  
Ant-patient, sure, and slow ?  
What subtle philtre, wine or drowsy draught ?  
Lovely enchantress, if you know it, say  
To this soul whelmed with woes,  
Dying, whom loads of wounded crush to clay  
Under the horses' shoes :  
Lovely enchantress, if you know it, say  
To this poor moribund, while wolves yet stalk him  
And ravens croak his doom,  
To this spent soldier say if fate will baulk him  
Even of a cross or tomb –  
Say to this moribund, while wolves yet stalk him !  
Can this black muddy sky be ever lighted,  
The shades be ever torn,  
Denser than pitch, to day and dusk benighted,  
To lightning, stars, or morn ?  
Can this black muddy sky be ever lighted ?  
The candle Hope that shows the Inn to strangers  
Is blown out, snuffed, and melted.  
Lacking both moon and glimmer, how shall rangers  
Of evil roads be sheltered ?  
The devil snuffed the light that burned for strangers.  
Sweet witch, do you love spirits lost to grace ?  
Whose sins are not remitted ?  
Say, do you know Remorse, with venom'd face,  
By whom our hearts are spitted ?  
Sweet witch, do you love spirits lost to grace ?  
The Irreparable gnaws us where it lurks  
And for our soul's defacement,  
As on a monument the termite, works

Up from the very basement.  
The Irreparable gnaws us where it lurks.  
In tawdry theatres I've sometimes seen  
How, to the blare of brasses,  
Miraculous, to light some hellish scene,  
Like dawn, a fairy passes ;  
In tawdry theatres I've often seen  
That by this fay of light, and gold, and gauzes,  
Some monstrous fiend is slain.  
But my heart knows no raptures or applauses –  
A fleapit where, in vain,  
One waits, and waits the creature winged with gauzes.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Causerie

### Causerie

Vous êtes un beau ciel d'automne, clair et rose !  
 Mais la tristesse en moi monte comme la mer,  
 Et laisse, en refluant, sur ma lèvre morose  
 Le souvenir cuisant de son limon amer.  
 – Ta main se glisse en vain sur mon sein qui se pâme ;  
 Ce qu'elle cherche, amie, est un lieu saccagé  
 Par la griffe et la dent féroce de la femme.  
 Ne cherchez plus mon coeur ; les bêtes l'ont mangé.  
 Mon coeur est un palais flétri par la cohue ;  
 On s'y soûle, on s'y tue, on s'y prend aux cheveux !  
 – Un parfum nage autour de votre gorge nue !...  
 Ô Beauté, dur fléau des âmes, tu le veux !  
 Avec tes yeux de feu, brillants comme des fêtes,  
 Calcine ces lambeaux qu'ont épargnés les bêtes !

– Charles Baudelaire

### Conversation

You are a lovely autumn sky, clear and rosy !  
 But sadness rises in me like the sea,  
 And as it ebbs, leaves on my sullen lips  
 The burning memory of its bitter slime.  
 – In vain does your hand slip over my swooning breast ;  
 What it seeks, darling, is a place plundered  
 By the claws and the ferocious teeth of woman.  
 Seek my heart no longer ; the beasts have eaten it.  
 My heart is a palace polluted by the mob ;



They get drunk there, kill, tear each other's hair!  
– A perfume floats about your naked breast!...  
O Beauty, ruthless scourge of souls, you desire it!  
With the fire of your eyes, brilliant as festivals,  
Bum these tatters which the beasts spared!

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Conversation

You're like an autumn sky, rose, clear, and placid.  
But sorrow whelms me, like the tide's assault,  
And ebbing, leaves upon my lips the acid  
And muddy-bitter memory of its salt.  
Your hand may stroke my breast, but not console.  
What it seeks there is but a hole, deep caverned  
By women's claws and fangs, and ransacked whole.  
Seek not my heart, on which the beasts have ravened.  
My heart's a palace plundered by the rabble :  
They tope, they kill, in blood and guts they scabble :  
– A perfume swims around your naked breast!  
O Beauty, flail of spirits, you know best!  
With your eyes' fire, lit up as for a spree,  
Char the poor rags those beasts have left of me!

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# Chant d'automne (1861)

## Chant d'automne

### I

Bientôt nous plongerons dans les froides ténèbres ;  
Adieu, vive clarté de nos étés trop courts !  
J'entends déjà tomber avec des chocs funèbres  
Le bois retentissant sur le pavé des cours.

Tout l'hiver va rentrer dans mon être : colère,  
Haine, frissons, horreur, labeur dur et forcé,  
Et, comme le soleil dans son enfer polaire,  
Mon coeur ne sera plus qu'un bloc rouge et glacé.

J'écoute en frémissant chaque bûche qui tombe  
L'échafaud qu'on bâtit n'a pas d'écho plus sourd.  
Mon esprit est pareil à la tour qui succombe  
Sous les coups du bélier infatigable et lourd.

Il me semble, bercé par ce choc monotone,  
Qu'on cloue en grande hâte un cercueil quelque part.  
Pour qui ? – C'était hier l'été ; voici l'automne !  
Ce bruit mystérieux sonne comme un départ.

### II

J'aime de vos longs yeux la lumière verdâtre,  
Douce beauté, mais tout aujourd'hui m'est amer,  
Et rien, ni votre amour, ni le boudoir, ni l'âtre,  
Ne me vaut le soleil rayonnant sur la mer.

Et pourtant aimez-moi, tendre coeur ! soyez mère,  
Même pour un ingrat, même pour un méchant ;  
Amante ou soeur, soyez la douceur éphémère  
D'un glorieux automne ou d'un soleil couchant.  
Courte tâche ! La tombe attend ; elle est avide !

Ah ! laissez-moi, mon front posé sur vos genoux,  
Goûter, en regrettant l'été blanc et torride,  
De l'arrière-saison le rayon jaune et doux !

– Charles Baudelaire

## Song of Autumn

### I

Soon we shall plunge into the cold darkness ;  
Farewell, vivid brightness of our short-lived summers !  
Already I hear the dismal sound of firewood  
Falling with a clatter on the courtyard pavements.  
All winter will possess my being : wrath,  
Hate, horror, shivering, hard, forced labor,  
And, like the sun in his polar Hades,  
My heart will be no more than a frozen red block.  
All atremble I listen to each falling log ;  
The building of a scaffold has no duller sound.  
My spirit resembles the tower which crumbles  
Under the tireless blows of the battering ram.  
It seems to me, lulled by these monotonous shocks,  
That somewhere they're nailing a coffin, in great haste.  
For whom ? – Yesterday was summer ; here is autumn  
That mysterious noise sounds like a departure.

### II

I love the greenish light of your long eyes,  
Sweet beauty, but today all to me is bitter ;  
Nothing, neither your love, your boudoir, nor your hearth  
Is worth as much as the sunlight on the sea.  
Yet, love me, tender heart ! be a mother,  
Even to an ingrate, even to a scapegrace ;  
Mistress or sister, be the fleeting sweetness  
Of a gorgeous autumn or of a setting sun.  
Short task ! The tomb awaits ; it is avid !  
Ah ! let me, with my head bowed on your knees,  
Taste the sweet, yellow rays of the end of autumn,  
While I mourn for the white, torrid summer !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Song of Autumn

### I

Soon into frozen shades, like leaves, we'll tumble.  
Adieu, short summer's blaze, that shone to mock.  
I hear already the funereal rumble  
Of logs, as on the paving-stones they shock.  
Winter will enter in my soul to dwell –  
Rage, hate, fear, horror, labour forced and dire!  
My heart will seem, to sun that polar hell,  
A dim, red, frozen block, devoid of fire.  
Shuddering I hear the heavy thud of fuel.  
The building of a gallows sounds as good!  
My spirit, like a tower, reels to the cruel  
Battering-ram in every crash of wood.  
The ceaseless echoes rock me and appal.  
They're nailing up a coffin, I'll be bound,  
For whom? – Last night was Summer. Here's the Fall.  
There booms a farewell volley in the sound.

### II

I like the greenish light in your long eyes,  
Dear : but today all things are sour to me.  
And naught, your hearth, your boudoir, nor your sighs  
Are worth the sun that glitters on the sea.  
Yet love me, tender heart, as mothers cherish  
A thankless wretch, Lover or sister, be  
Ephemeral sweetness of the suns that perish  
Or glory of the autumn swift to flee.  
Brief task! The charnel yawns in hunger horrid,  
Yet let me with my head upon your knees,  
Although I mourn the summer, white and torrid  
Taste these last yellow rays before they freeze.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## À une Madone (1861)

### À une Madone

Ex-voto dans le goût espagnol

Je veux bâtir pour toi, Madone, ma maîtresse,  
Un autel souterrain au fond de ma détresse,  
Et creuser dans le coin le plus noir de mon coeur,  
Loin du désir mondain et du regard moqueur,  
Une niche, d'azur et d'or tout émaillée,  
Où tu te dresseras, Statue émerveillée.  
Avec mes Vers polis, treillis d'un pur métal  
Savamment constellé de rimes de cristal  
Je ferai pour ta tête une énorme Couronne ;  
Et dans ma Jalousie, ô mortelle Madone  
Je saurai te tailler un Manteau, de façon  
Barbare, roide et lourd, et doublé de soupçon,  
Qui, comme une guérite, enfermera tes charmes,  
Non de Perles brodé, mais de toutes mes Larmes !  
Ta Robe, ce sera mon Désir, frémissant,  
Onduleux, mon Désir qui monte et qui descend,  
Aux pointes se balance, aux vallons se repose,  
Et revêt d'un baiser tout ton corps blanc et rose.  
Je te ferai de mon Respect de beaux Souliers  
De satin, par tes pieds divins humiliés,  
Qui, les emprisonnant dans une molle étreinte  
Comme un moule fidèle en garderont l'empreinte.  
Si je ne puis, malgré tout mon art diligent  
Pour Marchepied tailler une Lune d'argent  
Je mettrai le Serpent qui me mord les entrailles  
Sous tes talons, afin que tu foules et railles  
Reine victorieuse et féconde en rachats  
Ce monstre tout gonflé de haine et de crachats.

Tu verras mes Penseurs, rangés comme les Cierges  
 Devant l'autel fleuri de la Reine des Vierges  
 Etoilant de reflets le plafond peint en bleu,  
 Te regarder toujours avec des yeux de feu ;  
 Et comme tout en moi te chérit et t'admire,  
 Tout se fera Benjoin, Encens, Oliban, Myrrhe,  
 Et sans cesse vers toi, sommet blanc et neigeux,  
 En Vapeurs montera mon Esprit orageux.  
 Enfin, pour compléter ton rôle de Marie,  
 Et pour mêler l'amour avec la barbarie,  
 Volupté noire ! des sept Péchés capitaux,  
 Bourreau plein de remords, je ferai sept Couteaux  
 Bien affilés, et comme un jongleur insensible,  
 Prenant le plus profond de ton amour pour cible,  
 Je les planterai tous dans ton Coeur pantelant,  
 Dans ton Coeur sanglotant, dans ton Coeur ruisselant !

– Charles Baudelaire

## To a Madonna

Votive Offering in the Spanish Style

I want to build for you, Madonna, my mistress,  
 An underground altar in the depths of my grief  
 And carve out in the darkest corner of my heart,  
 Far from worldly desires and mocking looks,  
 A niche, all enameled with azure and with gold,  
 Where you shall stand, amazed Statue ;  
 With my polished Verses as a trellis of pure metal  
 Studded cunningly with rhymes of crystal,  
 I shall make for your head an immense Crown,  
 And from my Jealousy, O mortal Madonna,  
 I shall know how to cut a cloak in a fashion,  
 Barbaric, heavy, and stiff, lined with suspicion,  
 Which, like a sentry-box, will enclose your charms ;  
 Embroidered not with Pearls, but with all of my Tears !  
 Your Gown will be my Desire, quivering,  
 Undulant, my Desire which rises and which falls,  
 Balances on the crests, repose in the troughs,  
 And clothes with a kiss your white and rose body.

Of my Self-respect I shall make you Slippers  
Of satin which, humbled by your divine feet,  
Will imprison them in a gentle embrace,  
And assume their form like a faithful mold ;  
If I can't, in spite of all my painstaking art,  
Carve a Moon of silver for your Pedestal,  
I shall put the Serpent which is eating my heart  
Under your heels, so that you may trample and mock,  
Triumphant queen, fecund in redemptions,  
That monster all swollen with hatred and spittle.  
You will see my Thoughts like Candles in rows  
Before the flower-decked altar of the Queen of Virgins,  
Starring with their reflections the azure ceiling,  
And watching you always with eyes of fire.  
And since my whole being admires and loves you,  
All will become Storax, Benzoin, Frankincense, Myrrh,  
And ceaselessly toward you, white, snowy pinnacle,  
My turbulent spirit will rise like a vapor.  
Finally, to complete your role of Mary,  
And to mix love with inhumanity,  
Infamous pleasure ! of the seven deadly sins,  
I, torturer full of remorse, shall make seven  
Well sharpened Daggers and, like a callous juggler,  
Taking your deepest love for a target,  
I shall plant them all in your panting Heart,  
In your sobbing Heart, in your bleeding Heart !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## To a Madonna

(Ex Voto in Spanish Style)

I'd build, Madonna, love, for my belief,  
An altar in the dim crypt of my grief,  
And in the darkest comer of my heart,  
From mortal lust and mockery far apart,  
Scoop you a niche, with gold and azure glaze,  
Where you would stand in wonderment and gaze,  
With my pure verses trellised, and all round

In constellated rhymes of crystal bound :  
And with a huge tiara richly crowned.  
Out of the Jealousy which rules my passion,  
Mortal Madonna, I a cloak would fashion,  
Barbarous, stiff, and heavy with my doubt,  
Whereon as in a fourm you would fill out  
And mould your lair. Of tears, not pearls, would be  
The sparkle of its rich embroidery :  
Your robe would be my lust, with waving flow,  
Poising on tips, in valleys lying low,  
And clothing, in one kiss, coral and snow.  
In my Respect (for satin) you'll be shod  
Which your white feet would humble to the clod,  
While prisoning their flesh with tender hold  
It kept their shape imprinted like a mould.  
If for a footstool to support your shoon,  
For all my art, I could not get the moon,  
I'd throw the serpent, that devours my vitals  
Under your trampling heels for his requitals,  
Victorious queen, to spurn, bruise, and belittle  
That monstrous worm blown-up with hate and spittle.  
Round you my thoughts like candles should be seen  
Around the flowered shrine of the virgins' Queen,  
Reflected on a roof that's painted blue,  
And aiming all their golden eyes at you.  
Since nought is in me that you do not stir,  
All will be incense, benjamin, and myrrh,  
And up to you, white peak, in clouds will soar  
My stormy soul, in rapture, to adore.  
In fine, your role of Mary to perfect  
And mingle barbarism with respect –  
Of seven deadly sins, O black delight!  
Remorseful torturer, to show my sleight,  
I'll forge and sharpen seven deadly swords  
And like a callous juggler on the boards,  
Taking it for my target, I would dart  
Them deep into your streaming, sobbing heart.

– Roy Campbell, 1952



## Chanson d'Après-midi (1861)

### Chanson d'Après-midi

Quoique tes sourcils méchants  
Te donnent un air étrange  
Qui n'est pas celui d'un ange,  
Sorcière aux yeux alléchants,  
Je t'adore, ô ma frivole,  
Ma terrible passion !  
Avec la dévotion  
Du prêtre pour son idole.  
Le désert et la forêt  
Embaument tes tresses rudes,  
Ta tête a les attitudes  
De l'énigme et du secret.  
Sur ta chair le parfum rôde  
Comme autour d'un encensoir ;  
Tu charmes comme le soir  
Nymphé ténébreuse et chaude.  
Ah ! les philtres les plus forts  
Ne valent pas ta paresse,  
Et tu connais la caresse  
Ou fait revivre les morts !  
Tes hanches sont amoureuses  
De ton dos et de tes seins,  
Et tu ravis les coussins  
Par tes poses langoureuses.  
Quelquefois, pour apaiser  
Ta rage mystérieuse,  
Tu prodigues, sérieuse,  
La morsure et le baiser ;

Tu me déchires, ma brune,  
Avec un rire moqueur,  
Et puis tu mets sur mon coeur  
Ton oeil doux comme la lune.  
Sous tes souliers de satin,  
Sous tes charmants pieds de soie  
Moi, je mets ma grande joie,  
Mon génie et mon destin,  
Mon âme par toi guérie,  
Par toi, lumière et couleur !  
Explosion de chaleur  
Dans ma noire Sibérie !

– Charles Baudelaire

## Afternoon Song

Though your mischievous eyebrows  
Give you a singular air,  
Not that of an angel,  
Sorceress with Siren's eyes,  
I adore you, my madcap,  
My ineffable passion !  
With the pious devotion  
Of a priest for his idol.  
Your stiff tresses are scented  
With the desert and forest,  
Your head assumes the poses  
Of the enigma and key.  
Perfume lingers about your flesh  
Like incense about a censer ;  
You charm like the evening,  
Tenebrous, passionate nymph.  
Ah ! the most potent philtres  
Are weaker than your languor,  
And you know the caresses  
That make the dead live again !  
Your haunches are enamored  
Of your back and your bosom

And you delight the cushions  
With your languorous poses.  
Sometimes, to alleviate  
Your mysterious passion,  
You lavish, resolutely,  
Your bites and your kisses ;  
You tear me open, dark beauty,  
With derisive laughter,  
And then look at my heart  
With eyes as soft as moonlight  
Under your satin slippers,  
Under your dear silken feet,  
I place all my happiness,  
My genius and destiny,  
My soul brought to life by you  
By your clear light and color,  
Explosion of heat  
In my dark Siberia !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Song of Afternoon

Though your eyebrows' wicked slant  
Give you an intriguing air  
Which the angels do not share  
Sorceress, whose eyes enchant –  
My passion, terrible yet gay,  
With all my heart I bow before you,  
With that devotion to adore you  
That priests to sacred idols pay.  
Deserts and woods embalmed your hair,  
Its movements give your head the stigma  
Of sphinx-like secret and enigma,  
Both in its attitude and air.  
As round a censer vapours form,  
About your flesh the perfumes wander.  
The selfsame charms you seem to squander  
As does an evening, dark yet warm,

The strongest philtres cannot craze  
As does your indolent address  
And you have mastered a caress  
Dead corpses from their tombs to raise.  
Your hips are amorous of your breast  
And of your back : your languorous pose  
Enchants the cushions where you doze  
When in their depths you make your nest.  
Sometimes in order to appease  
Mysterious rages in your soul,  
You bite and kiss without control.  
Then with a mocking laugh you tease  
My heart, brown beauty, tearing it :  
Then over it the light is strewn  
Of your eye, softer than the moon,  
Till with its glance my soul is lit.  
Underneath your satin shoes,  
And underneath your silken feet,  
My joy, my fate, my genius meet  
To strew the pathway of my muse.  
My soul is healed, restored and made complete  
By you, all colour, warmth, and light,  
In my Siberia a bright  
Explosion as of tropic heat.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Sisina (1861)

### Sisina

Imaginez Diane en galant équipage,  
Parcourant les forêts ou battant les halliers,  
Cheveux et gorge au vent, s'enivrant de tapage,  
Superbe et défiant les meilleurs cavaliers !  
Avez-vous vu Théroigne, amante du carnage,  
Excitant à l'assaut un peuple sans souliers,  
La joue et l'oeil en feu, jouant son personnage,  
Et montant, sabre au poing, les royaux escaliers ?  
Telle la Sisina ! Mais la douce guerrière  
À l'âme charitable autant que meurtrière ;  
Son courage, affolé de poudre et de tambours,  
Devant les suppliants sait mettre bas les armes,  
Et son coeur, ravagé par la flamme, a toujours,  
Pour qui s'en montre digne, un réservoir de larmes.

– Charles Baudelaire

### Sisina

Imagine Diana in elegant attire,  
Roaming through the forest, or beating the thickets,  
Hair flying in the wind, breast bare, drunk with the noise,  
Superb, defying the finest horsemen !  
Have you seen Théroigne that lover of carnage,  
Urging a barefoot mob on to attack,  
Her eyes and cheeks aflame, playing her role,  
And climbing, sword in hand, the royal staircase ?  
That is Sisina ! But the sweet amazon's soul

Is as charitable as it is murderous ;  
Her courage, exalted by powder and by drums,  
Before supplicants, knows how to lay down its arms,  
And her heart, ravaged by love, has always,  
For him who is worthy, a reservoir of tears.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Sisina

Picture Diana, gallantly arrayed,  
Ranging the woods, elated with the chase,  
With flying hair and naked breasts displayed,  
Defying fleetest horsemen with her pace.  
Know you Theroigne whom blood and fire exalt,  
Hounding a shoeless rabble to the fray,  
Up royal stairways heading the assault,  
And mounting, sword in hand, to show the way?  
Such is Sisina. Terrible her arms.  
But charity restrains her killing charms.  
Though rolling drums and scent of powder madden  
Her courage, – laying by its pikes and spears,  
For those who merit, her scorched heart will sadden,  
And open, in its depth, a well of tears.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Vers pour le portrait de M. Honoré Daumier (1868)

### Vers pour le portrait de M. Honoré Daumier

Celui dont nous t'offrons l'image,  
Et dont l'art, subtil entre tous,  
Nous enseigne à rire de nous,  
Celui-là, lecteur, est un sage.  
C'est un satirique, un moqueur ;  
Mais l'énergie avec laquelle  
Il peint le Mal et sa séquelle  
Prouve la beauté de son coeur.  
Son rire n'est pas la grimace  
De Melmoth ou de Méphisto  
Sous la torche de l'Alecto  
Qui les brûle, mais qui nous glace,  
Leur rire, hélas ! de la gaieté  
N'est que la douloureuse charge ;  
Le sien rayonne, franc et large,  
Comme un signe de sa bonté !

– Charles Baudelaire

### Verses for the Portrait of M. Honoré Daumier

He whose portrait we offer you,  
Whose art subtler than all others,  
Teaches us to laugh at ourselves,  
He is a sage, gentle reader.  
He's a satirist, a scoffer ;

But the power with which he paints  
Evil and his retinue  
Attests the beauty of his heart.  
His laughter is not the grimace  
Of Melmoth or of Mephisto  
Under Alecto's torch which burns them  
But makes our blood run cold.  
Their laughter, alas! is only  
A sad caricature of mirth;  
His radiates, hearty and free,  
Like a symbol of his goodness!

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Verses for Honoré Daumier's Portrait

The man whose image this presents,  
In art more subtle than the rest,  
Teaches us sagely, as is best,  
To chuckle at our own expense.  
In mockery he stands apart.  
His energy defies an equal  
In painting Evil and its sequel –  
Which proves the beauty of his heart –  
Melmoth or Mephostopheles,  
His mirth has naught akin to theirs.  
The flambeau of Alecto flares  
To singe them, while it makes us freeze.  
Their merriment they come to rue  
So steeped in treachery and guile,  
While his frank radiating smile  
Declares him to be good and true.

– Roy Campbell, 1952



## Franciscae meae laudes

### Franciscae meae laudes

Novis te cantabo chordis,  
O novelletum quod ludis  
In solitudine cordis.  
Esto sertis implicata,  
Ô femina delicata  
Per quam solvuntur peccata!  
Sicut beneficum Lethæ,  
Hauriam oscula de te,  
Quae imbuta es magnete.  
Quum vitiorum tempegtas  
Turbabat omnes semitas,  
Apparuisti, Deitas,  
Velut stella salutaris  
In naufragiis amaris.....  
Suspendam cor tuis aris!  
Piscina plena virtutis,  
Fons æternæ juventutis  
Labris vocem redde mutis!  
Quod erat spurcum, cremasti;  
Quod rudius, exaequasti;  
Quod debile, confirmasti.  
In fame mea taberna  
In nocte mea lucerna,  
Recte me semper gubernas.  
Adde nunc vires viribus,  
Dulce balneum suavibus  
Unguentatum odoribus!  
Meos circa lumbos mica,

O castitatis lorica,  
Aqua tincta seraphica ;  
Patera gemmis corusca,  
Panis salsus, mollis esca,  
Divinum vinum, Francisca !

– Charles Baudelaire

## In Praise of My Frances

I'll sing to you on a new note,  
O young hind that gambols gaily  
In the solitude of my heart.  
Be adorned with wreaths of flowers,  
O delightful woman  
By whom our sins are washed away !  
As from a benign Lethe,  
I shall drink kisses from you,  
Who were given a magnet's strength.  
When a tempest of vices  
Was sweeping down on every path,  
You appeared, O divinity !  
Like the star of salvation  
Above a disastrous shipwreck...  
I shall place my heart on your altar !  
Reservoir full of virtue,  
Fountain of eternal youth,  
Restore the voice to my mute lips !  
You have burned that which was filthy,  
Made smooth that which was rough,  
Strengthened that which was weak.  
In my hunger you are the inn,  
In the darkness my lamp,  
Lead me always on virtue's path.  
Add your strength now to my strength,  
Sweet bath scented  
With pleasant perfumes !  
Shine forth from my loins,  
O cuirass of chastity,

That was dipped in seraphic water,  
Cup glittering with precious stones,  
Bread seasoned with salt, delectable dish,  
Heavenly wine – My Frances.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Praises of My Francisca

(Verses to a learned and devout Milliner)

Upon new chords of you I sing.  
And the new-born bud you bring  
From solitude, the pure heart's Spring.  
Your brows should be with garlands twined  
Woman of delightful mind,  
Who our trespasses unbind.  
As the wondrous balm of Lethe,  
Through thy kisses, I will breathe thee.  
All are magnetised who see thee.  
When my vices, wild and stormy,  
From my wonted courses bore me  
It was You appeared before me,  
Star of Oceans! you that alter  
Courses, when the pilots falter –  
Take my heart upon your altar.  
Cistern full of virtuous ruth,  
Fountain of eternal youth,  
Give to dumbness speech and truth!  
What was dirty, you cremated,  
What uneven – you equated,  
What was weak you re-created.  
Inn, on the hungry roads I tramp,  
And, in the dark, a guiding lamp  
To steer the lost one back to camp.  
To my strength add strength, O sweet  
Bath, where scents and unguents meet!  
Anoint me for some peerless feat!  
Holy water most seraphic,

On the lusts in which I traffic  
Flash your chastity ecstatic.  
Bowl of gems where radiance dances.  
Salt that the holy bread enhances,  
And sacred wine – your name is Frances !

– **Roy Campbell**, 1952

## À une Dame créole

### À une Dame créole

Au pays parfumé que le soleil caresse,  
J'ai connu, sous un dais d'arbres tout empourprés  
Et de palmiers d'où pleut sur les yeux la paresse,  
Une dame créole aux charmes ignorés.  
Son teint est pâle et chaud ; la brune enchantresse  
A dans le cou des airs noblement maniérés ;  
Grande et svelte en marchant comme une chasseresse,  
Son sourire est tranquille et ses yeux assurés.  
Si vous alliez, Madame, au vrai pays de gloire,  
Sur les bords de la Seine ou de la verte Loire,  
Belle digne d'orner les antiques manoirs,  
Vous feriez, à l'abri des ombreuses retraites  
Germer mille sonnets dans le coeur des poètes,  
Que vos grands yeux rendraient plus soumis que vos noirs.

– Charles Baudelaire

### To a Creole Lady

In the perfumed country which the sun caresses,  
I knew, under a canopy of crimson trees  
And palms from which indolence rains into your eyes,  
A Creole lady whose charms were unknown.  
Her complexion is pale and warm ; the dark enchantress  
Affects a noble air with the movements of her neck.  
Tall and slender, she walks like a huntress ;  
Her smile is calm and her eye confident.  
If you went, Madame, to the true land of glory,

On the banks of the Seine or along the green Loire,  
Beauty fit to ornament those ancient manors,  
You'd make, in the shelter of those shady retreats,  
A thousand sonnets grow in the hearts of poets,  
Whom your large eyes would make more subject than your  
slaves.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## To a Colonial Lady

In scented countries by the sun caressed  
I've known, beneath a tent of purple boughs,  
And palmtrees shedding slumber as they drowse,  
A creole lady with a charm unguessed.  
She's pale, and warm, and duskily beguiling ;  
Nobility is moulded in her neck ;  
Slender and tall she holds herself in check,  
An huntress born, sure-eyed, and quiet-smiling.  
Should you go, Madam, to the land of glory  
Along the Seine or Loire, where you would merit  
To ornament some mansion famed in story,  
Your eyes would bum in those deep-shaded parts,  
And breed a thousand rhymes in poets' hearts,  
Tamed like the negro slaves that you inherit.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Moesta et errabunda

### Moesta et errabunda

Dis-moi ton coeur parfois s'envole-t-il, Agathe,  
Loin du noir océan de l'immonde cité  
Vers un autre océan où la splendeur éclate,  
Bleu, clair, profond, ainsi que la virginité ?  
Dis-moi, ton coeur parfois s'envole-t-il, Agathe ?  
La mer la vaste mer, console nos labeurs !  
Quel démon a doté la mer, rauque chanteuse  
Qu'accompagne l'immense orgue des vents grondeurs,  
De cette fonction sublime de berceuse ?  
La mer, la vaste mer, console nos labeurs !  
Emporte-moi wagon ! enlève-moi, frégate !  
Loin ! loin ! ici la boue est faite de nos pleurs !  
– Est-il vrai que parfois le triste coeur d'Agathe  
Dise : Loin des remords, des crimes, des douleurs,  
Emporte-moi, wagon, enlève-moi, frégate ?  
Comme vous êtes loin, paradis parfumé,  
Où sous un clair azur tout n'est qu'amour et joie,  
Où tout ce que l'on aime est digne d'être aimé,  
Où dans la volupté pure le coeur se noie !  
Comme vous êtes loin, paradis parfumé !  
Mais le vert paradis des amours enfantines,  
Les courses, les chansons, les baisers, les bouquets,  
Les violons vibrant derrière les collines,  
Avec les brocs de vin, le soir, dans les bosquets,  
– Mais le vert paradis des amours enfantines,  
L'innocent paradis, plein de plaisirs furtifs,  
Est-il déjà plus loin que l'Inde et que la Chine ?  
Peut-on le rappeler avec des cris plaintifs,

Et l'animer encor d'une voix argentine,  
L'innocent paradis plein de plaisirs furtifs ?

– Charles Baudelaire

## Grieving and Wandering

Tell me, does your heart sometimes fly away, Agatha,  
Far from the black ocean of the filthy city,  
Toward another ocean where splendor glitters,  
Blue, clear, profound, as is virginity ?  
Tell me, does your heart sometimes fly away, Agatha ?  
The sea, the boundless sea, consoles us for our toil !  
What demon endowed the sea, that raucous singer,  
Whose accompanist is the roaring wind,  
With the sublime function of cradle-rocker ?  
The sea, the boundless sea, consoles us for our toil !  
Take me away, carriage ! Carry me off, frigate !  
Far, far away ! Here the mud is made with our tears !  
– Is it true that sometimes the sad heart of Agatha  
Says : Far from crimes, from remorse, from sorrow,  
Take me away, carriage, carry me off, frigate ?  
How far away you are, O perfumed Paradise,  
Where under clear blue sky there's only love and joy,  
Where all that one loves is worthy of love,  
Where the heart is drowned in sheer enjoyment !  
How far away you are, O perfumed Paradise !  
But the green Paradise of childhood loves  
The outings, the singing, the kisses, the bouquets,  
The violins vibrating behind the hills,  
And the evenings in the woods, with jugs of wine  
– But the green Paradise of childhood loves,  
That sinless Paradise, full of furtive pleasures,  
Is it farther off now than India and China ?  
Can one call it back with plaintive cries,  
And animate it still with a silvery voice,  
That sinless Paradise full of furtive pleasures ?

– William Aggeler, 1954



## Moesta et Errabunda

Agatha, does your heart rise up and fly,  
Far from the city's black and sordid sea  
Towards a sea that's blue as any sky,  
And clear and deep as pure virginity?  
Agatha, does your heart rise up and fly?  
The sea, the mighty sea, consoles our labour.  
What demon taught the sea with raucous verse  
To choir the organ which the winds belabour  
And lullaby our sorrows like a nurse?  
The sea, the mighty sea, consoles our labour.  
Train, bear me; take me, ship, to other climes!  
Far, far! For here the mud is made of tears.  
– Does Agatha's sad heart not say, at times,  
"Far from remorse, sorrows, crimes, and fears,  
Train, bear me; take me, ship, to other climes" ?  
How distant is that perfumed paradise!  
Where all is joy and love with azure crowned,  
Where all one loves is truly worth the price,  
And hearts in pure voluptuousness are drowned.  
How distant is that perfumed paradise!  
But the green paradise of childish love,  
Of races, songs, and kisses, and bouquets,  
Of fiddles shrilling in the hills above,  
And jars of wine, and woods, and dying rays –  
But the green paradise of childish love,  
innocent paradise of furtive joys,  
Is it far off as India or Hong Kong?  
Could it be conjured by a plaintive voice  
Or animated by a silver song –  
That far off paradise of furtive joys?

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# Le Revenant

## Le Revenant

Comme les anges à l'oeil fauve,  
Je reviendrai dans ton alcôve  
Et vers toi glisserai sans bruit  
Avec les ombres de la nuit ;  
Et je te donnerai, ma brune,  
Des baisers froids comme la lune  
Et des caresses de serpent  
Autour d'une fosse rampant.  
Quand viendra le matin livide,  
Tu trouveras ma place vide,  
Où jusqu'au soir il fera froid.  
Comme d'autres par la tendresse,  
Sur ta vie et sur ta jeunesse,  
Moi, je veux régner par l'effroi.

– Charles Baudelaire

## The Ghost

Like angels with wild beast's eyes  
I shall return to your bedroom  
And silently glide toward you  
With the shadows of the night ;  
And, dark beauty, I shall give you  
Kisses cold as the moon  
And the caresses of a snake  
That crawls around a grave.  
When the livid morning comes,

You'll find my place empty,  
And it will be cold there till night.  
I wish to hold sway over  
Your life and youth by fear,  
As others do by tenderness.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Ghost

Like angels fierce and tawny-eyed,  
Back to your chamber I will glide,  
And noiselessly into your sight  
Steal with the shadows of the night.  
And I will bring you, brown delight,  
Kisses as cold as lunar night  
And the caresses of a snake  
Revolving in a grave. At break  
Of morning in its livid hue,  
You'd find I had bequeathed to you  
An empty place as cold as stone.  
Others by tenderness and ruth  
Would reign over your life and youth,  
But I would rule by fear alone.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Sonnet d'automne (1861)

### Sonnet d'automne

Ils me disent, tes yeux, clairs comme le cristal :  
 « Pour toi, bizarre amant, quel est donc mon mérite ? »  
 – Sois charmante et tais-toi ! Mon coeur, que tout irrite,  
 Excepté la candeur de l'antique animal,  
 Ne veut pas te montrer son secret infernal,  
 Berceuse dont la main aux longs sommeils m'invite,  
 Ni sa noire légende avec la flamme écrite.  
 Je hais la passion et l'esprit me fait mal !  
 Aimons-nous doucement. L'Amour dans sa guérite,  
 Ténébreux, embusqué, bande son arc fatal.  
 Je connais les engins de son vieil arsenal :  
 Crime, horreur et folie ! – Ô pâle marguerite !  
 Comme moi n'es-tu pas un soleil automnal,  
 Ô ma si blanche, ô ma si froide Marguerite ?

– Charles Baudelaire

### Autumn Sonnet

They say to me, your eyes, clear as crystal :  
 "For you, bizarre lover, what is my merit then ?"  
 – Be charming and be still ! My heart, which all things irk,  
 Except the candor of the animals of old,  
 Does not wish to reveal its black secret to you,  
 Whose lulling hands invite me to long sleep,  
 Nor its somber legend written with flame.  
 I hate passion ; intelligence makes me suffer !  
 Let us love each other sweetly. Tenebrous Love,

Ambushed in his shelter, stretches his fatal bow.  
I know all the weapons of his old arsenal :  
Crime, horror, and madness ! – pale marguerite !  
Are you not, like me, an autumnal sun,  
O my Marguerite, so white and so cold ?

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Autumn Sonnet

Your eyes like crystal ask me, clear and mute,  
“in me, strange lover, what do you admire ?”  
Be lovely : hush : my heart, whom all things tire  
Except the candour of the primal brute,  
Would hide from you the secret burning it  
And its black legend written out in fire,  
O soother of the sleep that I respire !  
Passion I hate, and I am hurt by wit.  
Let us love gently. In his lair laid low,  
Ambushed in shades, Love strings his fatal bow.  
I know his ancient arsenal complete,  
Crime, horror, lunacy – O my pale daisy !  
Are we not suns in Autumn, silver-hazy,  
O my so white, so snow-cold Marguerite ?

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Tristesses de la lune

### Tristesses de la lune

Ce soir, la lune rêve avec plus de paresse ;  
Ainsi qu'une beauté, sur de nombreux coussins,  
Qui d'une main distraite et légère caresse  
Avant de s'endormir le contour de ses seins,  
Sur le dos satiné des molles avalanches,  
Mourante, elle se livre aux longues pâmoisons,  
Et promène ses yeux sur les visions blanches  
Qui montent dans l'azur comme des floraisons.  
Quand parfois sur ce globe, en sa langueur oisive,  
Elle laisse filer une larme furtive,  
Un poète pieux, ennemi du sommeil,  
Dans le creux de sa main prend cette larme pâle,  
Aux reflets irisés comme un fragment d'opale,  
Et la met dans son coeur loin des yeux du soleil.

– Charles Baudelaire

### Sadness of the Moon

Tonight the moon dreams with more indolence,  
Like a lovely woman on a bed of cushions  
Who fondles with a light and listless hand  
The contour of her breasts before falling asleep ;  
On the satiny back of the billowing clouds,  
Languishing, she lets herself fall into long swoons  
And casts her eyes over the white phantoms  
That rise in the azure like blossoming flowers.  
When, in her lazy listlessness,

She sometimes sheds a furtive tear upon this globe,  
A pious poet, enemy of sleep,  
In the hollow of his hand catches this pale tear,  
With the iridescent reflections of opal,  
And hides it in his heart afar from the sun's eyes.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Sorrow of the Moon

More drowsy dreams the moon tonight. She rests  
Like a proud beauty on heaped cushions pressing,  
With light and absent-minded touch caressing,  
Before she sleeps, the contour of her breasts.  
On satin-shimmering, downy avalanches  
She dies from swoon to swoon in languid change,  
And lets her eyes on snowy visions range  
That in the azure rise like flowering branches.  
When sometimes to this earth her languor calm  
Lets streak a stealthy tear, a pious poet,  
The enemy of sleep, in his cupped palm,  
Takes this pale tear, of liquid opal spun  
With rainbow lights, deep in his heart to stow it  
Far from the staring eyeballs of the Sun.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# Les Chats

## Les Chats

Les amoureux fervents et les savants austères  
Aiment également, dans leur mûre saison,  
Les chats puissants et doux, orgueil de la maison,  
Qui comme eux sont frileux et comme eux sédentaires.  
Amis de la science et de la volupté  
Ils cherchent le silence et l'horreur des ténèbres ;  
L'Erèbe les eût pris pour ses coursiers funèbres,  
S'ils pouvaient au servage incliner leur fierté.  
Ils prennent en songeant les nobles attitudes  
Des grands sphinx allongés au fond des solitudes,  
Qui semblent s'endormir dans un rêve sans fin ;  
Leurs reins féconds sont pleins d'étincelles magiques,  
Et des parcelles d'or, ainsi qu'un sable fin,  
Etoilent vaguement leurs prunelles mystiques.

– Charles Baudelaire

## Cats

Both ardent lovers and austere scholars  
Love in their mature years  
The strong and gentle cats, pride of the house,  
Who like them are sedentary and sensitive to cold.  
Friends of learning and sensual pleasure,  
They seek the silence and the horror of darkness ;  
Erebus would have used them as his gloomy steeds :  
If their pride could let them stoop to bondage.  
When they dream, they assume the noble attitudes



Of the mighty sphinxes stretched out in solitude,  
Who seem to fall into a sleep of endless dreams ;  
Their fertile loins are full of magic sparks,  
And particles of gold, like fine grains of sand,  
Spangle dimly their mystic eyes.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Cats

Sages austere and fervent lovers both,  
In their ripe season, cherish cats, the pride  
Of hearths, strong, mild, and to themselves allied  
In chilly stealth and sedentary sloth.  
Friends both to lust and learning, they frequent  
Silence, and love the horror darkness breeds.  
Erebus would have chosen them for steeds  
To hearses, could their pride to it have bent.  
Dreaming, the noble postures they assume  
Of sphinxes stretching out into the gloom  
That seems to swoon into an endless trance.  
Their fertile flanks are full of sparks that tingle,  
And particles of gold, like grains of shingle,  
Vaguely be-star their pupils as they glance.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# Les Hiboux

## Les Hiboux

Sous les ifs noirs qui les abritent  
Les hiboux se tiennent rangés  
Ainsi que des dieux étrangers  
Dardant leur oeil rouge. Ils méditent.  
Sans remuer ils se tiendront  
Jusqu'à l'heure mélancolique  
Où, poussant le soleil oblique,  
Les ténèbres s'établiront.  
Leur attitude au sage enseigne  
Qu'il faut en ce monde qu'il craigne  
Le tumulte et le mouvement ;  
L'homme ivre d'une ombre qui passe  
Porte toujours le châtimement  
D'avoir voulu changer de place.

– Charles Baudelaire

## Owls

Under the dark yews which shade them,  
The owls are perched in rows,  
Like so many strange gods,  
Darting their red eyes. They meditate.  
Without budging they will remain  
Till that melancholy hour  
When, pushing back the slanting sun,  
Darkness will take up its abode.  
Their attitude teaches the wise

That in this world one must fear  
Movement and commotion ;  
Man, enraptured by a passing shadow,  
Forever bears the punishment  
Of having tried to change his place.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Owls

Within the shelter of black yews  
The owls in ranks are ranged apart  
Like foreign gods, whose eyeballs dart  
Red fire. They meditate and muse.  
Without a stir they will remain  
Till, in its melancholy hour,  
Thrusting the level sun from power,  
The shade establishes its reign.  
Their attitude instructs the sage,  
Content with what is near at hand,  
To shun all motion, strife, and rage.  
Men, crazed with shadows that they chase,  
Bear, as a punishment, the brand  
Of having wished to change their place.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## La Pipe

### La Pipe

Je suis la pipe d'un auteur ;  
On voit, à contempler ma mine  
D'Abyssinienne ou de Cafrine,  
Que mon maître est un grand fumeur.  
Quand il est comblé de douleur,  
Je fume comme la chaumine  
Où se prépare la cuisine  
Pour le retour du laboureur.  
J'enlace et je berce son âme  
Dans le réseau mobile et bleu  
Qui monte de ma bouche en feu,  
Et je roule un puissant dictame  
Qui charme son coeur et guérit  
De ses fatigues son esprit.

– Charles Baudelaire

### The Pipe

I am the pipe of an author ;  
One sees by my color,  
Abyssinian or Kaffir,  
That my master's a great smoker.  
When he is laden with sorrow,  
I smoke like a cottage  
Where they are preparing dinner  
For the return of the ploughman.  
I clasp and lull his soul

In the wavy blue web  
That rises from my fiery mouth.  
I give forth clouds of dittany  
That warm his heart and cure  
His mind of its fatigue.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Author's Pipe

I am an author's pipe. To see me  
And my outlandish shape to heed,  
You'd know my master was a dreamy  
Inveterate smoker of the weed.  
When he is loaded down with care,  
I like a stove will smoke and burn  
Wherein the supper they prepare  
Against the labourer's return.  
I nurse his spirit with my charm  
Swaying it in a soft, uncertain,  
And vaguely-moving azure curtain.  
I roll a potent cloud of balm  
To lull his spirit into rest  
And cure the sorrows in his breast.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# La Musique

## La Musique

La musique souvent me prend comme une mer !  
Vers ma pâle étoile,  
Sous un plafond de brume ou dans un vaste éther,  
Je mets à la voile ;  
La poitrine en avant et les poumons gonflés  
Comme de la toile  
J'escalade le dos des flots amoncelés  
Que la nuit me voile ;  
Je sens vibrer en moi toutes les passions  
D'un vaisseau qui souffre ;  
Le bon vent, la tempête et ses convulsions  
Sur l'immense gouffre  
Me bercent. D'autres fois, calme plat, grand miroir  
De mon désespoir !

– Charles Baudelaire

## Music

Music often transports me like a sea !  
Toward my pale star,  
Under a ceiling of fog or a vast ether,  
I get under sail ;  
My chest thrust out and my lungs filled  
Like the canvas,  
I scale the slopes of wave on wave  
That the night obscures ;  
I feel vibrating within me all the passions

Of ships in distress ;  
The good wind and the tempest with its convulsions  
Over the vast gulf  
Cradle me. At other times, dead calm, great mirror  
Of my despair !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Music

Music uplifts me like the sea and races  
Me to my distant star,  
Through veils of mist or through ethereal spaces,  
I sail on it afar.  
With chest flung out and lungs like sails inflated  
Into the depth of night  
I escalate the backs of waves serrated,  
That darkness veils from sight.  
I feel vibrating in me the emotions  
That storm-tossed ships must feel.  
The fair winds and the tempests and the oceans  
Sway my exultant keel.  
Sometimes a vast, dead calm with glassy stare  
Mirrors my dumb despair.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# Sépulture

## Sépulture

Si par une nuit lourde et sombre  
Un bon chrétien, par charité,  
Derrière quelque vieux décombre  
Enterre votre corps vanté,  
À l'heure où les chastes étoiles  
Ferment leurs yeux appesantis,  
L'araignée y fera ses toiles,  
Et la vipère ses petits ;  
Vous entendrez toute l'année  
Sur votre tête condamnée  
Les cris lamentables des loups  
Et des sorcières faméliques,  
Les ébats des vieillards lubriques  
Et les complots des noirs filous.

– Charles Baudelaire

## Sepulcher

If on a dismal, sultry night  
Some good Christian, through charity,  
Will bury your vaunted body  
Behind the ruins of a building  
At the hour when the chaste stars  
Close their eyes, heavy with sleep,  
The spider will make his webs there,  
And the viper his progeny ;  
You will hear all year long



Above your damned head  
The mournful cries of wolves  
And of the half-starved witches,  
The frolics of lustful old men  
And the plots of vicious robbers.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Burial Of an Accursed Poet

If on a night obscure and deep,  
Some decent Christian, out of ruth,  
Buries behind some garbage-heap  
The vaunted body of your youth :  
There, when the chaster stars have set  
And the moon her hammock slung  
Will the spider weave his net  
And the adder batch her young.  
Your curse'd head beneath the ground  
Will hear, through all the seasons then,  
The dismal cries of wolves resound,  
Old half-starved witches raising spooks,  
The antics of obscene old men,  
And black conspiracies of crooks.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Une gravure fantastique (1861)

### Une gravure fantastique

Ce spectre singulier n'a pour toute toilette,  
Grotesquement campé sur son front de squelette,  
Qu'un diadème affreux sentant le carnaval.  
Sans éperons, sans fouet, il essouffle un cheval,  
Fantôme comme lui, rosse apocalyptique,  
Qui bave des naseaux comme un épileptique.  
Au travers de l'espace ils s'enfoncent tous deux,  
Et foulent l'infini d'un sabot hasardeux.  
Le cavalier promène un sabre qui flamboie  
Sur les foules sans nom que sa monture broie,  
Et parcourt, comme un prince inspectant sa maison,  
Le cimetière immense et froid, sans horizon,  
Où gisent, aux lueurs d'un soleil blanc et terne,  
Les peuples de l'histoire ancienne et moderne.

– Charles Baudelaire

### A Fantastic Print

That strange specter wears nothing more  
Than a diadem, atrocious and tawdry,  
Grotesquely fixed on his skeleton brow.  
Without spurs, without whip, he winds a horse,  
A phantom like himself, an apocalyptic steed  
That foams at the nostrils like an epileptic.  
Both of them are plunging through space  
And trampling on the infinite with daring feet.  
The horseman is waving a flaming sword

Over the nameless crowds who are crushed by his mount  
And examines like a prince inspecting his house,  
The graveyard, immense and cold, with no horizon,  
Where lie, in the glimmer of a white, lifeless sun,  
The races of history, ancient and modern.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Fantastic Engraving

A monstrous spectre carries on his forehead,  
And at a rakish tilt, grotesquely horrid,  
A crown such as at carnivals parade.  
Without a Whip or spur he rides a jade,  
A phantom-like apocalyptic moke,  
Whose nostrils seem with rabid froth to smoke.  
Across unbounded space the couple moves  
Spurning infinity with reckless hooves.  
The horseman waves a sword that lights the gloom  
Of nameless crowds he tramples to their doom,  
And, like a prince his mansion, goes inspecting  
The graveyard, which, no skyline intersecting,  
Contains, beneath a sun that's white and bleak,  
Peoples of history, modern and antique.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# Le Mort joyeux

## Le Mort joyeux

Dans une terre grasse et pleine d'escargots  
Je veux creuser moi-même une fosse profonde,  
Où je puisse à loisir étaler mes vieux os  
Et dormir dans l'oubli comme un requin dans l'onde.  
Je hais les testaments et je hais les tombeaux ;  
Plutôt que d'implorer une larme du monde,  
Vivant, j'aimerais mieux inviter les corbeaux  
À saigner tous les bouts de ma carcasse immonde.  
Ô vers ! noirs compagnons sans oreille et sans yeux,  
Voyez venir à vous un mort libre et joyeux ;  
Philosophes viveurs, fils de la pourriture,  
À travers ma ruine allez donc sans remords,  
Et dites-moi s'il est encor quelque torture  
Pour ce vieux corps sans âme et mort parmi les morts !

– Charles Baudelaire

## The Joyful Corpse

In a rich, heavy soil, infested with snails,  
I wish to dig my own grave, wide and deep,  
Where I can at leisure stretch out my old bones  
And sleep in oblivion like a shark in the wave.  
I have a hatred for testaments and for tombs ;  
Rather than implore a tear of the world,  
I'd sooner, while alive, invite the crows  
To drain the blood from my filthy carcass.  
O worms ! black companions with neither eyes nor ears,

See a dead man, joyous and free, approaching you ;  
Wanton philosophers, children of putrescence,  
Go through my ruin then, without remorse,  
And tell me if there still remains any torture  
For this old soulless body, dead among the dead !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Joyous Dead

In a fat, greasy soil, that's full of snails,  
I'll dig a grave deep down, where I may sleep  
Spreading my bones at ease, to drowse in deep  
Oblivion, as a shark within the wave.  
I hate all tombs, and testaments, and wills :  
I want no human tears ; I'd like it more,  
That ravens could attack me with their bills,  
To broach my carcase of its living gore.  
O worms ! black friends, who cannot hear or see,  
A free and joyous corpse behold in me !  
You philosophic souls, corruption-bred,  
Plough through my ruins ! eat your merry way !  
And if there are yet further torments, say,  
For this old soulless corpse among the dead.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# Le Tonneau de la Haine

## Le Tonneau de la Haine

La Haine est le tonneau des pâles Danaïdes ;  
La Vengeance éperdue aux bras rouges et forts  
À beau précipiter dans ses ténèbres vides  
De grands seaux pleins du sang et des larmes des morts,  
Le Démon fait des trous secrets à ces abîmes,  
Par où fuiraient mille ans de sueurs et d'efforts,  
Quand même elle saurait ranimer ses victimes,  
Et pour les pressurer ressusciter leurs corps.  
La Haine est un ivrogne au fond d'une taverne,  
Qui sent toujours la soif naître de la liqueur  
Et se multiplier comme l'hydre de Lerne.  
– Mais les buveurs heureux connaissent leur vainqueur,  
Et la Haine est vouée à ce sort lamentable  
De ne pouvoir jamais s'endormir sous la table.

– Charles Baudelaire

## Hatred's Cask

Hatred is the cask of the pale Danaïdes ;  
Bewildered Vengeance with arms red and strong  
Vainly pours into its empty darkness  
Great pailfuls of the blood and the tears of the dead ;  
The Demon makes secret holes in this abyss,  
Whence would escape a thousand years of sweat and strain,  
Even if she could revive her victims,  
Could restore their bodies, to squeeze them dry once more.  
Hatred is a drunkard in a tavern,

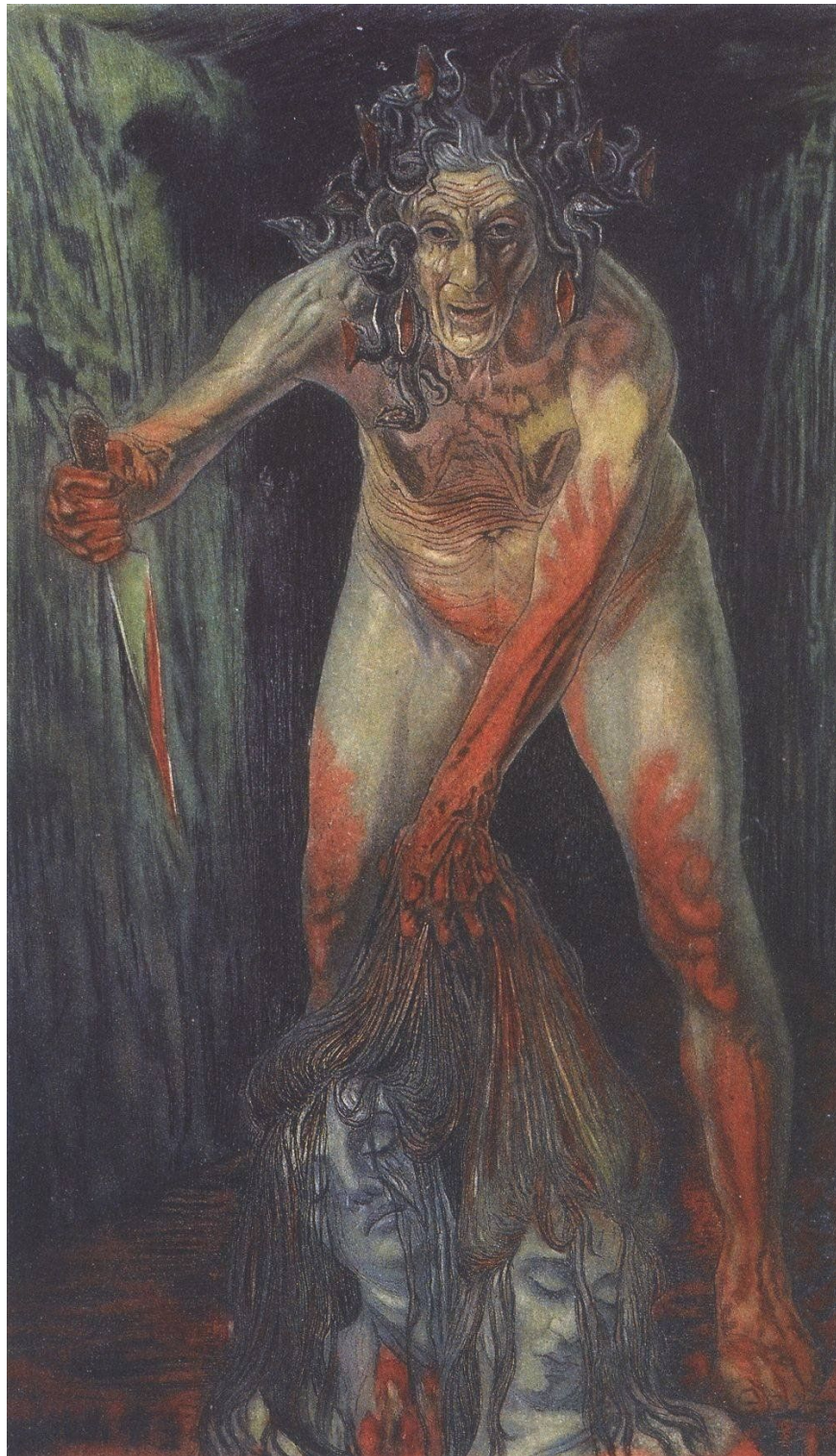
Who feels his thirst grow greater with each drink  
And multiply itself like the Lernaean hydra.  
– While fortunate drinkers know they can be conquered,  
Hatred is condemned to this lamentable fate,  
That she can never fall asleep beneath the table.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Cask of Hate

The Cask of the pale Danaids is Hate.  
Vainly Revenge, with red strong arms employed,  
Precipitates her buckets, in a spate  
Of blood and tears, to feed the empty void.  
The Fiend bores secret holes to these abysses  
By which a thousand years of sweat and strain  
Escape, though she'd revive their organisms  
In order just to bleed them once again.  
Hate is a drunkard in a tavern staying,  
Who feels his thirst born of its very cure,  
Like Lerna's hydra, multiplied by slaying.  
Gay drinkers of their conqueror are sure,  
And Hate is doomed to a sad fate, unable  
Ever to fall and snore beneath the table.

– Roy Campbell, 1952





## La Cloche fêlée

### La Cloche fêlée

Il est amer et doux, pendant les nuits d'hiver,  
D'écouter, près du feu qui palpète et qui fume,  
Les souvenirs lointains lentement s'élever  
Au bruit des carillons qui chantent dans la brume.  
Bienheureuse la cloche au gosier vigoureux  
Qui, malgré sa vieillesse, alerte et bien portante,  
Jette fidèlement son cri religieux,  
Ainsi qu'un vieux soldat qui veille sous la tente !  
Moi, mon âme est fêlée, et lorsqu'en ses ennuis  
Elle veut de ses chants peupler l'air froid des nuits,  
Il arrive souvent que sa voix affaiblie  
Semble le râle épais d'un blessé qu'on oublie  
Au bord d'un lac de sang, sous un grand tas de morts  
Et qui meurt, sans bouger, dans d'immenses efforts.

– Charles Baudelaire

### The Flawed Bell

It is bitter and sweet on winter nights  
To listen by the fire that smokes and palpitates,  
To distant souvenirs that rise up slowly  
At the sound of the chimes that sing in the fog.  
Happy is the bell which in spite of age  
Is vigilant and healthy, and with lusty throat  
Faithfully sounds its religious call,  
Like an old soldier watching from his tent !  
I, my soul is flawed, and when, a prey to ennui,

She wishes to fill the cold night air with her songs,  
It often happens that her weakened voice  
Resembles the death rattle of a wounded man,  
Forgotten beneath a heap of dead, by a lake of blood,  
Who dies without moving, striving desperately.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Cracked Bell

It's sweet and bitter, of a winter night,  
To hear, beside the crackling, smoking log,  
Far memories prepare themselves for flight  
To carillons that sound amid the fog.  
Happy's the bell whose vigorous throat on high,  
in spite of time, is sound and still unspent,  
To hurl his faithful and religious cry  
Like an old soldier watching in his tent.  
My soul is cracked, and when amidst its care  
It tries with song to fill the frosty air,  
Sometimes, its voice seems like the feeble croak  
A wounded soldier makes, lost in the smoke,  
Beneath a pile of dead, in bloody mire,  
Trying, with fearful efforts, to expire.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Spleen (Pluviôse irrité)

### Spleen

Pluviôse, irrité contre la ville entière,  
De son urne à grands flots verse un froid ténébreux  
Aux pâles habitants du voisin cimetière  
Et la mortalité sur les faubourgs brumeux.  
Mon chat sur le carreau cherchant une litière  
Agite sans repos son corps maigre et galeux ;  
L'âme d'un vieux poète erre dans la gouttière  
Avec la triste voix d'un fantôme frileux.  
Le bourdon se lamente, et la bûche enfumée  
Accompagne en fausset la pendule enrhumée  
Cependant qu'en un jeu plein de sales parfums,  
Héritage fatal d'une vieille hydropique,  
Le beau valet de coeur et la dame de pique  
Causent sinistrement de leurs amours défunts.

– Charles Baudelaire

### Spleen

January, irritated with the whole city,  
Pours from his urn great waves of gloomy cold  
On the pale occupants of the nearby graveyard  
And death upon the foggy slums.  
My cat seeking a bed on the tiled floor  
Shakes his thin, mangy body ceaselessly ;  
The soul of an old poet wanders in the rain-pipe  
With the sad voice of a shivering ghost.  
The great bell whines, the smoking log

Accompanies in falsetto the snuffling clock,  
While in a deck of cards reeking of filthy scents,  
My mortal heritage from some dropsical old woman,  
The handsome knave of hearts and the queen of spades  
Converse sinisterly of their dead love affair.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Spleen

The Month of Rains, incensed at life, outpours  
Out of her urn, a dark chill, like a penance,  
Over the graveyards and their wan, grey tenants  
And folk in foggy suburbs out of doors.  
My cat seeks out a litter on the ground  
Twitching her scrawny body flecked with mange.  
The soul of some old poet seems to range  
The gutter, with a chill phantasmal sound.  
The big bell tolls : damp hearth-logs seem to mock,  
Whistling, the snuffle-snuffle of the clock,  
While in the play of odours stale with must,  
Reminders of a dropsical old crone,  
The knave of hearts and queen of spades alone  
Darkly discuss a passion turned to dust.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Spleen (J'ai plus de souvenirs)

### Spleen

J'ai plus de souvenirs que si j'avais mille ans.  
Un gros meuble à tiroirs encombré de bilans,  
De vers, de billets doux, de procès, de romances,  
Avec de lourds cheveux roulés dans des quittances,  
Cache moins de secrets que mon triste cerveau.  
C'est une pyramide, un immense caveau,  
Qui contient plus de morts que la fosse commune.  
– Je suis un cimetière abhorré de la lune,  
Où comme des remords se traînent de longs vers  
Qui s'acharnent toujours sur mes morts les plus chers.  
Je suis un vieux boudoir plein de roses fanées,  
Où gît tout un fouillis de modes surannées,  
Où les pastels plaintifs et les pâles Boucher  
Seuls, respirent l'odeur d'un flacon débouché.  
Rien n'égale en longueur les boiteuses journées,  
Quand sous les lourds flocons des neigeuses années  
L'ennui, fruit de la morne incuriosité,  
Prend les proportions de l'immortalité.  
– Désormais tu n'es plus, ô matière vivante !  
Qu'un granit entouré d'une vague épouvante,  
Assoupi dans le fond d'un Sahara brumeux ;  
Un vieux sphinx ignoré du monde insoucieux,  
Oublié sur la carte, et dont l'humeur farouche  
Ne chante qu'aux rayons du soleil qui se couche.

– Charles Baudelaire

## Spleen

I have more memories than if I'd lived a thousand years.  
A heavy chest of drawers cluttered with balance-sheets,  
Processes, love-letters, verses, ballads,  
And heavy locks of hair enveloped in receipts,  
Hides fewer secrets than my gloomy brain.  
It is a pyramid, a vast burial vault  
Which contains more corpses than potter's field.  
– I am a cemetery abhorred by the moon,  
In which long worms crawl like remorse  
And constantly harass my dearest dead.  
I am an old boudoir full of withered roses,  
Where lies a whole litter of old-fashioned dresses,  
Where the plaintive pastels and the pale Bouchers,  
Alone, breathe in the fragrance from an opened phial.  
Nothing is so long as those limping days,  
When under the heavy flakes of snowy years  
Ennui, the fruit of dismal apathy,  
Becomes as large as immortality.  
– Henceforth you are no more, O living matter!  
Than a block of granite surrounded by vague terrors,  
Dozing in the depths of a hazy Sahara  
An old sphinx ignored by a heedless world,  
Omitted from the map, whose savage nature  
Sings only in the rays of a setting sun.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Spleen

I have more memories than had I seen  
Ten centuries. A huge chest that has been  
Stuffed full of writs, bills, verses, balance-sheets  
With golden curls wrapt up in old receipts  
And love-letters – hides less than my sad brain,  
A pyramid, a vault that must contain  
More corpses than the public charnel stores.  
I am a cemetery the moon abhors,  
Where, like remorsees, the long worms that trail

Always the dearest of my dead assail.  
I am a boudoir full of faded roses  
Where many an old outmoded dress reposes  
And faded pastels and pale Bouchers only  
Breathe a scent-flask, long-opened and left lonely...  
Nothing can match those limping days for length  
Where under snows of years, grown vast in strength,  
Boredom (of listlessness the pale abortion)  
Of immortality takes the proportion !  
– From henceforth, living matter, you are nought  
But stone surrounded by a dreadful thought :  
Lost in some dim Sahara, an old Sphinx,  
Of whom the world we live in never thinks.  
Lost on the map, it is its surly way  
Only to sing in sunset's fading ray.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Spleen (Je suis comme le roi)

### Spleen

Je suis comme le roi d'un pays pluvieux,  
Riche, mais impuissant, jeune et pourtant très vieux,  
Qui, de ses précepteurs méprisant les courbettes,  
S'ennuie avec ses chiens comme avec d'autres bêtes.  
Rien ne peut l'égayer, ni gibier, ni faucon,  
Ni son peuple mourant en face du balcon.  
Du bouffon favori la grotesque ballade  
Ne distrait plus le front de ce cruel malade ;  
Son lit fleurdelisé se transforme en tombeau,  
Et les dames d'atour, pour qui tout prince est beau,  
Ne savent plus trouver d'impudique toilette  
Pour tirer un souris de ce jeune squelette.  
Le savant qui lui fait de l'or n'a jamais pu  
De son être extirper l'élément corrompu,  
Et dans ces bains de sang qui des Romains nous viennent,  
Et dont sur leurs vieux jours les puissants se souviennent,  
Il n'a su réchauffer ce cadavre hébété  
Où coule au lieu de sang l'eau verte du Léthé

– Charles Baudelaire

### Spleen

I am like the king of a rainy land,  
Wealthy but powerless, both young and very old,  
Who contemns the fawning manners of his tutors  
And is bored with his dogs and other animals.  
Nothing can cheer him, neither the chase nor falcons,



Nor his people dying before his balcony.  
The ludicrous ballads of his favorite clown  
No longer smooth the brow of this cruel invalid ;  
His bed, adorned with fleurs-de-lis, becomes a grave ;  
The lady's maids, to whom every prince is handsome,  
No longer can find gowns shameless enough  
To wring a smile from this young skeleton.  
The alchemist who makes his gold was never able  
To extract from him the tainted element,  
And in those baths of blood come down from Roman times,  
And which in their old age the powerful recall,  
He failed to warm this dazed cadaver in whose veins  
Flows the green water of Lethe in place of blood.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Spleen

I'm like the King of some damp, rainy clime,  
Grown impotent and old before my time,  
Who scorns the bows and scrapings of his teachers  
And bores himself with hounds and all such creatures.  
Naught can amuse him, falcon, steed, or chase :  
No, not the mortal plight of his whole race  
Dying before his balcony. The tune,  
Sung to this tyrant by his pet buffoon,  
Irks him. His couch seems far more like a grave.  
Even the girls, for whom all kings seem brave,  
Can think no toilet up, nor shameless rig,  
To draw a smirk from this funereal prig.  
The sage who makes him gold, could never find  
The baser element that rots his mind.  
Even those blood-baths the old Romans knew  
And later thugs have imitated too,  
Can't warm this skeleton to deeds of slaughter,  
Whose only blood is Lethe's cold, green water.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Spleen (Quand le ciel bas et lourd)

### Spleen

Quand le ciel bas et lourd pèse comme un couvercle  
Sur l'esprit gémissant en proie aux longs ennuis,  
Et que de l'horizon embrassant tout le cercle  
Il nous verse un jour noir plus triste que les nuits ;

Quand la terre est changée en un cachot humide,  
Où l'Espérance, comme une chauve-souris,  
S'en va battant les murs de son aile timide  
Et se cognant la tête à des plafonds pourris ;

Quand la pluie étalant ses immenses traînées  
D'une vaste prison imite les barreaux,  
Et qu'un peuple muet d'infâmes araignées  
Vient tendre ses filets au fond de nos cerveaux,

Des cloches tout à coup sautent avec furie  
Et lancent vers le ciel un affreux hurlement,  
Ainsi que des esprits errants et sans patrie  
Qui se mettent à geindre opiniâtrement.

– Et de longs corbillards, sans tambours ni musique,  
Défilent lentement dans mon âme ; l'Espoir,  
Vaincu, pleure, et l'Angoisse atroce, despotique,  
Sur mon crâne incliné plante son drapeau noir.

– Charles Baudelaire

## Spleen

When the low, heavy sky weighs like a lid  
On the groaning spirit, victim of long ennui,  
And from the all-encircling horizon  
Spreads over us a day gloomier than the night ;  
When the earth is changed into a humid dungeon,  
In which Hope like a bat  
Goes beating the walls with her timid wings  
And knocking her head against the rotten ceiling ;  
When the rain stretching out its endless train  
Imitates the bars of a vast prison  
And a silent horde of loathsome spiders  
Comes to spin their webs in the depths of our brains,  
All at once the bells leap with rage  
And hurl a frightful roar at heaven,  
Even as wandering spirits with no country  
Burst into a stubborn, whimpering cry.  
– And without drums or music, long hearses  
Pass by slowly in my soul ; Hope, vanquished,  
Weeps, and atrocious, despotic Anguish  
On my bowed skull plants her black flag.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Spleen

When the cold heavy sky weighs like a lid  
On spirits whom eternal boredom grips,  
And the wide ring of the horizon's hid  
In daytime darker than the night's eclipse :  
When the world seems a dungeon, damp and small,  
Where hope flies like a bat, in circles reeling,  
Beating his timid wings against the wall  
And dashing out his brains against the ceiling :  
When trawling rains have made their steel-grey fibres  
Look like the grilles of some tremendous jail,  
And a whole nation of disgusting spiders  
Over our brains their dusty cobwebs trail :

Suddenly bells are fiercely clanged about  
And hurl a fearsome howl into the sky  
Like spirits from their country hunted out  
Who've nothing else to do but shriek and cry –  
Then long processions without fifes or drums  
Wind slowly through my soul. Hope, weeping, bows  
To conquest. And atrocious Anguish comes  
To plant his black flag on my drooping brows.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Obsession (1861)

### Obsession

Grands bois, vous m'effrayez comme des cathédrales ;  
Vous hurlez comme l'orgue ; et dans nos coeurs maudits,  
Chambres d'éternel deuil où vibrent de vieux râles,  
Répondent les échos de vos De profundis.

Je te hais, Océan ! tes bonds et tes tumultes,  
Mon esprit les retrouve en lui ; ce rire amer  
De l'homme vaincu, plein de sanglots et d'insultes,  
Je l'entends dans le rire énorme de la mer

Comme tu me plairais, ô nuit ! sans ces étoiles  
Dont la lumière parle un langage connu !  
Car je cherche le vide, et le noir, et le nu !

Mais les ténèbres sont elles-mêmes des toiles  
Où vivent, jaillissant de mon oeil par milliers,  
Des êtres disparus aux regards familiers.

– Charles Baudelaire

### Obsession

Great woods, you frighten me like cathedrals ;  
You roar like the organ ; and in our cursed hearts,  
Rooms of endless mourning where old death-rattles sound,  
Respond the echoes of your De profundis.

I hate you, Ocean ! your bounding and your tumult,  
My mind finds them within itself ; that bitter laugh  
Of the vanquished man, full of sobs and insults,  
I hear it in the immense laughter of the sea.

How I would like you, Night ! without those stars

Whose light speaks a language I know !  
For I seek emptiness, darkness, and nudity !  
But the darkness is itself a canvas  
Upon which live, springing from my eyes by thousands,  
Beings with understanding looks, who have vanished.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Obsession

You forests, like cathedrals, are my dread :  
You roar like organs. Our curst hearts, like cells  
Where death forever rattles on the bed,  
Echo your de Profundis as it swells.  
My spirit hates you, Ocean ! sees, and loathes  
Its tumults in your own. Of men defeated  
The bitter laugh, that's full of sobs and oaths,  
Is in your own tremendously repeated.  
How you would please me, Night ! without your stars  
Which speak a foreign dialect, that jars  
On one who seeks the void, the black, the bare.  
Yet even your darkest shade a canvas forms  
Whereon my eye must multiply in swarms  
Familiar looks of shapes no longer there.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Le Goût du néant (1861)

### Le Goût du néant

Morne esprit, autrefois amoureux de la lutte,  
L'Espoir, dont l'éperon attisait ton ardeur,  
Ne veut plus t'enfourcher ! Couche-toi sans pudeur,  
Vieux cheval dont le pied à chaque obstacle butte.  
Résigne-toi, mon coeur ; dors ton sommeil de brute.  
Esprit vaincu, fourbu ! Pour toi, vieux maraudeur,  
L'amour n'a plus de goût, non plus que la dispute ;  
Adieu donc, chants du cuivre et soupirs de la flûte !  
Plaisirs, ne tentez plus un coeur sombre et boudeur !  
Le Printemps adorable a perdu son odeur !  
Et le Temps m'engloutit minute par minute,  
Comme la neige immense un corps pris de roideur ;  
– Je contemple d'en haut le globe en sa rondeur  
Et je n'y cherche plus l'abri d'une cahute.  
Avalanche, veux-tu m'emporter dans ta chute ?

– Charles Baudelaire

### The Desire for Annihilation

Dejected soul, once anxious for the strife,  
Hope, whose spur fanned your ardor into flame,  
No longer wishes to mount you ! Lie down shamelessly,  
Old horse who stumbles over every rut.  
Resign yourself, my heart ; sleep your brutish sleep.  
Conquered, foundered spirit ! For you, old jade,  
Love has no more relish, no more than war ;

Farewell then, songs of the brass and sighs of the flute!  
Pleasure, tempt no more a dark, sullen heart!  
Adorable spring has lost its fragrance!  
And Time engulfs me minute by minute,  
As the immense snow a stiffening corpse;  
I survey from above the roundness of the globe  
And I no longer seek there the shelter of a hut.  
Avalanche, will you sweep me along in your fall?

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Thirst for the Void

My soul, you used to love the battle's rumble.  
Hope, whose sharp spur once kindled you like flame,  
Will mount on you no more. Rest, without shame,  
Old charger, since at every step you stumble.  
Sleep now the sleep of brutes, proud heart : be humble.  
O broken raider, for your outworn mettle,  
Love has no joys, no fight is worth disputing.  
Farewell to all the trumpeting and fluting!  
Pleasure, have done, when brooding shadows settle,  
The blooms of spring are vanquished by the nettle.  
As snows devour stiff corpses in their welter,  
Time wolfs my soul in, minute after minute.  
I've seen the world and everything that's in it,  
And I no longer seek in it for shelter;  
Come, Avalanche! and sweep me helter-skelter.

– Roy Campbell, 1952



## Alchimie de la douleur (1861)

### Alchimie de la douleur

L'un t'éclaire avec son ardeur,  
L'autre en toi met son deuil, Nature !  
Ce qui dit à l'un : Sépulture !  
Dit à l'autre : Vie et splendeur !  
Hermès inconnu qui m'assistes  
Et qui toujours m'intimidas,  
Tu me rends l'égal de Midas,  
Le plus triste des alchimistes ;  
Par toi je change l'or en fer  
Et le paradis en enfer ;  
Dans le suaire des nuages  
Je découvre un cadavre cher,  
Et sur les célestes rivages  
Je bâtis de grands sarcophages.

– Charles Baudelaire

### The Alchemy of Sorrow

One man lights you with his ardor,  
Another puts you in mourning, Nature !  
That which says to one : sepulcher !  
Says to another : life ! glory !  
You have always frightened me,  
Hermes the unknown, you who help me.  
You make me the peer of Midas,  
The saddest of all alchemists ;  
Through you I change gold to iron

And make of paradise a hell ;  
In the winding sheet of the clouds  
I discover a beloved corpse,  
And on the celestial shores  
I build massive sarcophagi.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## **Alchemy of Sorrow**

One puts all nature into mourning,  
One lights her like a flaring sun –  
What whispers "Burial" to the one  
Cries to the other, "Life and Morning."  
The unknown Hermes who assists  
The role of Midas to reverse,  
And makes me by a subtle curse  
The saddest of all alchemists –  
By him, my paradise to hell,  
And gold to slag, is changed too well.  
The clouds are winding-sheets, and I,  
Bidding some dear-loved corpse farewell,  
Along the shore-line of the sky,  
Erect my vast sarcophagi.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Horreur sympathique (1861)

### Horreur sympathique

De ce ciel bizarre et livide,  
Tourmenté comme ton destin,  
Quels pensers dans ton âme vide  
Descendent ? réponds, libertin.  
– Insatiablement avide  
De l'obscur et de l'incertain,  
Je ne geindrai pas comme Ovide  
Chassé du paradis latin.  
Cieux déchirés comme des grèves  
En vous se mire mon orgueil ;  
Vos vastes nuages en deuil  
Sont les corbillards de mes rêves,  
Et vos lueurs sont le reflet  
De l'Enfer où mon coeur se plaît.

– Charles Baudelaire

### Reflected Horror

From that sky, bizarre and livid,  
Distorted as your destiny,  
What thoughts into your empty soul  
Descend ? Answer me, libertine.  
– Insatiably avid  
For the dark and the uncertain,  
I shall not whimper like Ovid  
Chased from his Latin paradise.  
Skies torn like the shores of the sea,

You are the mirror of my pride ;  
Your vast clouds in mourning  
Are the black hearses of my dreams,  
And your gleams are the reflection  
Of the Hell which delights my heart.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Sympathetic Horror

From livid skies that, without end,  
As stormy as your future roll,  
What thoughts into your empty soul  
(Answer me, libertine!) descend ?  
– Insatiable yet for all  
That turns on darkness, doom, or dice,  
I'll not, like Ovid, mourn my fall,  
Chased from the Latin paradise.  
Skies, torn like seacoasts by the storm !  
In you I see my pride take form,  
And the huge clouds that rush in streams  
Are the black hearses of my dreams,  
And your red rays reflect the hell,  
In which my heart is pleased to dwell.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# Le Calumet de Paix (1868)

## Le Calumet de Paix

(Imité de Longfellow)

I

Or Gitche Manito, le Maître de la Vie,  
Le Puissant, descendit dans la verte prairie,  
Dans l'immense prairie aux coteaux montueux ;  
Et là, sur les rochers de la Rouge Carrière,  
Dominant tout l'espace et baigné de lumière,  
Il se tenait debout, vaste et majestueux.  
Alors il convoqua les peuples innombrables,  
Plus nombreux que ne sont les herbes et les sables.  
Avec sa main terrible il rompit un morceau  
Du rocher, dont il fit une pipe superbe,  
Puis, au bord du ruisseau, dans une énorme gerbe,  
Pour s'en faire un tuyau, choisit un long roseau.  
Pour la bourrer il prit au saule son écorce ;  
Et lui, le Tout-Puissant, Créateur de la Force,  
Debout, il alluma, comme un divin fanal,  
La Pipe de la Paix. Debout sur la Carrière  
Il fumait, droit, superbe et baigné de lumière.  
Or pour les nations c'était le grand signal.  
Et lentement montait la divine fumée  
Dans l'air doux du matin, onduleuse, embaumée.  
Et d'abord ce ne fut qu'un sillon ténébreux ;  
Puis la vapeur se fit plus bleue et plus épaisse,  
Puis blanchit ; et montant, et grossissant sans cesse,  
Elle alla se briser au dur plafond des cieux.  
Des plus lointains sommets des Montagnes Rocheuses,

Depuis les lacs du Nord aux ondes tapageuses,  
Depuis Tawasentha, le vallon sans pareil,  
Jusqu'à Tuscaloosa, la forêt parfumée,  
Tous virent le signal et l'immense fumée  
Montant paisiblement dans le matin vermeil.  
Les Prophètes disaient : « Voyez-vous cette bande  
De vapeur, qui, semblable à la main qui commande,  
Oscille et se détache en noir sur le soleil ?  
C'est Gitche Manito, le Maître de la Vie,  
Qui dit aux quatre coins de l'immense prairie :  
'Je vous convoque tous, guerriers, à mon conseil !'. »  
Par le chemin des eaux, par la route des plaines,  
Par les quatre côtés d'où soufflent les haleines  
Du vent, tous les guerriers de chaque tribu, tous,  
Comprenant le signal du nuage qui bouge,  
Vinrent docilement à la Carrière Rouge  
Où Gitche Manito leur donnait rendez-vous.  
Les guerriers se tenaient sur la verte prairie,  
Tous équipés en guerre, et la mine aguerrie,  
Bariolés ainsi qu'un feuillage automnal ;  
Et la haine qui fait combattre tous les êtres,  
La haine qui brûlait les yeux de leurs ancêtres  
Incendiait encor leurs yeux d'un feu fatal.  
Et leurs yeux étaient pleins de haine héréditaire.  
Or Gitche Manito, le Maître de la Terre,  
Les considérait tous avec compassion,  
Comme un père très-bon, ennemi du désordre,  
Qui voit ses chers petits batailler et se mordre.  
Tel Gitche Manito pour toute nation.  
Il étendit sur eux sa puissante main droite  
Pour subjuguier leur cœur et leur nature étroite,  
Pour rafraîchir leur fièvre à l'ombre de sa main ;  
Puis il leur dit avec sa voix majestueuse,  
Comparable à la voix d'une eau tumultueuse  
Qui tombe et rend un son monstrueux, surhumain :

## II

« O ma postérité, déplorable et chérie !  
O mes fils ! écoutez la divine raison.  
C'est Gitche Manito, le Maître de la Vie,

Qui vous parle ! Celui qui dans votre patrie  
A mis l'ours, le castor, le renne et le bison.  
Je vous ai fait la chasse et la pêche faciles ;  
Pourquoi donc le chasseur devient-il assassin ?  
Le marais fut par moi peuple de volatiles ;  
Pourquoi n'êtes-vous pas contents, fils indociles ?  
Pourquoi l'homme fait-il la chasse à son voisin ?  
Je suis vraiment bien las de vos horribles guerres.  
Vos prières, vos vœux mêmes sont des forfaits !  
Le péril est pour vous dans vos humeurs contraires,  
Et c'est dans l'union qu'est votre force. En frères  
Vivez donc, et sachez vous maintenir en paix.  
Bientôt vous recevrez de ma main un Prophète  
Qui viendra vous instruire et souffrir avec vous.  
Sa parole fera de la vie une fête ;  
Mais si vous méprisez sa sagesse parfaite,  
Pauvres enfants maudits, vous disparaîtrez tous !  
Effacez dans les flots vos couleurs meurtrières.  
Les roseaux sont nombreux et le roc est épais ;  
Chacun en peut tirer sa pipe. Plus de guerres,  
Plus de sang ! Désormais vivez comme des frères,  
Et tous, unis, fumez le Calumet de Paix ! »

### III

Et soudain tous, jetant leurs armes sur la terre,  
Lavent dans le ruisseau les couleurs de la guerre  
Qui luisaient sur leurs fronts cruels et triomphants.  
Chacun creuse une pipe et cueille sur la rive  
Un long roseau qu'avec adresse il enjolive.  
Et l'Esprit souriait à ses pauvres enfants !  
Chacun s'en retourna l'âme calme et ravie,  
Et Gitche Manito, le Maître de la Vie,  
Remonta par la porte entr'ouverte des cieux.  
– À travers la vapeur splendide du nuage  
Le Tout-Puissant montait, content de son ouvrage,  
Immense, parfumé, sublime, radieux !

## The Peace Pipe

In Imitation of Longfellow

I

Now, Guitchi Manitou, the Master of Life,  
The Powerful, descended into the green prairie,  
Into the immense prairie encircled by mountains ;  
And there, on the rocks of the Red Quarry,  
Dominating space and bathed in light,  
He stood erect, vast and majestic.  
Then he convoked the countless peoples,  
More numerous than blades of grass and grains of sand.  
With his terrible hand he broke off a piece  
of rock and made a wonderful pipe bowl,  
And, on the edge of the stream, from an enormous sheaf of  
reeds,  
He chose one long reed for a pipe stem.  
To fill it, he took bark from the willow,  
And, standing, he, the All-Powerful, Creator of Authority,  
He lit, like a divine beacon,  
The Peace Pipe. Standing upon the Quarry,  
He smoked, erect, proud, and bathed in light.  
Now, for the nations this was the great signal.  
And slowly the divine smoke rose  
In the gentle morning air, undulating, fragrant.  
And at first it was no more than a dark trail ;  
Then the vapor became bluer and thicker,  
Then white ; and ceaselessly rising and growing larger,  
It broke against the hard ceiling of the heavens.  
From the furthest summits of the Rocky Mountains,  
To the Northern lakes with their boisterous waves,  
From Tawasentha, the matchless valley,  
As far as Tuscaloosa, the perfumed forest,  
All saw the signal and the immense billows of smoke  
Rising peacefully in the rosy morning sky.  
The Prophets said : "Do you see that band  
Of vapor that, like the hand that commands,  
Flickers and stands out black against the sun ?  
That is Guitchi Manitou, the Master of Life,



Who says to the four corners of the immense prairie :  
'Warriors, I convoke you all to my council !' "

On the paths of the waters, on the routes of the plains,  
From the four quarters from which blow the breath  
Of the winds, all of the warriors of every tribe, all,  
Understanding the moving cloud signal,  
Came obediently to the Red Quarry  
Where Guitchi Manitou had called them to meet with him.  
The warriors stood upon the green prairie,  
All dressed for war, with warlike faces,  
Streaked with many colors like the Autumn leaves ;  
And the hatred that makes all beings fight,  
The hatred that burned in the eyes of their ancestors,  
Still lit their eyes with a fatal fire.  
And their eyes were full of hereditary hatred.  
Now Guitchi Manitou, the Master of the Earth,  
Contemplated them all with compassion,  
Like a very kind father, enemy of disorder,  
Who sees his dear children fight and claw.  
So Guitchi Manitou contemplated every nation.  
He stretched forth upon them his powerful right hand  
To subjugate their hearts and their narrow natures,  
To cool their fever in the shade of his hand ;  
Then he told them with his majestic voice,  
Like the sound of tumultuous waters,  
Falling and sending forth a monstrous, superhuman noise :

## II

"Oh deplorable and beloved posterity !  
Oh my sons ! Listen to divine reason.  
It is Guitchi Manitou, the Master of Life,  
Who speaks to you ! He who placed in your land  
The bear, the beaver, the elk, and the bison.  
I made hunting and fishing easy for you ;  
Why then does the hunter become an assassin ?  
I stocked the swamps with birds ;  
Why then are you not content, indocile sons ?  
Why does man hunt his own neighbor ?  
I am truly tired of your horrible wars.  
Your prayers, even your promises are offenses !

Danger rests in your contrary natures,  
And force lies in union. Live then  
As brothers, and learn to keep the peace.  
Soon you will receive from my hand a Prophet  
Who will come to instruct you and to suffer with you.  
His word will make a festival out of life ;  
But if you disdain his perfect wisdom,  
Poor, condemned children, you will all disappear !  
Expunge in the waves your murderous paints.  
The reeds are many and the rock is thick ;  
Each one of you may make from them a pipe. No more wars,  
No more blood ! Henceforth live as brothers,  
And all, united, smoke the Peace Pipe !”

### III

And suddenly all of them, throwing down their arms,  
Wash off in the stream the war paint  
That had gleamed on their cruel and triumphant faces.  
Each among them hollows out a pipe bowl and gathers on the  
shore  
A long reed with which to embellish it.  
And the Spirit smiled at his poor children !  
Each went home with a calm and enraptured soul,  
And Guitchi Manitou, the Master of Life,  
Reascended through the open door of the heavens.  
– Through the splendid vapor of the clouds,  
The All-Powerful rose, happy with his work,  
Immense, perfumed, sublime, radiant !

– Cat Nilan, 1999

## La Prière d'un païen (1868)

### La Prière d'un païen

Ah ! ne ralentis pas tes flammes ;  
Réchauffe mon coeur engourdi,  
Volupté, torture des âmes !  
*Diva ! Supplicem exaudî !*  
Déesse dans l'air répandue,  
Flamme dans notre souterrain !  
Exauce une âme morfondue,  
Qui te consacre un chant d'airain.  
Volupté, sois toujours ma reine !  
Prends le masque d'une sirène  
Fait de chair et de velours,  
Ou verse-moi tes sommeils lourds  
Dans le vin informe et mystique,  
Volupté, fantôme élastique !

– Charles Baudelaire

### A Pagan's Prayer

Ah ! do not dampen your ardor ;  
Warm my numb heart again,  
Pleasure, torture of souls !  
Goddess ! hear me, I beseech you !  
Goddess who permeates the air,  
Flame in our underground cavern !  
Grant the prayer of a soul bored utterly,  
Who offers you a brazen hymn.  
Pleasure, be my queen forever !

Put on a siren's mask  
Fashioned of flesh and of velvet  
Or pour on me your heavy sleep,  
In wine, formless and mystical,  
O Pleasure, elastic phantom !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## **Pagan Prayer**

Don't stint the fires with which you flare.  
Warm up my dull heart to delight,  
O Pleasure, torture of the sprite,  
O Goddess, hear my fervent prayer !  
Goddess, who through the ether pass,  
Flame in this subterranean hole !  
Raise up a chilled and stricken soul  
Who lifts to you his peal of brass.  
O Pleasure, always be my queen !  
In flesh and velvet to be seen,  
Mask your beauty like a siren :  
Or else my soul with sleep environ  
Drained from the formless mystic wine,  
Elastic phantom ! which is thine.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Le Couvercle (1868)

### Le Couvercle

En quelque lieu qu'il aille, ou sur mer ou sur terre,  
Sous un climat de flamme ou sous un soleil blanc,  
Serviteur de Jésus, courtisan de Cythère,  
Mendiant ténébreux ou Crésus rutilant,  
Citadin, campagnard, vagabond, sédentaire,  
Que son petit cerveau soit actif ou soit lent,  
Partout l'homme subit la terreur du mystère,  
Et ne regarde en haut qu'avec un oeil tremblant.  
En haut, le Ciel ! Ce mur de caveau qui l'étouffe,  
Plafond illuminé par un opéra bouffe  
Où chaque histrion foule un sol ensanglanté ;  
Terreur du libertin, espoir du fol ermite ;  
Le Ciel ! Couvercle noir de la grande marmite  
Où bout l'imperceptible et vaste Humanité.

– Charles Baudelaire

### The Cover

Wherever he may go, on land or sea,  
Under a blazing sky or a pale sun,  
Servant of Jesus, courtier of Cythera,  
Somber beggar or glittering Croesus,  
City-dweller, rustic, vagabond, stay-at-home,  
Whether his little brain be sluggish or alert,  
Everywhere man feels the terror of mystery  
And looks up at heaven only with frightened eyes  
Above, the Sky ! that cavern wall that stifles him,

That ceiling lighted by a comic opera  
Where every player treads on blood-stained soil ;  
Terror of the lecher, hope of the mad recluse :  
The Sky ! black cover of the great cauldron  
In which boils vast, imperceptible Humanity.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Lid

Wherever Man may go, by earth or ocean,  
Beneath a sky of fire, or sun snow-cold,  
Whether to Christ or Venus his devotion,  
In gloomy want, or glittering with gold ;  
Citizen, vagabond, stamplicker, farmer,  
Be his small brain slow-witted, quick, or sly,  
For this strange terror he can find no armour  
Nor look to heaven save with trembling eye.  
Above, the Sky, that cellar-ceiling, stifles,  
Lit up for comic farce, where struts and trifles  
Each mummer on a floor of blood and mire.  
Terror of rakes, the crazy hermits' hope –  
Beneath its cauldron-lid mankind must grope,  
Never above its margin to aspire.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## L'imprévu (1868)

### L'imprévu

Harpagon, qui veillait son père agonisant,  
Se dit, rêveur, devant ces lèvres déjà blanches :  
« Nous avons au grenier un nombre suffisant,  
Ce me semble, de vieilles planches ? »

Célimène roucoule et dit : « Mon coeur est bon,  
Et naturellement, Dieu m'a faite très belle. »  
– Son coeur ! coeur racorni, fumé comme un jambon,  
Recuit à la flamme éternelle !

Un gazetier fumeux, qui se croit un flambeau,  
Dit au pauvre, qu'il a noyé dans les ténèbres :  
« Où donc l'aperçois-tu, ce créateur du Beau,  
Ce Redresseur que tu célèbres ? »

Mieux que tous, je connais certain voluptueux  
Qui bâille nuit et jour, et se lamente, et pleure,  
Répétant, l'impuissant et le fat : « Oui, je veux  
Etre vertueux, dans une heure ! »

L'horloge, à son tour, dit à voix basse : « Il est mûr,  
Le damné ! J'avertis en vain la chair infecte.  
L'homme est aveugle, sourd, fragile, comme un mur  
Qu'habite et que ronge un insecte ! »

Et puis, Quelqu'un paraît, que tous avaient nié,  
Et qui leur dit, railleur et fier : « Dans mon ciboire,  
Vous avez, que je crois, assez communié  
À la Joyeuse Messe noire ?

Chacun de vous m'a fait un temple dans son coeur ;  
Vous avez, en secret, baisé ma fesse immonde !  
Reconnaissez Satan à son rire vainqueur,  
Enorme et laid comme le monde !

Avez-vous donc pu croire, hypocrites surpris,  
 Qu'on se moque du maître, et qu'avec lui l'on triche,  
 Et qu'il soit naturel de recevoir deux prix,  
 D'aller au Ciel et d'être riche ?  
 Il faut que le gibier paye le vieux chasseur  
 Qui se morfond longtemps à l'affût de la proie.  
 Je vais vous emporter à travers l'épaisseur,  
 Compagnons de ma triste joie,  
 À travers l'épaisseur de la terre et du roc,  
 À travers les amas confus de votre cendre,  
 Dans un palais aussi grand que moi, d'un seul bloc,  
 Et qui n'est pas de pierre tendre ;  
 Car il est fait avec l'universel Péché,  
 Et contient mon orgueil, ma douleur et ma gloire ! »  
 – Cependant, tout en haut de l'univers juché,  
 Un ange sonne la victoire  
 De ceux dont le coeur dit : « Que béni soit ton fouet,  
 Seigneur ! que la douleur, ô Père, soit bénie !  
 Mon âme dans tes mains n'est pas un vain jouet,  
 Et ta prudence est infinie. »  
 Le son de la trompette est si délicieux,  
 Dans ces soirs solennels de célestes vendanges,  
 Qu'il s'infiltré comme une extase dans tous ceux  
 Dont elle chante les louanges.

– Charles Baudelaire

## The Unforeseen

Harpagon watching over his dying father ;  
 Mused, looking at those lips that were already white :  
 "It seems to me we have in the attic  
 A sufficient number of old boards ?"  
 Célimene coos and says : "My heart is kind,  
 And naturally enough, God made me very fair."  
 – Her heart, a shriveled heart like a ham smoked and seared,  
 At the eternal flame !  
 A smoky journalist who thinks he is a light  
 Says to the poor wretch he has plunged into darkness :



“Where do you see him, this creator of beauty,  
This Knight-errant whom you extol?”  
I know better than anyone, a sensualist  
Who yawns night and day, and laments and weeps,  
Repeating, the impotent fop : “Of course, I wish  
To be virtuous in an hour !”  
The clock in turn says in a low voice : “He is ripe,  
The damned one ! In vain do I warn the stinking flesh.  
Man is blind and deaf, fragile as a wall  
That is the home of gnawing insects !”  
And then appears Someone all had denied,  
Who proud and mocking says : “From my ciborium  
You have communicated rather frequently,  
I think, at the joyous black Mass ?  
Each of you has made a shrine for me in his heart ;  
And you have secretly kissed my unclean haunches !  
Recognize Satan by his conquering laughter,  
Immense and ugly as the world !  
Could you have believed, surprised hypocrites,  
That one makes fun of the master, that one cheats him,  
That it’s reasonable to receive two rewards,  
To be rich and go to Heaven ?  
The game must pay the hunter who stands shivering  
For a long time on the watch for his prey.  
I’m going to take you away through the thickness,  
Companions in my gloomy joy,  
Through the thickness of the earth and the rock,  
Through the unshapen pile of your ashes  
Into a palace huge as I, a single block,  
That is not fashioned of soft stone ;  
For it is made of universal Sin,  
And contains my pride, my sorrow and my glory !”  
But meanwhile, perched on the top of the universe  
An Angel sounds the victory  
Of those whose hearts say : “Blessed be your whip,  
Lord ! O Father, blessed be suffering !  
My soul in your hands is not an idle plaything  
And your prudence is infinite.”  
The sound of the trumpet is O ! so delightful

On the solemn evenings of heavenly harvest,  
That it permeates like an ecstasy all those  
Whose praises the trumpet sings.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Unforeseen

Harpagon watched his father slowly dying  
And musing on his white lips as they shrunk,  
Said, "There is lumber in the outhouse lying  
It seems : old boards and junk."  
Celimene cooed, and said, "How good I am  
And, naturally, God made my looks excell"  
(Her callous heart, thrice-smoked like salted ham,  
Will burn in endless Hell !)  
A smoky scribbler, to himself a beacon,  
Says to the wretch whom he has plunged in shade –  
"Where's the Creator you so loved to speak on,  
The Saviour you portrayed?"  
But best of all I know a certain rogue  
Who yawns and weeps, lamenting night and day  
(Impotent fathead) in the same old brogue,  
"I will be good – one day!"  
The clock says in a whisper, "He is ready  
The damned one, whom I warned of his disaster.  
He's blind, and deaf, and like a wall unsteady,  
Where termites mine the plaster."  
Then one appeared whom all of them denied  
And said with mocking laughter "To my manger  
You've all come ; to the Black Mass I provide  
Not one of you's a stranger.  
You've built me temples in your hearts of sin.  
You've kissed my buttocks in your secret mirth.  
Know me for Satan by this conquering grin,  
As monstrous as the Earth.  
D'you think, poor hypocrites surprised red-handed  
That you can trick your lord without a hitch ;  
And that by guile two prizes can be landed –

Heaven, and being rich ?  
The wages of the huntsman is his quarry,  
Which pays him for the chills he gets while stalking  
Companions of my revels grim and sorry  
I am going to take you walking,  
Down through the denseness of the soil and rock,  
Down through the dust and ash you leave behind,  
Into a palace, built in one sole block,  
Of stone that is not kind :  
For it is built of Universal Sin  
And holds of me all that is proud and glorious"  
– Meanwhile an angel, far above the din,  
Sends forth a peal victorious  
For all whose hearts can say, "I bless thy rod ;  
And blessed be the griefs that on us fall.  
My soul is but a toy, Eternal God,  
Thy wisdom all in all !"  
And so deliciously that trumpet blows  
On evenings of celestial harvestings,  
It makes a rapture in the hearts of those  
Whose love and praise it sings.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## L'Examen de minuit (1868)

### L'Examen de minuit

La pendule, sonnant minuit,  
Ironiquement nous engage  
À nous rappeler quel usage  
Nous fîmes du jour qui s'enfuit :  
– Aujourd'hui, date fatidique,  
Vendredi, treize, nous avons,  
Malgré tout ce que nous savons,  
Mené le train d'un hérétique.  
Nous avons blasphémé Jésus,  
Des Dieux le plus incontestable !  
Comme un parasite à la table  
De quelque monstrueux Crésus,  
Nous avons, pour plaire à la brute,  
Digne vassale des Démons,  
Insulté ce que nous aimons  
Et flatté ce qui nous rebute ;  
Contristé, servile bourreau,  
Le faible qu'à tort on méprise ;  
Salué l'énorme Bêtise,  
La Bêtise au front de taureau ;  
Baisé la stupide Matière  
Avec grande dévotion,  
Et de la putréfaction  
Béni la blafarde lumière.  
Enfin, nous avons, pour noyer  
Le vertige clans le délire,  
Nous, prêtre orgueilleux de la Lyre,  
Dont la gloire est de déployer  
L'ivresse des choses funèbres,

Bu sans soif et mangé sans faim !...  
– Vite soufflons la lampe, afin  
De nous cacher dans les ténèbres !

– Charles Baudelaire

## Examination of Conscience at Midnight

The clock striking midnight  
Ironically invites us  
To call to mind what use we made  
Of the day that is fleeing :  
– Today, a fateful date,  
Friday the thirteenth we have  
In spite of everything we know  
Lived the life of a heretic ;  
We have blasphemed Jesus,  
The one God one cannot deny !  
Like a parasite at the table  
Of some monstrous Croesus,  
We have, to please the brute,  
Worthy vassal of the Demons,  
Hurling insults at that which we love  
And flattered what repulses us.  
Servile hangman, we have saddened  
The weak man, wrongfully despised,  
Saluted enormous Folly,  
Folly with the brow of a bull ;  
Kissed with great devotion  
Stupid and unfeeling Matter  
And bestowed our blessing on  
The wan light of putrefaction ;  
Finally we have, to drown  
Vertigo in delirium,  
We, the proud priest of the Lyre,  
Whose glory is to show  
The rapture of sorrowful things,  
Drunk without thirst, eaten without hunger !  
– Quickly let us snuff out the lamp,  
So we may hide in the darkness !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Midnight Enquiry

The clocks strike midnight one by one  
Ironically to remind us,  
And ask what profit we have won  
Out of the day we've left behind us.  
The Thirteenth, Friday, as it chances !  
A fatal date ; when all is said,  
In spite of all we know, we've led  
The most heretical of dances.  
Today we've spent blaspheming Jesus,  
The incontestable, sole Lord ;  
Like a base sponger at the board  
Of some intolerable Croesus,  
We have, to please the beast within us,  
The Devil's worthy advocate,  
Defamed all that whose love should win us,  
And flattered all that we should hate.  
The weak man, like a bullying coward,  
We harmed, and wrongly did despise ;  
We worshipped Folly, where he towered,  
Huge bull-horned monster, to the skies.  
We have lain kissing stupid Matter  
With great devotion to its presence,  
And of Corruption stooped to flatter  
The wan, mephitic phosphorescence.  
To drown our vertigo entire  
And our delirium to nourish –  
Proud priest of the immortal Lyre  
Whose glory it has been to flourish  
The rapture of funereal things –  
We've eaten without appetite,  
Unthirsting drunk of muddy springs.  
Come, quick, my soul, blow out the light,  
To hide in shades of blackest night !

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Madrigal triste (1868)

### Madrigal triste

#### I

Que m'importe que tu sois sage ?  
Sois belle ! Et sois triste ! Les pleurs  
Ajoutent un charme au visage,  
Comme le fleuve au paysage ;  
L'orage rajeunit les fleurs.  
Je t'aime surtout quand la joie  
S'enfuit de ton front terrassé ;  
Quand ton coeur dans l'horreur se noie ;  
Quand sur ton présent se déploie  
Le nuage affreux du passé.  
Je t'aime quand ton grand oeil verse  
Une eau chaude comme le sang ;  
Quand, malgré ma main qui te berce,  
Ton angoisse, trop lourde, perce  
Comme un râle d'agonisant.  
J'aspire, volupté divine !  
Hymne profond, délicieux !  
Tous les sanglots de ta poitrine,  
Et crois que ton coeur s'illumine  
Des perles que versent tes yeux.

#### II

Je sais que ton coeur, qui regorge  
De vieux amours déracinés,  
Flamboie encor comme une forge,  
Et que tu couves sous ta gorge  
Un peu de l'orgueil des damnés ;

Mais tant, ma chère, que tes rêves  
N'auront pas reflété l'Enfer,  
Et qu'en un cauchemar sans trêves,  
Songeant de poisons et de glaives,  
Éprise de poudre et de fer,  
N'ouvrant à chacun qu'avec crainte,  
Déchiffrant le malheur partout,  
Te convulsant quand l'heure tinte,  
Tu n'auras pas senti l'étreinte  
De l'irrésistible Dégoût,  
Tu ne pourras, esclave reine  
Qui ne m'aimes qu'avec effroi,  
Dans l'horreur de la nuit malsaine  
Me dire, l'âme de cris pleine :  
« Je suis ton égale, ô mon Roi ! »

– Charles Baudelaire

## Gloomy Madrigal

I

What's it to me that you are sage?  
Be beautiful! and be sad! Tears  
Add a charm to the countenance  
As a stream does to a landscape;  
Storms make the flowers fresh again.  
I love you most of all when joy  
Flees from your oppressed brow,  
When your heart is drowned in horror,  
When the frightful cloud of the Past  
Is spread out over your Present.  
I love you when your large eyes shed  
Tears as hot as blood, when  
In spite of my hand which lulls you  
Your unbearable pain comes through  
Like a dying man's death-rattle.  
I breathe in, heavenly pleasure!  
Profound, delightful hymn!  
Every sob from your breast



And I believe your heart lights up  
With the pearls that your eyes pour out !

## II

I know, your heart, overflowing  
With old, uprooted loves,  
Still blazes like a forge  
And that there smolders in your breast  
Something of the pride of the damned ;  
But my sweet, so long as your dreams  
Have not reflected Hell,  
While in a nightmare without respite,  
Dreaming of poisons and daggers,  
Enamored with powder and steel,  
Answering the door fearfully,  
Seeing misfortune everywhere,  
Convulsing when the hour strikes,  
You have not felt yourself embraced  
By irresistible Disgust ;  
You cannot, slave and queen  
Who love me only with terror,  
In the unhealthy night's horror  
Say to me, your soul full of cries,  
"I am your equal, O my King !"

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Sad Madrigal

## I

That you are good what does it matter ?  
Be sad : be beautiful ! The rain  
Rejuvenates the flowering plain.  
As streams do landscapes, teardrops flatter  
Your face. Your looks, by weeping, gain.  
When joy from your dejected forehead  
Has fled, your heart is in the power  
Of torment, and, to make you cower,  
The huge cloud of your past, with horrid

Black shadow, overlooms the hour,  
I love you most : and when your eye  
Pours water hot as blood in battle,  
And when, despite the fact that I  
Am nursing you, you give a cry  
Like death, an agonising rattle.  
Delicious hymn, profound delight,  
Pleasure divine !I breathe with zest  
The sobs arising from your breast.  
I think your heart must blaze the light  
Of pearls that from your eyes are pressed.

## II

I know your heart once more disgorges  
Its old uprooted love-affairs :  
And flaming with the heat of forges  
You feel the pride of vanished orgies,  
Which makes the damned put on such airs.  
But now ere yet your evil dreams  
Reflect the red flames of the Pit,  
While in an endless nightmare scheming  
Of poison-draughts and daggers gleaming,  
Cold steel and powder tempt your wit :  
While yet in fear the door you answer  
And see all things with vague mistrust :  
Free from his grasp, O dear entrancer,  
And not yet partnered for a dancer  
With irresistible Disgust,  
You'll never claim, both queen and slave,  
Who only love me with affright  
In the sick silence of the night,  
And while your feelings inly rave –  
To match with me in power or might.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## L'Avertisseur (1868)

### L'Avertisseur

Tout homme digne de ce nom  
A dans le coeur un Serpent jaune,  
Installé comme sur un trône,  
Qui, s'il dit : « Je veux, » répond : « Non ! »  
Plonge tes yeux dans les yeux fixes  
Des Satyresses ou des Nixes,  
La Dent dit : « Pense à ton devoir ! »  
Fais des enfants, plante des arbres,  
Polis des vers, sculpte des marbres,  
La Dent dit : « Vivras-tu ce soir ? »  
Quoi qu'il ébauche ou qu'il espère,  
L'homme ne vit pas un moment  
Sans subir l'avertissement  
De l'insupportable Vipère.

– Charles Baudelaire

### The Warner

Every man worthy of the name  
Has in his heart a yellow Snake  
Installed as if upon a throne,  
Who, if he says : "I will!" answers : "No!"  
Plunge your eyes into the fixed gaze  
Of Satyresses or Nixies,  
The Fang says : "Think of your duty!"  
Beget children, set out trees,  
Polish verses, sculpture marble,

The Fang says : "Will you be alive tonight?"  
Whatever he may plan or hope,  
Man does not live for an instant  
Without enduring the warning  
Of the unbearable Viper.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Fang

Each Man who's fit to be so called  
A Serpent in his heart has got,  
As though upon a throne installed,  
Who when he says "I will," says "Not."  
If your gaze the gaze transfixes  
O satyresses or of nixies,  
The Fang says, "Is your duty done?"  
Breed brats, plant trees, perform your task,  
Write verse, chip stone – the Fang will ask,  
"Will you be there at set of sun?"  
Men scheme each night and hope each morning,  
Yet no man grows one moment riper  
But suffers, at each turn, the warning  
Of the insufferable viper.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## À une Malabaraise (1868)

### À une Malabaraise

Tes pieds sont aussi fins que tes mains, et ta hanche  
Est large à faire envie à la plus belle blanche ;  
À l'artiste pensif ton corps est doux et cher ;  
Tes grands yeux de velours sont plus noirs que ta chair.  
Aux pays chauds et bleus où ton Dieu t'a fait naître,  
Ta tâche est d'allumer la pipe de ton maître,  
De pourvoir les flacons d'eaux fraîches et d'odeurs,  
De chasser loin du lit les moustiques rôdeurs,  
Et, dès que le matin fait chanter les platanes,  
D'acheter au bazar ananas et bananes.  
Tout le jour, où tu veux, tu mènes tes pieds nus,  
Et fredonnes tout bas de vieux airs inconnus ;  
Et quand descend le soir au manteau d'écarlate,  
Tu poses doucement ton corps sur une natte,  
Où tes rêves flottants sont pleins de colibris,  
Et toujours, comme toi, gracieux et fleuris.  
Pourquoi, l'heureuse enfant, veux-tu voir notre France,  
Ce pays trop peuplé que fauche la souffrance,  
Et, confiant ta vie aux bras forts des marins,  
Faire de grands adieux à tes chers tamarins ?  
Toi, vêtue à moitié de mousselines frêles,  
Frissonnante là-bas sous la neige et les grêles,  
Comme tu pleureras tes loisirs doux et francs  
Si, le corset brutal emprisonnant tes flancs  
Il te fallait glaner ton souper dans nos fanges  
Et vendre le parfum de tes charmes étranges,  
Oeil pensif, et suivant, dans nos sales brouillards,  
Des cocotiers absents les fantômes épars !

– Charles Baudelaire

## To a Malabar Woman

Your feet are as slender as your hands and your hips  
Are broad ; they'd make the fairest white woman jealous ;  
To the pensive artist your body's sweet and dear ;  
Your wide, velvety eyes are darker than your skin.  
In the hot blue country where your God had you born  
It is your task to light the pipe of your master,  
To keep the flasks filled with cool water and perfumes,  
To drive far from his bed the roving mosquitoes,  
And as soon as morning makes the plane-trees sing, to  
Buy pineapples and bananas at the bazaar.  
All day long your bare feet follow your whims,  
And, very low, you hum old, unknown melodies ;  
And when evening in his scarlet cloak descends,  
You stretch out quietly upon a mat and there  
Your drifting dreams are full of humming-birds and are  
Like you, always pleasant and adorned with flowers.  
Why, happy child, do you wish to see France,  
That over-peopled country which suffering mows down,  
And entrusting your life to the strong arms of sailors,  
Bid a last farewell to your dear tamarinds ?  
You, half-dressed in filmy muslins,  
Shivering over there in the snow and the hail,  
How you would weep for your free, pleasant leisure, if,  
With a brutal corset imprisoning your flanks,  
You had to glean your supper in our muddy streets  
And sell the fragrance of your exotic charms,  
With pensive eye, following in our dirty fogs  
The sprawling phantoms of the absent coco palms !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## To a Girl from Malabar

Your feet are finer than your hands, and bigger  
Your haunch than plumpest white ones are. Your figure  
Is to a pensive artist dear and fresh.  
Your velvet eyes are darker than your flesh.  
In hot blue lands, where your God gave you being,

Your task, lighting your master's pipe, and seeing  
The jars well filled with lymph, the flasks with scent,  
Or switching the mosquitoes – there you went,  
When dawn sang through the rustling planes, to buy  
Plantains or pineapples from the nearby  
Bazaar. All day, at will, barefoot you passed  
Humming old unknown tunes : and when at last  
The sun went down, bright red, across the flat,  
You flung your body on the wicker mat ;  
And full of humming birds, your floating dream  
Was gay and flowery as you always seem.  
How, happy child, did you come here to France,  
This overpeopled land, by what mischance,  
When to your tamarinds you bade adieu  
Confiding in the sailors of the crew ?  
But now half-clothed in muslin frail and thin,  
While frost and sleet assail your shivering skin,  
With brutal corsets prisoning you fast,  
How you must long for the old, carefree past !  
Now you must glean your dinners from the mud  
And sell the perfumes of your flesh and blood,  
In our foul mists, with pensive eye still straying  
To catch a glimpse of phantom palm trees swaying.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## La Voix (1868)

### La Voix

Mon berceau s'adossait à la bibliothèque,  
Babel sombre, où roman, science, fabliau,  
Tout, la cendre latine et la poussière grecque,  
Se mêlaient. J'étais haut comme un in-folio.  
Deux voix me parlaient. L'une, insidieuse et ferme,  
Disait : « La Terre est un gâteau plein de douceur ;  
Je puis (et ton plaisir serait alors sans terme !)  
Te faire un appétit d'une égale grosseur. »  
Et l'autre : « Viens ! oh ! viens voyager dans les rêves,  
Au delà du possible, au delà du connu ! »  
Et celle-là chantait comme le vent des grèves,  
Fantôme vagissant, on ne sait d'où venu,  
Qui caresse l'oreille et cependant l'effraie.  
Je te répondis : « Oui ! douce voix ! » C'est d'alors  
Que date ce qu'on peut, hélas ! nommer ma plaie  
Et ma fatalité. Derrière les décors  
De l'existence immense, au plus noir de l'abîme,  
Je vois distinctement des mondes singuliers,  
Et, de ma clairvoyance extatique victime,  
Je traîne des serpents qui mordent mes souliers.  
Et c'est depuis ce temps que, pareil aux prophètes,  
J'aime si tendrement le désert et la mer ;  
Que je ris dans les deuils et pleure dans les fêtes,  
Et trouve un goût suave au vin le plus amer ;  
Que je prends très souvent les faits pour des mensonges,  
Et que, les yeux au ciel, je tombe dans des trous.  
Mais la voix me console et dit : « Garde tes songes :  
Les sages n'en ont pas d'aussi beaux que les fous ! »

– Charles Baudelaire



## The Voice

The back of my crib was against the library,  
 That gloomy Babel, where novels, science, fabliaux,  
 Everything, Latin ashes and Greek dust,  
 Were mingled. I was no taller than a folio.  
 Two voices used to speak to me. One, sly and firm,  
 Would say : "The Earth's a cake full of sweetness ;  
 I can (and then there'd be no end to your pleasure !)  
 Give you an appetite of equal size."  
 And the other : "Come travel in dreams  
 Beyond the possible, beyond the known !"  
 And it would sing like the wind on the strand,  
 That wailing ghost, one knows not whence it comes,  
 That caresses the ear and withal frightens it.  
 I answered you : "Yes ! gentle voice !" It's from that time  
 That dates what may be called alas ! my wound  
 And my fatality. Behind the scenes  
 Of life's vastness, in the abyss' darkest corner  
 I see distinctly bizarre worlds,  
 And ecstatic victim of my own clairvoyance,  
 I drag along with me, serpents that bite my shoes.  
 And it's since that time that, like the prophets,  
 I love so tenderly the desert and the sea ;  
 That I laugh at funerals and weep at festivals  
 And find a pleasant taste in the most bitter wine ;  
 That very often I take facts for lies  
 And that, my eyes raised heavenward, I fall in holes.  
 But the Voice consoles me and it says : "Keep your dreams ;  
 Wise men do not have such beautiful ones as fools !"

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Voice

My cot was next the library, a Babel  
 Where fiction jostled science, myth and fable.  
 Greek dust with Roman ash there met the sight.  
 And I was but a folio in height  
 When two Voices addressed me. "Earth's a cake,"

Said one, "and full of sweetness. I can make  
Your appetite to its proportions equal  
Forever and forever without sequel."  
Another said "Come, rove in dreams, with me,  
Past knowledge, thought or possibility."  
That voice sang like the wind along the shore  
And, though caressing, frightened me the more.  
I answered "O sweet Voice!" and from that date  
Could never name my sorrow or my fate.  
Behind the giant scenery of this life  
I see strange worlds : with my own self at strife,  
Ecstatic victim of my second sight,  
I trail huge snakes, that at my ankles bite.  
And like an ancient prophet, from that time,  
I've loved the desert, found the sea sublime ;  
I've wept at festivals and laughed at wakes :  
And found in sourest wines a sweet that slakes ;  
Falsehoods for facts I love to swallow whole,  
And often fall, star-gazing, in a hole.  
But the Voice cheers – "Keep dreaming. It's a rule  
No sage can dream such beauty as a fool."

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Hymne (1868)

### Hymne

À la très chère, à la très belle  
Qui remplit mon coeur de clarté,  
À l'ange, À l'idole immortelle,  
Salut en l'immortalité !  
Elle se répand dans ma vie  
Comme un air imprégné de sel,  
Et dans mon âme inassouvie  
Verse le goût de l'éternel.  
Sachet toujours frais qui parfume  
L'atmosphère d'un cher réduit,  
Encensoir oublié qui fume  
En secret à travers la nuit,  
Comment, amour incorruptible,  
T'exprimer avec vérité ?  
Grain de musc qui gis, invisible,  
Au fond de mon éternité !  
À la très bonne, à la très belle  
Qui fait ma joie et ma santé,  
À l'ange, à l'idole immortelle,  
Salut en l'immortalité !

– Charles Baudelaire

### Hymn

To the dearest, fairest woman  
Who sets my heart ablaze with light,  
To the angel, the immortal idol,

Greetings in immortality !  
 She permeates my life  
 Like air impregnated with salt  
 And into my unsated soul  
 Pours the taste for the eternal.  
 Sachet, ever fresh, that perfumes  
 The atmosphere of a dear nook,  
 Forgotten censer smoldering  
 Secretly through the night,  
 Everlasting love, how can I  
 Describe you truthfully ?  
 Grain of musk that lies unseen  
 In the depths of my eternity !  
 To the dearest, fairest woman  
 Who is my health and my delight  
 To the angel, the immortal idol,  
 Greetings in immortality !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Hymn

To the most lovely, the most dear,  
 The Angel, and the deathless grail  
 Who fill my heart with radiance clear –  
 In immortality all hail !  
 Into my life she flows translated  
 As saline breezes fill the sky,  
 And pours into my soul unsated  
 The taste of what can never die.  
 Sachet, forever fresh, perfuming  
 Some quiet nook of hid delight ;  
 A lone forgotten censer fuming  
 In secrecy across the night.  
 How, flawless love, with truth impart  
 Your purity and keep it whole,  
 O unseen grain of musk who art  
 The core of my eternal soul ?  
 To the most lovely, the most dear,

The angel, and the deathless grail,  
Who fill my life with radiance clear –  
In immortality all hail !

– Roy Campbell, 1952



## Le Rebelle (1868)

### Le Rebelle

Un Ange furieux fond du ciel comme un aigle,  
Du mécréant saisit à plein poing les cheveux,  
Et dit, le secouant : « Tu connaîtras la règle !  
(Car je suis ton bon Ange, entends-tu ?) Je le veux !  
Sache qu'il faut aimer, sans faire la grimace,  
Le pauvre, le méchant, le tortu, l'hébété,  
Pour que tu puisses faire à Jesus, quand il passe,  
Un tapis triomphal avec ta charité.  
Tel est l'Amour ! Avant que ton coeur ne se blase,  
À la gloire de Dieu rallume ton extase ;  
C'est la Volupté vraie aux durables appas ! »  
Et l'Ange, châtiant autant, ma foi ! qu'il aime,  
De ses poings de géant torture l'anathème ;  
Mais le damné répond toujours : « Je ne veux pas ! »

– Charles Baudelaire

### The Rebel

A furious Angel swoops down like an eagle,  
Grabs a fistful of the infidel's hair,  
And shaking him says : "You shall know the rule !  
(For I am your good angel, do you hear ?) You shall !  
Know that you must love without making a wry face  
The pauper, the scoundrel, the hunchback, the dullard,  
So that you can make for Jesus when he passes  
A triumphal carpet of your love.  
Such is love ! Before your heart becomes indifferent,

Relight your ecstasy before the glory of God ;  
That is the true Voluptuousness with the lasting charms !"  
The Angel who gives punishment equal to his love  
Beats the anathema with his giant fists ;  
But the damned one still answers : "I shall not !"

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Rebel

An angel from the sky swoops like an eagle,  
Seizes the culprit's hair in his strong fist,  
And shakes him, saying "You must know what's legal  
For I am your Good Angel. I insist.  
Know you must cherish, without wry grimaces,  
The poor, deformed, blockheaded, sick, and vile :  
And thus unroll for Christ's triumphal paces  
The carpet of your charity in style.  
For such is Love ! Before your heart grows dim,  
Light up your heart from God and burn for him.  
That is the true delight that lasts for ever."  
The Angel, by his love filled with more ardour,  
With giant fists belabours him the harder.  
The damned soul always answers, "I will never."

– Roy Campbell, 1952



## Les Yeux de Berthe (1868)

### Les Yeux de Berthe

Vous pouvez mépriser les yeux les plus célèbres,  
Beaux yeux de mon enfant, par où filtre et s'enfuit  
Je ne sais quoi de bon, de doux comme la Nuit !  
Beaux yeux, versez sur moi vos charmantes ténèbres !  
Grands yeux de mon enfant, arcanes adorés,  
Vous ressemblez beaucoup à ces grottes magiques  
Où, derrière l'amas des ombres léthargiques,  
Scintillent vaguement des trésors ignorés !  
Mon enfant a des yeux obscurs, profonds et vastes,  
Comme toi, Nuit immense, éclairés comme toi !  
Leurs feux sont ces pensers d'Amour, mêlés de Foi,  
Qui pétillent au fond, voluptueux ou chastes.

– Charles Baudelaire

### Bertha's Eyes

You can hold in contempt the most famous eyes,  
Beautiful eyes of my child, whence filters and flees  
A certain something as kind, as sweet as the Night !  
Beautiful eyes pour your charming shadows upon me !  
Urge eyes of my child, adored mysteries,  
You greatly resemble those magical grottos  
In which, behind the heap of lethargic shadows,  
Unknown treasures sparkle indistinctly !  
My child has eyes, dark, profound and immense  
Like you, vast Night, lighted like you !  
Their fires are those thoughts of Love mingled with Faith

Which sparkle in their depths, voluptuous or chaste.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## **Bertha's Eyes**

The most illustrious gaze you may despise,  
Eyes of my child, where filters and takes flight  
I know not what of goodness, soft as night.  
Pour out on me your lovely shade, dear eyes!  
Great eyes of my dear child! arcades adored!  
You seem like magic caves where shadow darkles  
And, through the mass of crowded gloom, there sparkles  
And scintillates some richly treasured hoard.  
My girl has eyes as deep, vast, and serene  
As you, O night, immense, and lit like you;  
Their fires are thoughts of Love, with faith shot through,  
Voluptuous, and chaste, though sparkling keen.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Le Jet d'eau (1868)

### Le Jet d'eau

Tes beaux yeux sont las, pauvre amante !  
Reste longtemps, sans les rouvrir,  
Dans cette pose nonchalante  
Où t'a surprise le plaisir.  
Dans la cour le jet d'eau qui jase,  
Et ne se tait ni nuit ni jour,  
Entretient doucement l'extase  
Où ce soir m'a plongé l'amour.  
La gerbe épanouie  
En mille fleurs,  
Où Phoebé réjouie  
Met ses couleurs,  
Tombe comme une pluie  
De larges pleurs.  
Ainsi ton âme qu'incendie  
L'éclair brûlant des voluptés  
S'élançe, rapide et hardie,  
Vers les vastes cieux enchantés.  
Puis elle s'épanche, mourante,  
En un flot de triste langueur,  
Qui par une invisible pente  
Descend jusqu'au fond de mon coeur.  
La gerbe épanouie  
En mille fleurs,  
Où Phoebé réjouie  
Met ses couleurs,  
Tombe comme une pluie  
De larges pleurs.  
Ô toi, que la nuit rend si belle,

Qu'il m'est doux, penché vers tes seins,  
D'écouter la plainte éternelle  
Qui sanglote dans les bassins !  
Lune, eau sonore, nuit bénie,  
Arbres qui frissonnez autour,  
Votre pure mélancolie  
Est le miroir de mon amour.  
La gerbe épanouie  
En mille fleurs,  
Où Phoebé réjouie  
Met ses couleurs,  
Tombe comme une pluie  
De larges pleurs.

– Charles Baudelaire

## The Fountain

My poor mistress ! your lovely eyes  
Are tired, leave them closed and keep  
For long the nonchalant pose  
In which pleasure surprised you,  
In the court the bubbling fountain  
That's never silent night or day  
Sweetly sustains the ecstasy  
Into which love plunged me tonight.  
The sheaf unfolds into  
Countless flowers  
In which joyful Phoebe  
Puts her colors :  
It drops like a shower  
Of heavy tears.  
Thus your soul which is set ablaze  
By the burning flash of pleasure  
Springs heavenward, fearless and swift,  
Toward the boundless, enchanted skies.  
And then it overflows, dying  
In a wave of languid sadness  
That by an invisible slope  
Descends to the depths of my heart.

The sheaf unfolds into  
Countless flowers  
In which joyful Phoebe  
Puts her colors :  
It drops like a shower  
Of heavy tears.  
Oh you whom the night makes so fair,  
How sweet, bending over your breast,  
To listen to the endless plaint  
Of the sobbing of the fountains !  
Moon, singing water, blessed night,  
Trees that quiver round about us,  
Your innocent melancholy  
Is the mirror of my love.  
The sheaf unfolds into  
Countless flowers  
In which joyful Phoebe  
Puts her colors :  
It drops like a shower  
Of heavy tears.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Fountain

My darling of a sweetheart, close,  
For a long time, your great, tired eyes,  
Keeping them in that languid pose  
Where pleasure took them by surprise.  
Out in the court the fountain chatters  
And does not cease by day or night.  
The swoon of ecstasy it flatters  
In which love plunges me tonight.  
Its sheaf uprears  
A myriad flowers,  
While Phoebe sheers  
Through pearl-flushed hours,  
To rain down tears  
In glittering showers.  
So does your flashing soul ignite

In lightnings of voluptuous bliss  
And rushes reckless up the height  
As though the enchanted sky to kiss ;  
Then it relaxes, grows more fine,  
And in sad languor falls apart  
Down an invisible incline  
Into the deep well of my heart.

Its sheaf uprears  
A myriad flowers,  
While Phoebe sheers  
Through pearl-flushed hours,  
To rain down tears  
In glittering showers.

O you whom night so beautifies  
How sweet unto your breast to bend  
And hear the water as it sighs  
Into the ponds without an end  
Moon, singing water, blessed night  
And trees that tremble up above –  
Your melancholy charms my sprite  
And is the mirror of my love.

Its sheaf uprears  
A myriad flowers,  
While Phoebe sheers  
Through pearl-flushed hours,  
To rain down tears  
In glittering showers.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## La Rançon (1868)

### La Rançon

L'homme a, pour payer sa rançon,  
Deux champs au tuf profond et riche,  
Qu'il faut qu'il remue et défriche  
Avec le fer de la raison ;  
Pour obtenir la moindre rose,  
Pour extorquer quelques épis,  
Des pleurs salés de son front gris  
Sans cesse il faut qu'il les arrose.  
L'un est l'Art, et l'autre l'Amour.  
– Pour rendre le juge propice,  
Lorsque de la stricte justice  
Paraîtra le terrible jour,  
Il faudra lui montrer des granges  
Pleines de moissons, et des fleurs  
Dont les formes et les couleurs  
Gagnent le suffrage des Anges.

– Charles Baudelaire

### The Ransom

Man has, for paying his ransom,  
Two fields of rich, deep, porous rock  
That he must clear and cultivate  
With the iron of his reason ;  
To obtain the sorriest rose,  
To extort a few ears of grain,  
He must water them constantly

With salty sweat from his gray brow.  
One is Art and the other Love.  
– To win the judge's favor  
When the terrible day  
Of dispassionate justice dawns,  
He will have to show granaries  
Filled with harvests and with flowers  
Whose forms and colors will  
Win the suffrage of the Angels.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Ransom

Man, for his ransom, has two fields,  
Two fields of tufa, deep and rich,  
Which he must duly delve and ditch.  
His reason is the hoe he wields.  
In order to extort one rose,  
Or to produce a few poor cars,  
He has to squander showers of tears  
In watering the seeds he sows.  
One field is Art, the other Love ;  
And both must for his favour bloom  
When the strict judge appears above  
Upon the dreadful day of doom.  
Man's granges must be filled to burst  
With crops and flowers, whose form and shade  
Must win the angels' suffrage first  
Before his ransom can be paid.

– Roy Campbell, 1952



## Bien loin d'ici (1868)

### Bien loin d'ici

C'est ici la case sacrée  
Où cette fille très parée,  
Tranquille et toujours préparée,  
D'une main éventant ses seins,  
Et son coude dans les coussins,  
Écoute pleurer les bassins :  
C'est la chambre de Dorothée.  
– La brise et l'eau chantent au loin  
Leur chanson de sanglots heurtée  
Pour bercer cette enfant gâtée.  
Du haut en bas, avec grand soin.  
Sa peau délicate est frottée  
D'huile odorante et de benjoin.  
– Des fleurs se pâment dans un coin.

– Charles Baudelaire

### Very Far From Here

This is the sacred dwelling  
In which that much adorned maiden  
Calm and always prepared  
Listens to the fountains weeping,  
Fanning her breast with her hand,  
Her elbow resting on the cushions ;  
It's the bedroom of Dorothy.  
– Far off the breeze and waters sing  
Their broken, sobbing song

To lull to sleep this pampered child.  
From head to foot, with greatest care  
Her delicate skin is polished  
With perfumed oil and benzoin.  
– Flowers swoon in a corner.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Far Away From Here

This is the room, the sacred nest  
Of that girl so richly dressed,  
Tranquil and ready for her guest.  
With one hand she fans her nipples  
Elbow on the couch at rest  
Listening to the ponds and ripples.  
This room is Dorothy's. The play  
Of wind and water, far away,  
With fainting song and rhythmic sobs,  
Through her reverie hums and throbs.  
From head to toe with greatest care  
Her skin is polished, to adorn her  
With benjamin and oils as rare...  
Some flowers are swooning in a corner.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Le Coucher du Soleil Romantique (1868)

### Le Coucher du Soleil Romantique

Que le soleil est beau quand tout frais il se lève,  
Comme une explosion nous lançant son bonjour !  
– Bienheureux celui-là qui peut avec amour  
Saluer son coucher plus glorieux qu'un rêve !  
Je me souviens !... J'ai vu tout, fleur, source, sillon,  
Se pâmer sous son oeil comme un coeur qui palpite...  
– Courons vers l'horizon, il est tard, courons vite,  
Pour attraper au moins un oblique rayon !  
Mais je poursuis en vain le Dieu qui se retire ;  
L'irrésistible Nuit établit son empire,  
Noire, humide, funeste et pleine de frissons ;  
Une odeur de tombeau dans les ténèbres nage,  
Et mon pied peureux froisse, au bord du marécage,  
Des crapauds imprévus et de froids limaçons.

– Charles Baudelaire

### The Sunset of Romanticism

How beautiful the Sun is when newly risen  
He hurls his morning greetings like an explosion !  
– Fortunate the one who can lovingly salute  
His setting, more glorious than a dream !  
I remember !... I have seen all, flower, stream, furrow,  
Swoon under his gaze like a palpitating heart...  
– Let us run to the horizon, it's late,

Let us run fast, to catch at least a slanting ray !  
But I pursue in vain the sinking god ;  
Irresistible Night, black, damp, deadly,  
Full of shudders, establishes his reign ;  
The odor of the tomb swims in the shadows  
And at the marsh's edge my timid foot  
Treads upon slimy snails and unexpected toads.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Romantic Sunset

How lovely is the sun, when, freshly soaring,  
Like an explosion, first he bids "Good-Day."  
Happy the man, on gorgeous sunsets poring,  
Who can salute with love its parting ray.  
I've seen all things, flower, furrow, pond, and rill,  
Swoon in his gaze like a poor heart that dies.  
Run to the skyline. It is late. We still  
May catch one parting ray before it flies.  
But it's in vain I chase my God receding.  
Night irresistible, damp, black, unheeding  
Establishes her empire, full of fear.  
Amongst the shades a grave-like odour trails.  
My naked feet walk into chilly snails  
And bullfrogs unforeseen along the mere.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Sur 'Le Tasse en prison' d'Eugène Delacroix (1868)

### Sur 'Le Tasse en prison' d'Eugène Delacroix

Le poète au cachot, débraillé, maladif,  
Roulant un manuscrit sous son pied convulsif,  
Mesure d'un regard que la terreur enflamme  
L'escalier de vertige où s'abîme son âme.  
Les rires enivrants dont s'emplit la prison  
Vers l'étrange et l'absurde invitent sa raison ;  
Le Doute l'environne, et la Peur ridicule,  
Hideuse et multiforme, autour de lui circule.  
Ce génie enfermé dans un taudis malsain,  
Ces grimaces, ces cris, ces spectres dont l'essaim  
Tourbillonne, ameuté derrière son oreille,  
Ce rêveur que l'horreur de son logis réveille,  
Voilà bien ton emblème, Âme aux songes obscurs,  
Que le Réel étouffe entre ses quatre murs !

– Charles Baudelaire

### On 'Tasso in Prison' by Eugene Delacroix

The poet in the dungeon, sickly and unkempt,  
Rolling a manuscript under his convulsed foot,  
Measures with a look that terror enflames  
The stairway of vertigo down which his soul plunges.  
The intoxicating laughs that fill the prison  
Invite his reason to the strange and the absurd ;  
Doubt surrounds him and ridiculous Fear,

Hideous and multiform, flows all about him.  
This genius imprisoned in a noisome hovel,  
Those grimaces, those cries, that swarm of ghosts  
Gathered in a pack, swirls behind his car,  
This dreamer wakened by the horror of his lodgings,  
That's indeed your symbol, Soul with the obscure dreams,  
Whom Reality stifles inside its four walls!

– William Aggeler, 1954

### **On Delacroix's Picture of Tasso in Prison**

The poet, sick, and with his chest half bare  
Tramples a manuscript in his dark stall,  
Gazing with terror at the yawning stair  
Down which his spirit finally must fall.  
Intoxicating laughs which fill his prison  
Invite him to the Strange and the Absurd.  
With ugly shapes around him have arisen  
Both Doubt and Terror, multiform and blurred.  
This genius cooped in an unhealthy hovel,  
These cries, grimaces, ghosts that squirm and grovel  
Whirling around him, mocking as they call,  
This dreamer whom these horrors rouse with screams,  
They are your emblem, Soul of misty dreams  
Round whom the Real erects its stifling wall.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Le Gouffre (1868)

### Le Gouffre

Pascal avait son gouffre, avec lui se mouvant.  
– Hélas ! tout est abîme, – action, désir, rêve,  
Parole ! Et sur mon poil qui tout droit se relève  
Mainte fois de la Peur je sens passer le vent.  
En haut, en bas, partout, la profondeur, la grève,  
Le silence, l'espace affreux et captivant...  
Sur le fond de mes nuits Dieu de son doigt savant  
Dessine un cauchemar multiforme et sans trêve.  
J'ai peur du sommeil comme on a peur d'un grand trou,  
Tout plein de vague horreur, menant on ne sait où ;  
Je ne vois qu'infini par toutes les fenêtres,  
Et mon esprit, toujours du vertige hanté,  
Jalouse du néant l'insensibilité.  
– Ah ! ne jamais sortir des Nombres et des Êtres !

– Charles Baudelaire

### The Abyss

Pascal had his abyss that moved along with him.  
– Alas ! all is abysmal, – action, desire, dream,  
Word ! and over my hair which stands on end  
I feel the wind of Fear pass frequently.  
Above, below, on every side, the depth, the strand,  
The silence, space, hideous and fascinating...  
On the background of my nights God with clever hands  
Sketches an unending nightmare of many forms.  
I'm afraid of sleep as one is of a great hole

Full of obscure horrors, leading one knows not where ;  
I see only infinite through every window,  
And my spirit, haunted by vertigo, is jealous  
Of the insensibility of nothingness.  
– Ah! Never to go out from Numbers and Beings !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Gulf

Wherever Pascal went, his gulf was spread,  
All is abyss – dream, act, desire, or word !  
And often by the wind of terror stirred  
I've felt the hair shoot upright on my head.  
High up, low down, all round, the depth descending,  
The verge, the silence, the dread captor, Space.  
Behind my nights I see God's finger trace  
A Nightmare multiform yet never-ending.  
I dread my sleep like some enormous hole  
Full of vague horror, leading to no goal.  
All windows bare the infinite to me.  
My soul, in its vertiginous endeavour,  
Enviest the senseless void – Ah, never never  
From entities or numbers to be free !

– Roy Campbell, 1952



## Les Plaintes d'un Icare (1868)

### Les Plaintes d'un Icare

Les amants des prostituées  
Sont heureux, dispos et repus ;  
Quant à moi, mes bras sont rompus  
Pour avoir étreint des nuées.  
C'est grâce aux astres nonpareils,  
Qui tout au fond du ciel flamboient,  
Que mes yeux consumés ne voient  
Que des souvenirs de soleils.  
En vain j'ai voulu de l'espace  
Trouver la fin et le milieu ;  
Sous je ne sais quel oeil de feu  
Je sens mon aile qui se casse ;  
Et brûlé par l'amour du beau,  
Je n'aurai pas l'honneur sublime  
De donner mon nom à l'abîme  
Qui me servira de tombeau.

– Charles Baudelaire

### The Complaints of an Icarus

The lovers of prostitutes  
Are happy, healthy, and sated ;  
As for me, my arms are weary  
Because I have embraced the clouds,  
It is thanks to the peerless stars  
That flame in the depth of the sky  
That my burned out eyes see

Only the memories of suns.  
I tried in vain to find  
The middle and the end of space ;  
I know not under what fiery eye  
I feel my pinions breaking ;  
Burned by love of the beautiful  
I shan't have the sublime honor  
Of giving my name to the abyss  
That will serve me as a tomb.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Complaint of an Icarus

Those who love whores are well-endowed,  
Spry, and well-fed, and cheerful-spoken.  
But, as for me, my arms are broken  
From trying to embrace a cloud.  
To what two peerless stars have done  
That kindle in the farthest skies,  
I owe it that my burnt-out eyes  
Know only memories of the sun.  
In vain I've tried to find the pole  
And the equator-line of space.  
I know not by what burning gaze  
The wings were molten from my soul.  
By love of beauty singed, I fall  
Yet fail the honour and the bliss  
To give my name to the abyss  
Which serves me for my tomb and pall.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Recueillement (1868)

### Recueillement

Sois sage, ô ma Douleur, et tiens-toi plus tranquille.  
Tu réclamaï le Soir ; il descend ; le voici :  
Une atmosphère obscure enveloppe la ville,  
Aux uns portant la paix, aux autres le souci.  
Pendant que des mortels la multitude vile,  
Sous le fouet du Plaisir, ce bourreau sans merci,  
Va cueillir des remords dans la fête servile,  
Ma Douleur, donne-moi la main ; viens par ici,  
Loin d'eux. Vois se pencher les défuntes Années,  
Sur les balcons du ciel, en robes surannées ;  
Surgir du fond des eaux le Regret souriant ;  
Le soleil moribond s'endormir sous une arche,  
Et, comme un long linceul traînant à l'Orient,  
Entends, ma chère, entends la douce Nuit qui marche.

– Charles Baudelaire

### Meditation

Be quiet and more discreet, O my Grief.  
You cried out for the Evening ; even now it falls :  
A gloomy atmosphere envelops the city,  
Bringing peace to some, anxiety to others.  
While the vulgar herd of mortals, under the scourge  
Of Pleasure, that merciless torturer,  
Goes to gather remorse in the servile festival,  
My Grief, give me your hand ; come this way  
Far from them. See the dead years in old-fashioned gowns

Lean over the balconies of heaven ;  
Smiling Regret rise from the depths of the waters ;  
The dying Sun fall asleep beneath an arch, and  
Listen, darling, to the soft footfalls of the Night  
That traits off to the East like a long winding-sheet.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Meditation

Be good, my Sorrow : hush now : settle down.  
You sighed for dusk, and now it comes : look there !  
A denser atmosphere obscures the town,  
To some restoring peace, to others care.  
While the lewd multitude, like hungry beasts,  
By pleasure scourged (no thug so fierce as he !)  
Go forth to seek remorse among their feasts –  
Come, take my hand ; escape from them with me.  
From balconies of sky, around us yet,  
Lean the dead years in fashions that have ceased.  
Out of the depth of waters smiles Regret.  
The sun sinks moribund beneath an arch,  
And like a long shroud rustling from the East,  
Hark, Love, the gentle Night is on the march.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# L'Héautontimorouménos

## L'Héautontimorouménos

À J.G.F.

Je te frapperai sans colère  
Et sans haine, comme un boucher,  
Comme Moïse le rocher  
Et je ferai de ta paupière,  
Pour abreuver mon Saharah  
Jaillir les eaux de la souffrance.  
Mon désir gonflé d'espérance  
Sur tes pleurs salés nagera  
Comme un vaisseau qui prend le large,  
Et dans mon coeur qu'ils souleront  
Tes chers sanglots retentiront  
Comme un tambour qui bat la charge !  
Ne suis-je pas un faux accord  
Dans la divine symphonie,  
Grâce à la vorace Ironie  
Qui me secoue et qui me mord  
Elle est dans ma voix, la criarde !  
C'est tout mon sang ce poison noir !  
Je suis le sinistre miroir  
Où la mégère se regarde.  
Je suis la plaie et le couteau !  
Je suis le soufflet et la joue !  
Je suis les membres et la roue,  
Et la victime et le bourreau !  
Je suis de mon coeur le vampire,  
– Un de ces grands abandonnés  
Au rire éternel condamnés

Et qui ne peuvent plus sourire !

– Charles Baudelaire

## The Man Who Tortures Himself

To J. G. F.

I shall strike you without anger  
And without hate, like a butcher,  
As Moses struck the rock !  
And from your eyelids I shall make  
The waters of suffering gush forth  
To inundate my Sahara.  
My desire swollen with hope  
Will float upon your salty tears  
Like a vessel which puts to sea,  
And in my heart that they'll make drunk  
Your beloved sobs will resound  
Like a drum beating the charge !  
Am I not a discord  
In the heavenly symphony,  
Thanks to voracious Irony  
Who shakes me and who bites me ?  
She's in my voice, the termagant !  
All my blood is her black poison !  
I am the sinister mirror  
In which the vixen looks.  
I am the wound and the dagger !  
I am the blow and the cheek !  
I am the members and the wheel,  
Victim and executioner !  
I'm the vampire of my own heart  
– One of those utter derelicts  
Condemned to eternal laughter,  
But who can no longer smile !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Heautontimoroumenos

To J. G. F.

I'll strike you, but without the least  
Anger – as butchers poll an ox,  
Or Moses, when he struck the rocks –  
That from your eyelid thus released,  
The lymph of suffering may brim  
To slake my desert of its drought.  
So my desire, by hope made stout,  
Upon your salty tears may swim,  
Like a proud ship, far out from shore.  
Within my heart, which they'll confound  
With drunken joy, your sobs will sound  
Like drums that beat a charge in war.  
Am I not a faulty chord  
In all this symphony divine,  
Thanks to the irony malign  
That shakes and cuts me like a sword?  
It's in my voice, the raucous jade!  
It's in my blood's black venom too!  
I am the looking-glass, wherethrough  
Megera sees herself portrayed!  
I am the wound, and yet the blade!  
The smack, and yet the cheek that takes it!  
The limb, and yet the wheel that breaks it,  
The torturer, and he who's flayed!  
One of the sort whom all revile,  
A Vampire, my own blood I quaff,  
Condemned to an eternal laugh  
Because I know not how to smile.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# L'Irrémédiable

## L'Irrémédiable

I

Une Idée, une Forme, un Etre  
Parti de l'azur et tombé  
Dans un Styx bourbeux et plombé  
Où nul oeil du Ciel ne pénètre ;  
Un Ange, imprudent voyageur  
Qu'a tenté l'amour du difforme,  
Au fond d'un cauchemar énorme  
Se débattant comme un nageur,  
Et luttant, angoisses funèbres !  
Contre un gigantesque remous  
Qui va chantant comme les fous  
Et pirouettant dans les ténèbres ;  
Un malheureux ensorcelé  
Dans ses tâtonnements futiles  
Pour fuir d'un lieu plein de reptiles,  
Cherchant la lumière et la clé ;  
Un damné descendant sans lampe  
Au bord d'un gouffre dont l'odeur  
Trahit l'humide profondeur  
D'éternels escaliers sans rampe,  
Où veillent des monstres visqueux  
Dont les larges yeux de phosphore  
Font une nuit plus noire encore  
Et ne rendent visibles qu'eux ;  
Un navire pris dans le pôle  
Comme en un piège de cristal,  
Cherchant par quel détroit fatal



Il est tombé dans cette geôle ;  
– Emblèmes nets, tableau parfait  
D'une fortune irrémédiable  
Qui donne à penser que le Diable  
Fait toujours bien tout ce qu'il fait !

## II

Tête-à-tête sombre et limpide  
Qu'un coeur devenu son miroir !  
Puits de Vérité, clair et noir  
Où tremble une étoile livide,  
Un phare ironique, infernal  
Flambeau des grâces sataniques,  
Soulagement et gloire uniques,  
– La conscience dans le Mal !

– Charles Baudelaire

## Beyond Redemption

## I

An Idea, a Form, a Being  
Which left the azure sky and fell  
Into a leaden, miry Styx  
That no eye in Heaven can pierce ;  
An Angel, imprudent voyager  
Tempted by love of the deformed,  
In the depths of a vast nightmare  
Flailing his arms like a swimmer,  
And struggling, mortal agony !  
Against a gigantic whirlpool  
That sings constantly like madmen  
And pirouettes in the darkness ;  
An unfortunate, enchanted,  
Outstretched hands groping futilely,  
Looking for the light and the key,  
To flee a place filled with reptiles ;  
A damned soul descending endless stairs  
Without banisters, without light,

On the edge of a gulf of which  
 The odor reveals the humid depth,  
 Where slimy monsters are watching,  
 Whose eyes, wide and phosphorescent,  
 Make the darkness darker still  
 And make visible naught but themselves ;  
 A ship caught in the polar sea  
 As though in a snare of crystal,  
 Seeking the fatal strait through which  
 It came into that prison ;  
 – Patent symbols, perfect picture  
 Of an irremediable fate  
 Which makes one think that the Devil  
 Always does well whatever he does !

## II

Somber and limpid tête-à-tête –  
 A heart become its own mirror !  
 Well of Truth, clear and black,  
 Where a pale star flickers,  
 A hellish, ironic beacon,  
 Torch of satanical blessings,  
 Sole glory and only solace  
 – The consciousness of doing evil.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Irremediable

## I

A Form, Idea, or Essence, chased  
 Out of the azure sky, and shot  
 Into a leaden Styx where not  
 A star can pierce the muddy waste :  
 An angel, rash explorer, who,  
 Tempted by love of strange deformity,  
 Caught in a nightmare of enormity,  
 Fights like a swimmer, wrestling through  
 A monstrous whorl of eddying spume,

In deathly anguish, from him flinging  
The wave that, like an idiot singing,  
Goes pirouetting through the gloom :  
A wretch enchanted, who, to flee  
A den of serpents, gropes about  
In desperation vain, without  
Discovering a match or key :  
A damned soul, who, with no lamp,  
Stands by a gulf, whose humid scent  
Betrays the depth of the descent  
Of endless stairs without a ramp,  
Where slimy monsters watch the track  
Whose eyeballs phosphoresce and glow  
Only to make the night more black  
And nought except themselves to show :  
A vessel that the pole betrays,  
Caught in a crystal trap all round,  
And seeking by what fatal sound  
It ever entered such a maze : –  
Clear emblems ! measuring the level  
Of irremediable dooms,  
Which make us see bow well the Devil  
Performs whatever he presumes !

## II

Strange tête-à-tête ! the heart, its own  
Mirror, its own confession hears !  
Deep well where Truth is trembling shown  
And like a livid star appears,  
Ironic beacon and infernal  
Torch of satanic grace, but still  
Sole glory and relief eternal,  
– Conscience that operates in Ill !

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## L'Horloge (1861)

### L'Horloge

Horloge ! dieu sinistre, effrayant, impassible,  
Dont le doigt nous menace et nous dit : « *Souviens-toi !*  
Les vibrantes Douleurs dans ton coeur plein d'effroi  
Se planteront bientôt comme dans une cible ;

Le Plaisir vaporeux fuira vers l'horizon  
Ainsi qu'une sylphide au fond de la coulisse ;  
Chaque instant te dévore un morceau du délice  
À chaque homme accordé pour toute sa saison.

Trois mille six cents fois par heure, la Seconde  
Chuchote : *Souviens-toi !* – Rapide, avec sa voix  
D'insecte, Maintenant dit : Je suis Autrefois,  
Et j'ai pompé ta vie avec ma trompe immonde !

*Remember ! Souviens-toi ! prodigue ! Esto memor !*  
(Mon gosier de métal parle toutes les langues.)  
Les minutes, mortel folâtre, sont des gangues  
Qu'il ne faut pas lâcher sans en extraire l'or !

*Souviens-toi* que le Temps est un joueur avide  
Qui gagne sans tricher, à tout coup ! c'est la loi.  
Le jour décroît ; la nuit augmente ; *Souviens-toi !*  
Le gouffre a toujours soif ; la clepsydre se vide.

Tantôt sonnera l'heure où le divin Hasard,  
Où l'auguste Vertu, ton épouse encor vierge,  
Où le Repentir même (oh ! la dernière auberge !),  
Où tout te dira Meurs, vieux lâche ! il est trop tard ! »

– Charles Baudelaire

## The Clock

Impassive clock! Terrifying, sinister god,  
 Whose finger threatens us and says : "*Remember !*  
 The quivering Sorrows will soon be shot  
 Into your fearful heart, as into a target ;  
 Nebulous pleasure will flee toward the horizon  
 Like an actress who disappears into the wings ;  
 Every instant devours a piece of the pleasure  
 Granted to every man for his entire season.  
 Three thousand six hundred times an hour, Second  
 Whispers : *Remember !* – Immediately  
 With his insect voice, Now says : I am the Past  
 And I have sucked out your life with my filthy trunk !  
*Remember ! Souviens-toi, spendthrift ! Esto memor !*  
 (My metal throat can speak all languages.)  
 Minutes, blithesome mortal, are bits of ore  
 That you must not release without extracting the gold !  
 Remember, Time is a greedy player  
 Who wins without cheating, every round ! It's the law.  
 The daylight wanes ; the night deepens ; *remember !*  
 The abyss thirsts always ; the water-clock runs low.  
 Soon will sound the hour when divine Chance,  
 When august Virtue, your still virgin wife,  
 When even Repentance (the very last of inns !),  
 When all will say : Die, old coward ! it is too late !"

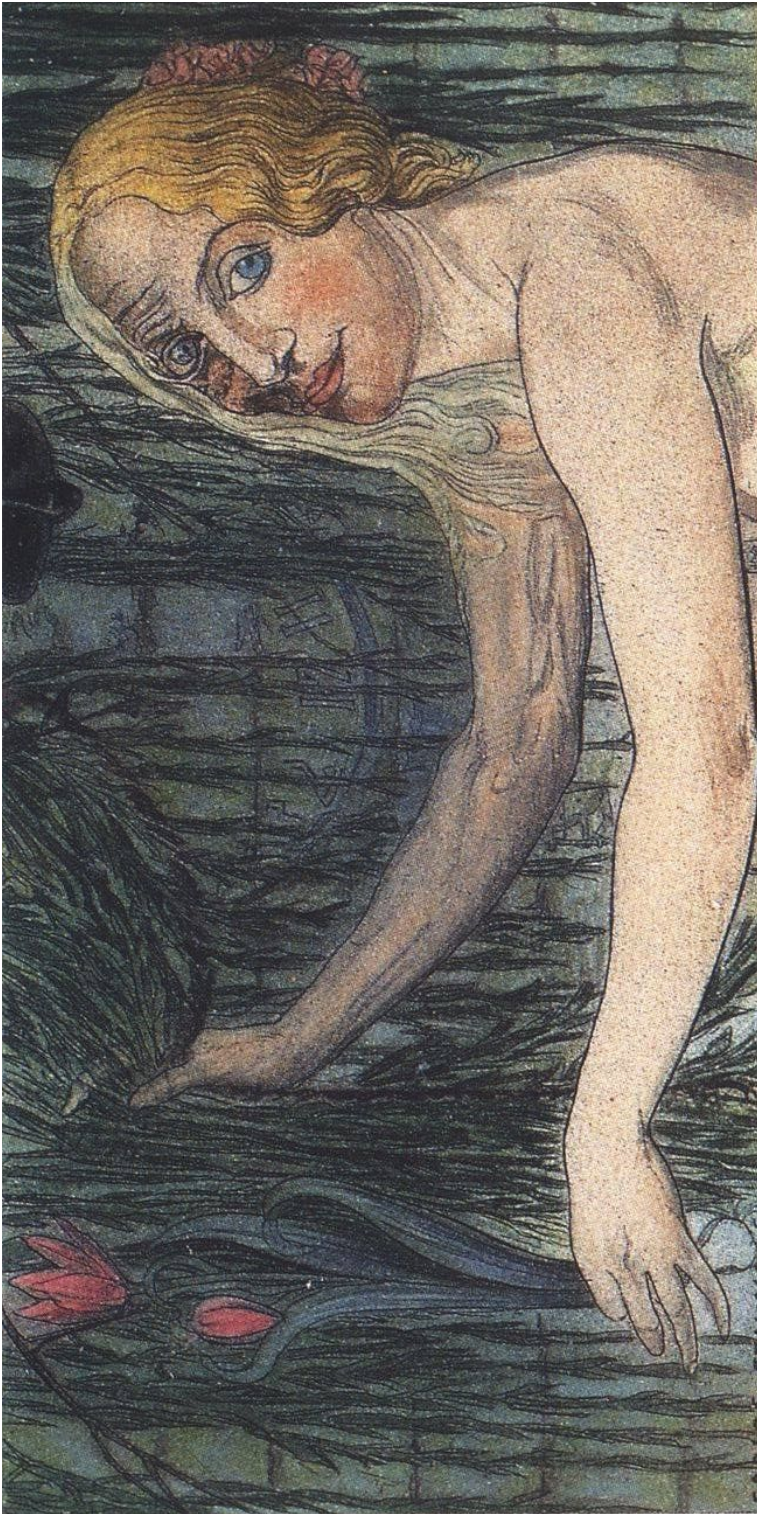
– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Clock

The Clock, calm evil god, that makes us shiver,  
 With threatening finger warns us each apart :  
 "*Remember !* Soon the vibrant woes will quiver,  
 Like arrows in a target, in your heart.  
 To the horizon Pleasure will take flight  
 As flits a vaporous sylphide to the wings.  
 Each instant gnaws a crumb of the delight  
 That for his season every mortal brings.

Three thousand times and more, each hour, the second  
Whispers '*Remember!*' Like an insect shrill  
The present chirps, 'With Nevermore I'm reckoned,  
I've pumped your lifeblood with my loathsome bill.'  
*Remember! Souviens-toi! Esto Memor!*  
My brazen windpipe speaks in every tongue.  
Each moment, foolish mortal, is like ore  
From which the precious metal must be wrung.  
*Remember.* Time the gamester (it's the law)  
Wins always, without cheating. Daylight wanes.  
Night deepens. The abyss with gulfy maw  
Thirsts on unsated, while the hour-glass drains.  
Sooner or later, now, the time must be  
When Hazard, Virtue (your still-virgin mate),  
Repentance, (your last refuge), or all three –  
Will tell you, 'Die, old Coward. It's too late!' "

– Roy Campbell, 1952







TABLEAUX PARISIENS  
PARISIAN SCENES



## Paysage (1861)

### Paysage

Je veux, pour composer chastement mes églogues,  
Coucher auprès du ciel, comme les astrologues,  
Et, voisin des clochers écouter en rêvant  
Leurs hymnes solennels emportés par le vent.  
Les deux mains au menton, du haut de ma mansarde,  
Je verrai l'atelier qui chante et qui bavarde ;  
Les tuyaux, les clochers, ces mâts de la cité,  
Et les grands ciels qui font rêver d'éternité.

Il est doux, à travers les brumes, de voir naître  
L'étoile dans l'azur, la lampe à la fenêtre  
Les fleuves de charbon monter au firmament  
Et la lune verser son pâle enchantement.  
Je verrai les printemps, les étés, les automnes ;  
Et quand viendra l'hiver aux neiges monotones,  
Je fermerai partout portières et volets  
Pour bâtir dans la nuit mes féeriques palais.  
Alors je rêverai des horizons bleuâtres,  
Des jardins, des jets d'eau pleurant dans les albâtres,  
Des baisers, des oiseaux chantant soir et matin,  
Et tout ce que l'Idylle a de plus enfantin.  
L'Émeute, tempêtant vainement à ma vitre,  
Ne fera pas lever mon front de mon pupitre ;  
Car je serai plongé dans cette volupté  
D'évoquer le Printemps avec ma volonté,  
De tirer un soleil de mon cœur, et de faire  
De mes pensers brûlants une tiède atmosphère.

## The Landscape

I would, to compose my eclogues chastely,  
 Lie down close to the sky like an astrologer,  
 And, near the church towers, listen while I dream  
 To their solemn anthems borne to me by the wind.  
 My chin cupped in both hands, high up in my garret  
 I shall see the workshops where they chatter and sing,  
 The chimneys, the belfries, those masts of the city,  
 And the skies that make one dream of eternity.  
 It is sweet, through the mist, to see the stars  
 Appear in the heavens, the lamps in the windows,  
 The streams of smoke rise in the firmament  
 And the moon spread out her pale enchantment.  
 I shall see the springtimes, the summers, the autumns ;  
 And when winter comes with its monotonous snow,  
 I shall close all the shutters and draw all the drapes  
 So I can build at night my fairy palaces.  
 Then I shall dream of pale blue horizons, gardens,  
 Fountains weeping into alabaster basins,  
 Of kisses, of birds singing morning and evening,  
 And of all that is most childlike in the Idyl.  
 Riot, storming vainly at my window,  
 Will not make me raise my head from my desk,  
 For I shall be plunged in the voluptuousness  
 Of evoking the Springtime with my will alone,  
 Of drawing forth a sun from my heart, and making  
 Of my burning thoughts a warm atmosphere.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Landscape

More chasteness to my eclogues it would give,  
 Sky-high, like old astrologers to live,  
 A neighbour of the belfries : and to hear  
 Their solemn hymns along the winds career.  
 High in my attic, chin in hand, I'd swing  
 And watch the workshops as they roar and sing,  
 The city's masts – each steeple, tower, and flue –

And skies that bring eternity to view.  
Sweet, through the mist, to see illumed again  
Stars through the azure, lamps behind the pane,  
Rivers of carbon irrigate the sky,  
And the pale moon pour magic from on high.  
I'd watch three seasons passing by, and then  
When winter came with dreary snows, I'd pen  
Myself between closed shutters, bolts, and doors,  
And build my fairy palaces indoors.  
A dream of blue horizons I would garble  
With thoughts of fountains weeping on to marble,  
Of gardens, kisses, birds that ceaseless sing,  
And all the Idyll holds of childhood's spring.  
The riots, brawling past my window-pane,  
From off my desk would not divert my brain.  
Because I would be plunged in pleasure still,  
Conjuring up the Springtime with my will,  
And forcing sunshine from my heart to form,  
Of burning thoughts, an atmosphere that's warm.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# Le Soleil

## Le Soleil

Le long du vieux faubourg, où pendent aux mesures  
Les persiennes, abri des secrètes luxures,  
Quand le soleil cruel frappe à traits redoublés  
Sur la ville et les champs, sur les toits et les blés,  
Je vais m'exercer seul à ma fantasque escrime,  
Flairant dans tous les coins les hasards de la rime,  
Trébuchant sur les mots comme sur les pavés  
Heurtant parfois des vers depuis longtemps rêvés.  
Ce père nourricier, ennemi des chloroses,  
Eveille dans les champs les vers comme les roses ;  
Il fait s'évaporer les soucis vers le ciel,  
Et remplit les cerveaux et les ruches le miel.  
C'est lui qui rajeunit les porteurs de béquilles  
Et les rend gais et doux comme des jeunes filles,  
Et commande aux moissons de croître et de mûrir  
Dans le coeur immortel qui toujours veut fleurir !  
Quand, ainsi qu'un poète, il descend dans les villes,  
Il ennoblit le sort des choses les plus viles,  
Et s'introduit en roi, sans bruit et sans valets,  
Dans tous les hôpitaux et dans tous les palais.

– Charles Baudelaire

## The Sun

Along the old street on whose cottages are hung  
The slatted shutters which hide secret lecherries,  
When the cruel sun strikes with increased blows

The city, the country, the roofs, and the wheat fields,  
I go alone to try my fanciful fencing,  
Scenting in every corner the chance of a rhyme,  
Stumbling over words as over paving stones,  
Colliding at times with lines dreamed of long ago.  
This foster-father, enemy of chlorosis,  
Makes verses bloom in the fields like roses ;  
He makes cares evaporate toward heaven,  
And fills with honey hives and brains alike.  
He rejuvenates those who go on crutches  
And gives them the sweetness and gaiety of girls,  
And commands crops to flourish and ripen  
In those immortal hearts which ever wish to bloom !  
When, like a poet, he goes down into cities,  
He ennobles the fate of the lowliest things  
And enters like a king, without servants or noise,  
All the hospitals and all the castles.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Sun

Along the outskirts where, close-sheltering  
Hid lusts, dilapidated shutters swing,  
When the sun strikes, redoubling waves of heat  
On town, and field, and roof, and dusty street –  
I prowl to air my prowess and kill time,  
Stalking, in likely nooks, the odds of rhyme,  
Tripping on words like cobbles as I go  
And bumping into lines dreamed long ago.  
This all-providing Sire, foe to chloroses,  
Wakes verses in the fields as well as roses  
Evaporates one's cares into the breeze,  
Filling with honey brains and hives of bees,  
Rejuvenating those who go on crutches  
And bringing youthful joy to all he touches,  
Life to those precious harvests he imparts  
That grow and ripen in our deathless hearts.  
Poet-like, through the town he seems to smile  
Ennobling fate for all that is most vile ;

And king-like, without servants or display,  
Through hospitals and mansions makes his way.

– **Roy Campbell**, 1952



## Lola de Valence (1868)

### Lola de Valence

Entre tant de beautés que partout on peut voir,  
Je contemple bien, amis, que le désir balance ;  
Mais on voit scintiller en Lola de Valence  
Le charme inattendu d'un bijou rose et noir.

– Charles Baudelaire

### Lola of Valencia

Among such beauties as one can see everywhere  
I understand, my friends, that desire hesitates ;  
But one sees sparkling in Lola of Valencia  
The unexpected charm of a black and rose jewel.

– William Aggeler, 1954

### On Manet's Picture 'Lola of Valencia'

Amongst the myriad flowers on beauty's stem  
It's hard to choose. Such crowds there are of them  
But Lola burns with unexpected fuel  
The radiance of a black and rosy jewel.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## La Lune offensée (1868)

### La Lune offensée

Ô Lune qu'adoraient discrètement nos pères,  
 Du haut des pays bleus où, radieux sérail,  
 Les astres vont te suivre en pimpant attirail,  
 Ma vieille Cynthia, lampe de nos repaires,  
 Vois-tu les amoureux sur leurs grabats prospères,  
 De leur bouche en dormant montrer le frais émail ?  
 Le poète buter du front sur son travail ?  
 Ou sous les gazons secs s'accoupler les vipères ?  
 Sous ton domino jaune, et d'un pied clandestin,  
 Vas-tu, comme jadis, du soir jusqu'au matin,  
 Baiser d'Endymion les grâces surannées ?  
 – « Je vois ta mère, enfant de ce siècle appauvri,  
 Qui vers son miroir penche un lourd amas d'années,  
 Et plâtre artistement le sein qui t'a nourri ! »

– Charles Baudelaire

### The Offended Moon

O Moon whom our ancestors discreetly adored,  
 Radiant seraglio ! from the blue countries' height  
 To which the stars follow you in dashing attire,  
 My ancient Cynthia, lamp of our haunts,  
 Do you see the lovers on their prosperous pallets,  
 Showing as they sleep, the cool enamel of their mouths ?  
 The poet beating his forehead over his work ?  
 Or the vipers coupling under the withered grass ?  
 Under your yellow domino, with quiet step,

Do you go as in days of old from morn till night  
To kiss the faded charms of Endymion?  
– “I see your mother, child of this impoverished age,  
Bending toward her mirror a heavy weight of years,  
Skillfully disguising the breast that nourished you!”

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Moon Offended

O moon, to whom our fathers used to pray,  
From your blue home, where, odalisques of light,  
The stars will follow you in spruce array,  
Old Cynthia, lantern of our dens by night,  
Do you see sleeping lovers on their couches  
Reveal the cool enamel of their teeth :  
The poet at his labours, how he crouches :  
And vipers – how they couple on the heath ?  
In yellow domino, with stealthy paces,  
Do you yet steal with clandestine embraces  
To clasp Endymion’s pale, millennial charm ?  
– “I see your mother, by her mirror, buckled  
By weight of years, poor child of death and harm !  
Patching with art the breast at which you suckled !”

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## À une Mendiante rousse

### À une Mendiante rousse

Blanche fille aux cheveux roux,  
Dont la robe par ses trous  
Laisse voir la pauvreté  
Et la beauté,

Pour moi, poète chétif,  
Ton jeune corps maladif,  
Plein de taches de rousseur,  
À sa douceur.

Tu portes plus galamment  
Qu'une reine de roman  
Ses cothurnes de velours  
Tes sabots lourds.

Au lieu d'un haillon trop court,  
Qu'un superbe habit de cour  
Traîne à plis bruyants et longs  
Sur tes talons ;

En place de bas troués  
Que pour les yeux des roués  
Sur ta jambe un poignard d'or  
Reluise encor ;

Que des noeuds mal attachés  
Dévoilent pour nos péchés  
Tes deux beaux seins, radieux  
Comme des yeux ;

Que pour te déshabiller  
Tes bras se fassent prier  
Et chassent à coups mutins  
Les doigts lutins,

Perles de la plus belle eau,  
Sonnets de maître Belleau  
Par tes galants mis aux fers  
Sans cesse offerts,  
Valetaille de rimeurs  
Te dédiant leurs primeurs  
Et contemplant ton soulier  
Sous l'escalier,  
Maint page épris du hasard,  
Maint seigneur et maint Ronsard  
Epieraient pour le déduit  
Ton frais réduit !  
Tu compterais dans tes lits  
Plus de baisers que de lis  
Et rangerais sous tes lois  
Plus d'un Valois !  
– Cependant tu vas gueusant  
Quelque vieux débris gisant  
Au seuil de quelque Véfour  
De carrefour ;  
Tu vas lorgnant en dessous  
Des bijoux de vingt-neuf sous  
Dont je ne puis, oh ! Pardon !  
Te faire don.  
Va donc, sans autre ornement,  
Parfum, perles, diamant,  
Que ta maigre nudité,  
Ô ma beauté !

– Charles Baudelaire

## To an Auburn-Haired Beggar-Maid

Pale girl with the auburn hair,  
Whose dress through its tears and holes  
Reveals your poverty  
And your beauty,  
For me, an ailing poet,  
Your body, young and sickly,

Spotted with countless freckles,  
Has its sweetness.  
You wear with more elegance  
Your wooden clogs than the queen  
In a romance her sandals  
Trimmed with velvet.  
Instead of a scanty rag,  
Let a glittering court dress  
Trail with its long, rustling folds  
Over your heels ;  
In place of stockings with holes,  
Let, for the eyes of roués,  
A golden poniard glisten  
In your garter ;  
Let ill-tied ribbons give way  
And unveil, so we may sin,  
Your two lovely breasts, radiant  
As shining eyes ;  
Let your arms demand entreating  
To uncover your body  
And repel with saucy blows  
Roguish fingers,  
Pearls of the finest water,  
Sonnets by Master Belleau  
Constantly offered by swains  
Held in love's chains,  
Plebeian versifiers  
Offering first books to you  
And ogling your slippered foot  
From under the stair ;  
Many a page fond of love's chance,  
Many a Ronsard and lord  
For amusement would spy on  
Your chilly hut !  
You could count in your beds  
More kisses than fleurs-de-lis  
And subject to your power  
Many Valois !  
– However, you go begging

Some moldy refuse lying  
On the steps of some Véfour  
At the crossroads ;  
You go furtively eyeing  
Baubles at twenty-nine sous,  
Of which I can't, oh ! pardon !  
Make you a gift.  
Go, with no more adornment,  
Perfume or pearl or diamond,  
Than your slender nudity,  
O my beauty !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Red-Haired Beggar Girl

White girl with flame-red hair,  
Whose garments, here and there,  
Give poverty to view,  
And beauty too.  
To me, poor puny poet,  
Your body, as you show it,  
With freckles on your arms,  
Has yet its charms.  
You wear with prouder mien  
Than in Romance a queen  
Her velvet buskins could –  
Your clogs of wood.  
In place of tatters short  
Let some rich robe of court  
Swirl with its silken wheels  
After your heels :  
In place of stockings holed  
A dagger made of gold,  
To light the lecher's eye,  
Flash on your thigh :  
Let ribbons slip their bows  
And for our sins disclose  
A breast whose radiance vies

Even with your eyes.  
To show them further charms  
Let them implore your arms,  
And these, rebuking, humble  
Fingers that fumble  
With proffered pearls aglow  
And sonnets of Belleau,  
Which, fettered by your beauty,  
They yield in duty.  
Riffraff of scullion-rhymers  
Would dedicate their primers  
Under the stairs to view  
Only your shoe.  
Each page-boy lucky-starred,  
Each marquis, each Ronsard  
Would hang about your bower  
To while an hour.  
You'd count, among your blisses,  
Than lilies far more kisses,  
And boast, among your flames,  
Some royal names.  
Yet now your beauty begs  
For scraps on floors, and dregs  
Else destined to the gutter,  
As bread and butter.  
You eye, with longing tense,  
Cheap gauds for thirty cents,  
Which, pardon me, these days  
I cannot raise.  
No scent, or pearl, or stone,  
But nothing save your own  
Thin nudity for dower,  
Pass on, my flower !

– Roy Campbell, 1952



# Le Cygne (1861)

## Le Cygne

*À Victor Hugo*

I

Andromaque, je pense à vous ! Ce petit fleuve,  
Pauvre et triste miroir où jadis resplendit  
L'immense majesté de vos douleurs de veuve,  
Ce Simois menteur qui par vos pleurs grandit,  
A fécondé soudain ma mémoire fertile,  
Comme je traversais le nouveau Carrousel.  
Le vieux Paris n'est plus (la forme d'une ville  
Change plus vite, hélas ! que le coeur d'un mortel) ;  
Je ne vois qu'en esprit tout ce camp de baraques,  
Ces tas de chapiteaux ébauchés et de fûts,  
Les herbes, les gros blocs verdis par l'eau des flaques,  
Et, brillant aux carreaux, le bric-à-brac confus.  
Là s'étalait jadis une ménagerie ;  
Là je vis, un matin, à l'heure où sous les cieux  
Froids et clairs le Travail s'éveille, où la voirie  
Pousse un sombre ouragan dans l'air silencieux,  
Un cygne qui s'était évadé de sa cage,  
Et, de ses pieds palmés frottant le pavé sec,  
Sur le sol raboteux traînait son blanc plumage.  
Près d'un ruisseau sans eau la bête ouvrant le bec  
Baignait nerveusement ses ailes dans la poudre,  
Et disait, le coeur plein de son beau lac natal :  
« Eau, quand donc pleuvras-tu ? quand tonneras-tu, foudre ? »  
Je vois ce malheureux, mythe étrange et fatal,  
Vers le ciel quelquefois, comme l'homme d'Ovide,

Vers le ciel ironique et cruellement bleu,  
 Sur son cou convulsif tendant sa tête avide  
 Comme s'il adressait des reproches à Dieu !

## II

Paris change ! mais rien dans ma mélancolie  
 N'a bougé ! palais neufs, échafaudages, blocs,  
 Vieux faubourgs, tout pour moi devient allégorie  
 Et mes chers souvenirs sont plus lourds que des rocs.  
 Aussi devant ce Louvre une image m'opprime :  
 Je pense à mon grand cygne, avec ses gestes fous,  
 Comme les exilés, ridicule et sublime  
 Et rongé d'un désir sans trêve ! et puis à vous,  
 Andromaque, des bras d'un grand époux tombée,  
 Vil bétail, sous la main du superbe Pyrrhus,  
 Auprès d'un tombeau vide en extase courbée  
 Veuve d'Hector, hélas ! et femme d'Hélénus !  
 Je pense à la négresse, amaigrie et phtisique  
 Piétinant dans la boue, et cherchant, l'oeil hagard,  
 Les cocotiers absents de la superbe Afrique  
 Derrière la muraille immense du brouillard ;  
 À quiconque a perdu ce qui ne se retrouve  
 Jamais, jamais ! à ceux qui s'abreuvent de pleurs  
 Et têtent la Douleur comme une bonne louve !  
 Aux maigres orphelins séchant comme des fleurs !  
 Ainsi dans la forêt où mon esprit s'exile  
 Un vieux Souvenir sonne à plein souffle du cor !  
 Je pense aux matelots oubliés dans une île,  
 Aux captifs, aux vaincus !... à bien d'autres encor !

– Charles Baudelaire

## The Swan

To Victor Hugo

## I

Andromache, I think of you ! – That little stream,  
 That mirror, poor and sad, which glittered long ago

With the vast majesty of your widow's grieving,  
That false Simois swollen by your tears,  
Suddenly made fruitful my teeming memory,  
As I walked across the new Carrousel.  
– Old Paris is no more (the form of a city  
Changes more quickly, alas! than the human heart);  
I see only in memory that camp of stalls,  
Those piles of shafts, of rough hewn cornices, the grass,  
The huge stone blocks stained green in puddles of water,  
And in the windows shine the jumbled bric-a-brac.  
Once a menagerie was set up there;  
There, one morning, at the hour when Labor awakens,  
Beneath the clear, cold sky when the dismal hubbub  
Of street-cleaners and scavengers breaks the silence,  
I saw a swan that had escaped from his cage,  
That stroked the dry pavement with his webbed feet  
And dragged his white plumage over the uneven ground.  
Beside a dry gutter the bird opened his beak,  
Restlessly bathed his wings in the dust  
And cried, homesick for his fair native lake :  
"Rain, when will you fall? Thunder, when will you roll?"  
I see that hapless bird, that strange and fatal myth,  
Toward the sky at times, like the man in Ovid,  
Toward the ironic, cruelly blue sky,  
Stretch his avid head upon his quivering neck,  
As if he were reproaching God!

## II

Paris changes! but naught in my melancholy  
Has stirred! New palaces, scaffolding, blocks of stone,  
Old quarters, all become for me an allegory,  
And my dear memories are heavier than rocks.  
So, before the Louvre, an image oppresses me :  
I think of my great swan with his crazy motions,  
Ridiculous, sublime, like a man in exile,  
Relentlessly gnawed by longing! and then of you,  
Andromache, base chattel, fallen from the embrace  
Of a mighty husband into the hands of proud Pyrrhus,  
Standing bowed in rapture before an empty tomb,  
Widow of Hector, alas! and wife of Helenus!

I think of the negress, wasted and consumptive,  
 Trudging through muddy streets, seeking with a fixed gaze  
 The absent coco-palms of splendid Africa  
 Behind the immense wall of mist ;  
 Of whoever has lost that which is never found  
 Again ! Never ! Of those who deeply drink of tears  
 And suckle Pain as they would suck the good she-wolf !  
 Of the puny orphans withering like flowers !  
 Thus in the dim forest to which my soul withdraws,  
 An ancient memory sounds loud the hunting horn !  
 I think of the sailors forgotten on some isle,  
 – Of the captives, of the vanquished !... of many others too !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Swan

To Victor Hugo

I

Andromache ! – This shallow stream, the brief  
 Mirror you once so grandly overcharged  
 With your vast majesty of widowed grief,  
 This lying Simois your tears enlarged,  
 Evoked your name, and made me think of you,  
 As I was crossing the new Carrousel.  
 – Old Paris is no more (cities renew,  
 Quicker than human hearts, their changing spell).  
 In mind I see that camp of huts, the muddle  
 Of rough-hewn roofs and leaning shafts for miles,  
 The grass, green logs stagnating in the puddle,  
 Where bric-a-brac lay glittering in piles.  
 Once a menagerie parked there.  
 And there it chanced one morning, when from slumber freed,  
 Labour stands up, and Transport through still air  
 Rumbles its sombre hurricane of speed, –  
 A swan escaped its cage : and as its feet  
 With finny palms on the harsh pavement scraped,  
 Trailing white plumage on the stony street,

In the dry gutter for fresh water gaped.  
Nervously bathing in the dust, in wonder  
It asked, remembering its native stream,  
"When will the rain come down? When roll the thunder?"  
I see it now, strange myth and fatal theme!  
Sometimes, like Ovid's wretch, towards the sky  
(Ironically blue with cruel smile)  
Its neck, convulsive, reared its head on high  
As though it were its Maker to revile.

## II

Paris has changed, but in my grief no change.  
New palaces and scaffoldings and blocks,  
To me, are allegories, nothing strange.  
My memories are heavier than rocks.  
Passing the Louvre, one image makes me sad :  
That swan, like other exiles that we knew,  
Grandly absurd, with gestures of the mad,  
Gnawed by one craving! – Then I think of you,  
Who fell from your great husband's arms, to be  
A beast of freight for Pyrrhus, and for life,  
Bowed by an empty tomb in ecstasy –  
Great Hector's widow! Helenus's wife!  
I think, too, of the starved and phthisic negress  
Tramping the mud, who seeks, with haggard eye,  
The palms of Africa, and for some egress  
Out of this great black wall of foggy sky :  
Of those who've lost what they cannot recover :  
Of those who slake with tears their lonely hours  
And milk the she-wolf, Sorrow, for their mother :  
And skinny orphans withering like flowers.  
So in the forest of my soul's exile,  
Remembrance winds his horn as on he rides.  
I think of sailors stranded on an isle,  
Captives, and slaves – and many more besides.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# Les Sept vieillards (1861)

## Les Sept vieillards

*À Victor Hugo*

Fourmillante cité, cité pleine de rêves,  
Où le spectre en plein jour raccroche le passant !  
Les mystères partout coulent comme des sèves  
Dans les canaux étroits du colosse puissant.  
Un matin, cependant que dans la triste rue  
Les maisons, dont la brume allongeait la hauteur,  
Simulaient les deux quais d'une rivière accrue,  
Et que, décor semblable à l'âme de l'acteur,  
Un brouillard sale et jaune inondait tout l'espace,  
Je suivais, roidissant mes nerfs comme un héros  
Et discutant avec mon âme déjà lasse,  
Le faubourg secoué par les lourds tombereaux.  
Tout à coup, un vieillard dont les guenilles jaunes  
Imitaient la couleur de ce ciel pluvieux,  
Et dont l'aspect aurait fait pleuvoir les aumônes,  
Sans la méchanceté qui luisait dans ses yeux,  
M'apparut. On eût dit sa prunelle trempée  
Dans le fiel ; son regard aiguïsait les frimas,  
Et sa barbe à longs poils, roide comme une épée,  
Se projetait, pareille à celle de Judas.  
Il n'était pas voûté, mais cassé, son échine  
Faisant avec sa jambe un parfait angle droit,  
Si bien que son bâton, parachevant sa mine,  
Lui donnait la tournure et le pas maladroit  
D'un quadrupède infirme ou d'un juif à trois pattes.  
Dans la neige et la boue il allait s'empêtrant,  
Comme s'il écrasait des morts sous ses savates,

Hostile à l'univers plutôt qu'indifférent.  
 Son pareil le suivait : barbe, oeil, dos, bâton, loques,  
 Nul trait ne distinguait, du même enfer venu,  
 Ce jumeau centenaire, et ces spectres baroques  
 Marchaient du même pas vers un but inconnu.  
 À quel complot infâme étais-je donc en butte,  
 Ou quel méchant hasard ainsi m'humiliait ?  
 Car je comptai sept fois, de minute en minute,  
 Ce sinistre vieillard qui se multipliait !  
 Que celui-là qui rit de mon inquiétude  
 Et qui n'est pas saisi d'un frisson fraternel  
 Songe bien que malgré tant de décrépitude  
 Ces sept monstres hideux avaient l'air éternel !  
 Aurais-je, sans mourir, contemplé le huitième,  
 Sosie inexorable, ironique et fatal  
 Dégoûtant Phénix, fils et père de lui-même ?  
 – Mais je tournai le dos au cortège infernal.  
 Exaspéré comme un ivrogne qui voit double,  
 Je rentrai, je fermai ma porte, épouvanté,  
 Malade et morfondu, l'esprit fiévreux et trouble,  
 Blessé par le mystère et par l'absurdité !  
 Vainement ma raison voulait prendre la barre ;  
 La tempête en jouant déroutait ses efforts,  
 Et mon âme dansait, dansait, vieille gabarre  
 Sans mâts, sur une mer monstrueuse et sans bords !

– Charles Baudelaire

## The Seven Old Men

To Victor Hugo

Teeming, swarming city, city full of dreams,  
 Where specters in broad day accost the passer-by !  
 Everywhere mysteries flow like the sap in a tree  
 Through the narrow canals of the mighty giant.  
 One morning, while in a gloomy street the houses,  
 Whose height was increased by the mist, simulated  
 The quais of a swollen river, and while  
 – A setting that was like the actor's soul –

A dirty yellow fog inundated all space,  
I was following, steeling my nerves like a hero,  
Arid arguing with my already weary soul,  
A squalid street shaken by the heavy dump-carts.  
Suddenly an old man whose tattered yellow clothes  
Were of the same color as the rainy heavens,  
And whose aspect would have brought him showers of alms  
If his eyes had not gleamed with so much wickedness,  
Appeared to me. One would have said his eyes were drenched  
With gall ; his look sharpened the winter's chill,  
And his long shaggy beard, like that of Judas,  
Projected from his chin as stiffly as a sword.  
He was not bent over, but broken ; his back-bone  
Made with his legs a perfect right angle,  
So that his stick, completing the picture,  
Gave him the appearance and clumsy gait  
Of a lame quadruped or a three-legged Jew.  
He went hobbling along in the snow and the mud  
As if he were crushing the dead under his shoes ;  
Hostile, rather than indifferent to the world,  
His likeness followed him : beard, eye, back, stick, tatters,  
No mark distinguished this centenarian twin,  
Who came from the same hell, and these baroque specters  
Were walking with the same gait toward an unknown goal.  
Of what infamous plot was I then the object,  
Or what evil chance humiliated me thus ?  
For I counted seven times in as many minutes  
That sinister old man who multiplied himself !  
Let him who laughs at my disquietude,  
And who is not seized with a fraternal shudder,  
Realize that in spite of such decrepitude  
Those hideous monsters had an eternal look !  
Could I, without dying, have regarded the eighth,  
Unrelenting Sosia, ironic and fatal,  
Disgusting Phoenix, son and father of himself ?  
– But I turned my back on that hellish procession.  
Exasperated like a drunk who sees double,  
I went home ; I locked the door, terrified,  
Chilled to the bone and ill, my mind fevered, confused,  
Hurt by that mysterious and absurd happening !



Vainly my reason tried to take the helm ;  
The frolicsome tempest baffled all its efforts,  
And my soul, old sailing barge without masts,  
Kept dancing, dancing, on a monstrous, shoreless sea !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Seven Old Men

To Victor Hugo

Ant-seething city, city full of dreams,  
Where ghosts by daylight tug the passer's sleeve.  
Mystery, like sap, through all its conduit-streams,  
Quickens the dread Colossus that they weave.  
One early morning, in the street's sad mud,  
Whose houses, by the fog increased in height,  
Seemed wharves along a riverside in flood :  
When with a scene to match the actor's plight,  
Foul yellow mist had filled the whole of space :  
Steeling my nerves to play a hero's part,  
I coaxed my weary soul with me to pace  
The backstreets shaken by each lumbering cart.  
A wretch appeared whose tattered, yellow clothing,  
Matching the colour of the raining skies,  
Could make it shower down alms – but for the loathing  
Malevolence that glittered in his eyes.  
The pupils of his eyes, with bile injected,  
Seemed with their glance to make the frost more raw.  
Stiff as a sword, his long red beard projected,  
Like that of Judas, level with his jaw.  
He was not bent, but broken, with the spine  
Forming a sharp right-angle to the straight,  
So that his stick, to finish the design,  
Gave him the stature and the crazy gait  
Of a three-footed Jew, or crippled hound.  
He plunged his soles into the slush as though  
To crush the dead ; and to the world around  
Seemed less of an indifferent than a foe.  
His image followed him, (back, stick, and beard

In nothing differed) spawned from the same hole,  
A centenarian twin. Both spectres steered  
With the same gait to the same unknown goal.  
To what foul plot was I exposed ? of what  
Humiliating hazard made the jeer ?  
For seven times, (I counted) was begot  
This sinister, self multiplying fear !  
Let him mark well who laughs at my despair  
With no fraternal shudder in reply...  
Those seven loathsome monsters had the air,  
Though rotting through, of what can never die.  
Disgusting Phoenix, his own sire and father !  
Could I have watched an eighth instalment spawn  
Ironic, fateful, grim – nor perished rather ?  
But from that hellish cortege I'd withdrawn.  
Perplexed as drunkards when their sight is doubled,  
I locked my room, sick, fevered, chilled with fright :  
With all my spirit sorely hurt and troubled  
By so ridiculous yet strange a sight.  
Vainly my reason for the helm was striving :  
The tempest of my efforts made a scorn.  
My soul like a dismayed wreck went driving  
Over a monstrous sea without a bourn.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# Les Petites Vieilles (1861)

## Les Petites Vieilles

*À Victor Hugo*

I

Dans les plis sinueux des vieilles capitales,  
Où tout, même l'horreur, tourne aux enchantements,  
Je guette, obéissant à mes humeurs fatales,  
Des êtres singuliers, décrépits et charmants.  
Ces monstres disloqués furent jadis des femmes,  
Eponine ou Laïs ! Monstres brisés, bossus  
Ou tordus, aimons-les ! ce sont encor des âmes.  
Sous des jupons troués et sous de froids tissus  
Ils rampent, flagellés par les bises iniques,  
Frémissant au fracas roulant des omnibus,  
Et serrant sur leur flanc, ainsi que des reliques,  
Un petit sac brodé de fleurs ou de rébus ;  
Ils trottent, tout pareils à des marionnettes ;  
Se traînent, comme font les animaux blessés,  
Ou dansent, sans vouloir danser, pauvres sonnettes  
Où se pend un Démon sans pitié ! Tout cassés  
Qu'ils sont, ils ont des yeux perçants comme une vrille,  
Luisants comme ces trous où l'eau dort dans la nuit ;  
Ils ont les yeux divins de la petite fille  
Qui s'étonne et qui rit à tout ce qui reluit.  
– Avez-vous observé que maints cercueils de vieilles  
Sont presque aussi petits que celui d'un enfant ?  
La Mort savante met dans ces bières pareilles  
Un symbole d'un goût bizarre et captivant,  
Et lorsque j'entrevois un fantôme débile

Traversant de Paris le fourmillant tableau,  
Il me semble toujours que cet être fragile  
S'en va tout doucement vers un nouveau berceau ;  
À moins que, méditant sur la géométrie,  
Je ne cherche, à l'aspect de ces membres discords,  
Combien de fois il faut que l'ouvrier varie  
La forme de la boîte où l'on met tous ces corps.  
– Ces yeux sont des puits faits d'un million de larmes,  
Des creusets qu'un métal refroidi pailleta...  
Ces yeux mystérieux ont d'invincibles charmes  
Pour celui que l'austère Infortune allaita !

## II

De Frascati défunt Vestale enamourée ;  
Prêtresse de Thalie, hélas ! dont le souffleur  
Enterré sait le nom ; célèbre évaporée  
Que Tivoli jadis ombragea dans sa fleur,  
Toutes m'enivrent ; mais parmi ces êtres frêles  
Il en est qui, faisant de la douleur un miel,  
Ont dit au Dévouement qui leur prêtait ses ailes :  
Hippogriffe puissant, mène-moi jusqu'au ciel !  
L'une, par sa patrie au malheur exercée,  
L'autre, que son époux surchargea de douleurs,  
L'autre, par son enfant Madone transpercée,  
Toutes auraient pu faire un fleuve avec leurs pleurs !

## III

Ah ! que j'en ai suivi de ces petites vieilles !  
Une, entre autres, à l'heure où le soleil tombant  
Ensanglante le ciel de blessures vermeilles,  
Pensive, s'asseyait à l'écart sur un banc,  
Pour entendre un de ces concerts, riches de cuivre,  
Dont les soldats parfois inondent nos jardins,  
Et qui, dans ces soirs d'or où l'on se sent revivre,  
Versent quelque héroïsme au coeur des citoyens.  
Celle-là, droite encor, fière et sentant la règle,  
Humait avidement ce chant vif et guerrier ;  
Son oeil parfois s'ouvrait comme l'oeil d'un vieil aigle ;  
Son front de marbre avait l'air fait pour le laurier !

## IV

Telles vous cheminez, stoïques et sans plaintes,  
À travers le chaos des vivantes cités,  
Mères au coeur saignant, courtisanes ou saintes,  
Dont autrefois les noms par tous étaient cités.  
Vous qui fûtes la grâce ou qui fûtes la gloire,  
Nul ne vous reconnaît ! un ivrogne incivil  
Vous insulte en passant d'un amour dérisoire ;  
Sur vos talons gambade un enfant lâche et vil.  
Honteuses d'exister, ombres ratatinées,  
Peureuses, le dos bas, vous côtoyez les murs ;  
Et nul ne vous salue, étranges destinées !  
Débris d'humanité pour l'éternité mûrs !  
Mais moi, moi qui de loin tendrement vous surveille,  
L'oeil inquiet, fixé sur vos pas incertains,  
Tout comme si j'étais votre père, ô merveille !  
Je goûte à votre insu des plaisirs clandestins :  
Je vois s'épanouir vos passions novices ;  
Sombres ou lumineux, je vis vos jours perdus ;  
Mon coeur multiplié jouit de tous vos vices !  
Mon âme respandit de toutes vos vertus !  
Ruines ! ma famille ! ô cerveaux congénères !  
Je vous fais chaque soir un solennel adieu !  
Où serez-vous demain, Eves octogénaires,  
Sur qui pèse la griffe effroyable de Dieu ?

– Charles Baudelaire

## Little Old Women

To Victor Hugo

## I

In the sinuous folds of the old capitals,  
Where all, even horror, becomes pleasant,  
I watch, obedient to my fatal whims,  
For singular creatures, decrepit and charming.  
These disjointed monsters were women long ago,

Eponine or Lais ! Monsters, hunch-backed, broken  
 Or distorted, let us love them ! they still have souls.  
 Clothed in tattered petticoats and flimsy dresses  
 They creep, lashed by the iniquitous wind,  
 Trembling at the clatter of the omnibuses,  
 Each pressing to her side, as if it were a relic,  
 A small purse embroidered with rebuses or flowers ;  
 They trot exactly like marionettes ;  
 They drag themselves along like wounded animals,  
 Or dance, against their will, poor little bells  
 Pulled constantly by a heartless Demon ! Broken  
 Though they are, they have eyes as piercing as gimlets,  
 That shine like those holes in which water sleeps at night ;  
 They have the divine eyes of little girls  
 Who are amazed and laugh at everything that gleams.  
 – Have you observed how frequently coffins  
 For old women are almost as small as a child's ?  
 Clever Death brings to these similar biers  
 A symbol of a strange and captivating taste,  
 And when I catch a glimpse of a feeble specter  
 Crossing the swarming scene that is Paris,  
 It always seems to me that that fragile creature  
 Is going quietly toward a second cradle ;  
 Unless, pondering on geometry,  
 I try, at the sight of those discordant members,  
 To figure how many times the workman changes  
 The shape of the boxes where those bodies are laid.  
 – Those eyes are wells filled with a million tears,  
 Crucibles which a quenched metal spangled...  
 Those mysterious eyes have invincible charms  
 For one whom austere Misfortune has suckled !

## II

Vestal in love with the late Frascati ;  
 High priestess of Thalia, whose name is known  
 To her buried prompter ; vanished celebrity  
 Whom Tivoli sheltered at the peak of her fame,  
 They all enrapture me ; among those frail beings  
 There are some who, making honey out of sorrow,  
 Have said to Devotion who had lent them his wings :

“Powerful hippogriff, carry me to the sky !”  
One, inured to misfortune by her fatherland,  
Another, overwhelmed with grief by her husband,  
Another, a Madonna transfixed by her child,  
Each could have made a river with her tears !

## III

Ah ! how many of these women I have followed !  
One, among others, at the hour when the sunset  
Makes the sky bloody with vermilion wounds,  
Pensive, used to sit alone on a bench  
To hear one of those concerts rich in brass,  
With which the soldiers sometimes flood our public parks  
On those golden evenings when one feels new life within  
And which inspire heroism in the townsman’s heart.  
Proud, still erect, feeling she must sit thus,  
She thirstily drank in that stirring, martial song ;  
Her eyes opened at times like the eyes of an old eagle ;  
Her marble brow seemed to be made for the laurel !

## IV

Thus you trudge along, stoical, uncomplaining,  
Amid the confusion of cities full of life,  
Mothers with bleeding hearts, courtesans, saints,  
Whose names in years gone by were on everyone’s lips.  
O you who were charming or who were glorious,  
None recognizes you ! A drunken ruffian  
Passing by insults you with an obscene remark ;  
A dirty, nasty child frisks about at your heels.  
Wizened shadows, ashamed of existing,  
With bent backs, you timidly keep close to the walls  
And no person greets you, strange destinies !  
Human wreckage, ripe for eternity !  
But I, I watch you tenderly from a distance ;  
My anxious eyes are fixed on your uncertain steps,  
As if I were your own father ; how wonderful !  
I taste unknown to you clandestine pleasures :  
I see your untried passions come into full bloom ;  
I live your vanished days, gloomy or filled with light ;  
My heart multiplied enjoys all of your vices !

My soul is resplendent with all of your virtues !  
Ruins ! my family ! O kindred minds !  
I bid you each evening a solemn farewell !  
Octogenarian Eves, upon whom rests  
God's terrible claw, where will you be tomorrow ?

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Little Old Women

To Victor Hugo

I

In sinuous folds of cities old and grim,  
Where all things, even horror, turn to grace,  
I follow, in obedience to my whim,  
Strange, feeble, charming creatures round the place.  
These crooked freaks were women in their pride,  
Fair Eponine or Lais ! Humped and bent,  
Love them ! Because they still have souls inside.  
Under their draughty skirts in tatters rent,  
They crawl : a vicious wind their carrion rides ;  
From the deep roar of traffic see them cower,  
Pressing like precious relics to their sides  
Some satchel stitched with mottoes or a flower.  
They trot like marionettes along the level,  
Or drag themselves like wounded deer, poor crones !  
Or dance, against their will, as if the devil  
Were swinging in the belfry of their bones.  
Cracked though they are, their eyes are sharp as drills  
And shine, like pools of water in the night, –  
The eyes of little girls whom wonder thrills  
To laugh at all that sparkles and is bright.  
The coffins of old women very often  
Are near as small as those of children are.  
Wise Death, who makes a symbol of a coffin  
Displays a taste both charming and bizarre.  
And when I track some feeble phantom fleeing  
Through Paris's immense ant-swarmling Babel,



I always think that such a fragile being  
Is moving softly to another cradle.  
Unless, sometimes, in geometric mood,  
To see the strange deformities they offer,  
I muse how often he who saws the wood  
Must change the shape and outline of the coffer.  
Those eyes are wells a million teardrops feed,  
Crucibles spangled by a cooling ore,  
Invincible in charm to all that breed  
Austere Misfortune suckled with her lore.

## II

Vestal whom old Frascati could enamour :  
Thalia's nun, whose name was only known  
To her dead prompter : madcap full of glamour  
Whom Tivoli once sheltered as its own –  
They all elate me. But of these a few,  
Of sorrow having made a honeyed leaven,  
Say to Devotion, "Lend me wings anew,  
O powerful Hippogriff, and fly to heaven."  
One for her fatherland a martyr : one  
By her own husband wronged beyond belief :  
And one a pierced Madonna through her son –  
They all could make a river with their grief.

## III

Yes, I have followed them, time and again !  
One, I recall, when sunset, like a heart,  
Bled through the sky from wounds of ruddy stain,  
Pensively sat upon a seat apart,  
To listen to the music, rich in metal  
That's played by bands of soldiers in the parks  
On golden, soul-reviving eves, to fettle,  
From meek civilian hearts, heroic sparks.  
This one was straight and stiff, in carriage regal,  
She breathed the warrior-music through her teeth,  
Opened her eye like that of an old eagle,  
And bared a forehead moulded for a wreath.

## IV

Thus, then, you journey, uncomplaining, stoic  
Across the strife of modern cities flung,  
Sad mothers, courtesans, or saints heroic,  
Whose names of old were heard on every tongue,  
You once were grace, and you were glory once.  
None know you now. Derisory advances  
Some drunkard makes you, mixed with worse affronts.  
And on your heels a child-tormentor prances.  
But I who watch you tenderly : and measure  
With anxious eye, your weak unsteady gait  
As would a father – get a secret pleasure  
On your account, as on your steps I wait.  
I see your passionate and virgin crazes ;  
Sombre or bright, I see your vanished prime ;  
My soul, resplendent with your virtue, blazes,  
And revels in your vices and your crimes.  
Poor wrecks ! My family ! Kindred in mind, you  
Receive from me each day my last addresses.  
Eighty-year Eves, will yet tomorrow find you  
On whom the claw of God so fiercely presses ?

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Les Aveugles (1861)

### Les Aveugles

Contemple-les, mon âme ; ils sont vraiment affreux !  
Pareils aux mannequins ; vaguement ridicules ;  
Terribles, singuliers comme les somnambules ;  
Dardant on ne sait où leurs globes ténébreux.  
Leurs yeux, d'où la divine étincelle est partie,  
Comme s'ils regardaient au loin, restent levés  
Au ciel ; on ne les voit jamais vers les pavés  
Pencher rêveusement leur tête appesantie.  
Ils traversent ainsi le noir illimité,  
Ce frère du silence éternel. Ô cité !  
Pendant qu'autour de nous tu chantes, ris et beugles,  
Eprise du plaisir jusqu'à l'atrocité,  
Vois ! je me traîne aussi ! mais, plus qu'eux hébété,  
Je dis : Que cherchent-ils au Ciel, tous ces aveugles ?

– Charles Baudelaire

### The Blind

Contemplate them, my soul ; they are truly frightful !  
Like mannequins ; vaguely ridiculous ;  
Strange and terrible, like somnambulists ;  
Darting, one never knows where, their tenebrous orbs.  
Their eyes, from which the divine spark has departed,  
Remain raised to the sky, as if they were looking  
Into space : one never sees them toward the pavement  
Dreamily bend their heavy heads.  
Thus they go across the boundless darkness,

That brother of eternal silence. O city!  
While about us you sing, laugh, and bellow,  
In love with pleasure to the point of cruelty,  
See! I drag along also! but, more dazed than they,  
I say : "What do they seek in Heaven, all those blind?"

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Blind

My soul, survey them, dreadful as they seem.  
Like marionettes, ridiculous they stare.  
Strange as somnambulists that, in their dream,  
Dart shadowy orbs around we know not where.  
Their eyes, from which the heavenly spark has flown  
Remain uplifted, as in distant quest,  
Skyward : but never on the paving stone  
Do they pore dreamingly or come to rest.  
They traverse thus the illimitable Dark,  
Twin of eternal Silence. While the City  
May sing around us, bellow, laugh, or bark, –  
By pleasure blinded even to horror, I,  
Too, drag my way, but, more a thing of pity,  
Ask what the Blind are seeking there on high.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## À une passante (1861)

### À une passante

La rue assourdissante autour de moi hurlait.  
Longue, mince, en grand deuil, douleur majestueuse,  
Une femme passa, d'une main fastueuse  
Soulevant, balançant le feston et l'ourlet ;  
Agile et noble, avec sa jambe de statue.  
Moi, je buvais, crispé comme un extravagant,  
Dans son oeil, ciel livide où germe l'ouragan,  
La douceur qui fascine et le plaisir qui tue.  
Un éclair... puis la nuit ! – Fugitive beauté  
Dont le regard m'a fait soudainement renaître,  
Ne te verrai-je plus que dans l'éternité ?  
Ailleurs, bien loin d'ici ! trop tard ! *jamais* peut-être !  
Car j'ignore où tu fuis, tu ne sais où je vais,  
Ô toi que j'eusse aimée, ô toi qui le savais !

– Charles Baudelaire

### To a Passer-By

The street about me roared with a deafening sound.  
Tall, slender, in heavy mourning, majestic grief,  
A woman passed, with a glittering hand  
Raising, swinging the hem and flounces of her skirt ;  
Agile and graceful, her leg was like a statue's.  
Tense as in a delirium, I drank  
From her eyes, pale sky where tempests germinate,  
The sweetness that entralls and the pleasure that kills.  
A lightning flash... then night ! Fleeting beauty

By whose glance I was suddenly reborn,  
Will I see you no more before eternity?  
Elsewhere, far, far from here! too late! *never* perhaps!  
For I know not where you fled, you know not where I go,  
O you whom I would have loved, O you who knew it!

– William Aggeler, 1954

## A Passer-by

The deafening street roared on. Full, slim, and grand  
In mourning and majestic grief, passed down  
A woman, lifting with a stately hand  
And swaying the black borders of her gown;  
Noble and swift, her leg with statues matching;  
I drank, convulsed, out of her pensive eye,  
A livid sky where hurricanes were hatching,  
Sweetness that charms, and joy that makes one die.  
A lighting-flash – then darkness! Fleeting chance  
Whose look was my rebirth – a single glance!  
Through endless time shall I not meet with you?  
Far off! too late! or never! – I not knowing  
Who you may be, nor you where I am going –  
You, whom I might have loved, who know it too!

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# Le Squelette laboureur (1861)

## Le Squelette laboureur

### I

Dans les planches d'anatomie  
Qui traînent sur ces quais poudreux  
Où maint livre cadavéreux  
Dort comme une antique momie,  
Dessins auxquels la gravité  
Et le savoir d'un vieil artiste,  
Bien que le sujet en soit triste,  
Ont communiqué la Beauté,  
On voit, ce qui rend plus complètes  
Ces mystérieuses horreurs,  
Bêchant comme des laboureurs,  
Des Ecorchés et des Squelettes.

### II

De ce terrain que vous fouillez,  
Manants résignés et funèbres  
De tout l'effort de vos vertèbres,  
Ou de vos muscles dépouillés,  
Dites, quelle moisson étrange,  
Forçats arrachés au charnier,  
Tirez-vous, et de quel fermier  
Avez-vous à remplir la grange ?  
Voulez-vous (d'un destin trop dur  
Epouvantable et clair emblème !)  
Montrer que dans la fosse même  
Le sommeil promis n'est pas sûr ;  
Qu'envers nous le Néant est traître ;

Que tout, même la Mort, nous ment,  
Et que sempiternellement  
Hélas ! il nous faudra peut-être  
Dans quelque pays inconnu  
Ecorcher la terre revêche  
Et pousser une lourde bêche  
Sous notre pied sanglant et nu ?

– Charles Baudelaire

## Skeleton with a Spade

### I

In the anatomical plates  
That lie about on dusty quais  
Where many cadaverous books  
Sleep like an ancient mummy,  
Engravings to which the staidness  
And knowledge of some old artist  
Have communicated beauty,  
Although the subject is gloomy,  
One sees, and it makes more complete  
These mysteries full of horror,  
Skinless bodies and skeletons, Spading as if they were farmhands.

### II

From the soil that you excavate,  
Resigned, macabre villagers,  
From all the effort of your backs,  
Or of your muscles stripped of skin,  
Tell me, what singular harvest,  
Convicts torn from cemeteries,  
Do you reap, and of what farmer  
Do you have to fill the barn ?  
Do you wish (clear, frightful symbol  
Of too cruel a destiny !)  
To show that even in the grave  
None is sure of the promised sleep ;  
That Annihilation betrays us ;



That all, even Death, lies to us,  
And that forever and ever,  
Alas! we shall be forced perhaps  
In some unknown country  
To scrape the hard and stony ground  
And to push a heavy spade in  
With our bare and bleeding feet?

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Skeleton Navy

### I

Quaint anatomic plates are sold  
Along the quays in third-hand stalls  
Where tomes cadaverous and old  
Slumber like mummies in their palls.  
In them the craftsman's skill combines  
With expert knowledge in a way  
That beautifies these chill designs  
Although the subject's far from gay.  
One notes that, consummating these  
Mysterious horrors, God knows how,  
Skeletons and anatomies  
Peel off their skins to delve and plough.

### II

Navvies, funereal and resigned,  
From the tough ground with which you tussle  
With all the effort that can find  
Filletted spine or skinless muscle –  
O grave-snatched convicts, say what strange  
Harvest you hope from such a soil  
And who the farmer is whose grange  
You would replenish with this toil.  
Mean you to show (O evil-starred  
Exponents of too stark a doom)  
The promised sleep may yet be barred,  
Even from us, beyond the tomb;

That even extinction may turn traitor,  
And Death itself, can be a lie ;  
And that perhaps, sooner or later,  
Forever, when we come to die,  
In some strange country, without wages,  
On stubborn outcrops delving holes,  
We'll push a shovel through the ages  
Beneath our flayed and blinding soles ?

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# Le Crépuscule du soir

## Le Crépuscule du soir

Voici le soir charmant, ami du criminel ;  
Il vient comme un complice, à pas de loup ; le ciel  
Se ferme lentement comme une grande alcôve,  
Et l'homme impatient se change en bête fauve.  
Ô soir, aimable soir, désiré par celui  
Dont les bras, sans mentir, peuvent dire : Aujourd'hui  
Nous avons travaillé ! – C'est le soir qui soulage  
Les esprits que dévore une douleur sauvage,  
Le savant obstiné dont le front s'alourdit,  
Et l'ouvrier courbé qui regagne son lit.  
Cependant des démons malsains dans l'atmosphère  
S'éveillent lourdement, comme des gens d'affaire,  
Et cognent en volant les volets et l'auvent.  
À travers les lueurs que tourmente le vent  
La Prostitution s'allume dans les rues ;  
Comme une fourmilière elle ouvre ses issues ;  
Partout elle se fraye un occulte chemin,  
Ainsi que l'ennemi qui tente un coup de main ;  
Elle remue au sein de la cité de fange  
Comme un ver qui dérobe à l'Homme ce qu'il mange.  
On entend çà et là les cuisines siffler,  
Les théâtres glapir, les orchestres ronfler ;  
Les tables d'hôte, dont le jeu fait les délices,  
S'emplissent de catins et d'escrocs, leurs complices,  
Et les voleurs, qui n'ont ni trêve ni merci,  
Vont bientôt commencer leur travail, eux aussi,  
Et forcer doucement les portes et les caisses  
Pour vivre quelques jours et vêtir leurs maîtresses.  
Recueille-toi, mon âme, en ce grave moment,

Et ferme ton oreille à ce rugissement.  
C'est l'heure où les douleurs des malades s'aigrissent !  
La sombre Nuit les prend à la gorge ; ils finissent  
Leur destinée et vont vers le gouffre commun ;  
L'hôpital se remplit de leurs soupirs. – Plus d'un  
Ne viendra plus chercher la soupe parfumée,  
Au coin du feu, le soir, auprès d'une âme aimée.  
Encore la plupart n'ont-ils jamais connu  
La douceur du foyer et n'ont jamais vécu !

– Charles Baudelaire

## Twilight

Behold the sweet evening, friend of the criminal ;  
It comes like an accomplice, stealthily ; the sky  
Closes slowly like an immense alcove,  
And impatient man turns into a beast of prey.  
O evening, kind evening, desired by him  
Whose arms can say, without lying : "Today  
We labored !" – It is the evening that comforts  
Those minds that are consumed by a savage sorrow,  
The obstinate scholar whose head bends with fatigue  
And the bowed laborer who returns to his bed.  
Meanwhile in the atmosphere malefic demons  
Awaken sluggishly, like businessmen,  
And take flight, bumping against porch roofs and shutters.  
Among the gas flames worried by the wind  
Prostitution catches alight in the streets ;  
Like an ant-hill she lets her workers out ;  
Everywhere she blazes a secret path,  
Like an enemy who plans a surprise attack ;  
She moves in the heart of the city of mire  
Like a worm that steals from Man what he eats.  
Here and there one hears food sizzle in the kitchens,  
The theaters yell, the orchestras moan ;  
The gambling dens, where games of chance delight,  
Fill up with whores and cardsharps, their accomplices ;  
The burglars, who know neither respite nor mercy,  
Are soon going to begin their work, they also,

And quietly force open cash-boxes and doors  
To enjoy life awhile and dress their mistresses.  
Meditate, O my soul, in this solemn moment,  
And close your ears to this uproar ;  
It is now that the pains of the sick grow sharper !  
Somber Night grabs them by the throat ; they reach the end  
Of their destinies and go to the common pit ;  
The hospitals are filled with their sighs. – More than one  
Will come no more to get his fragrant soup  
By the fireside, in the evening, with a loved one.  
However, most of them have never known  
The sweetness of a home, have never lived !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Evening Twilight

Delightful evening, partner of the crook,  
Steals in, wolf-padded, like a complice : look :  
Heaven, like a garret, closes to the day,  
And Man, impatient, turns a beast of prey.  
Sweet evening, loved by those whose arms can tell,  
Without a lie, "Today we've laboured well ;"  
Sweet evening, it is she who brings relief  
To men with souls devoured by one fierce grief,  
Obstinate thinkers drowsy in the head,  
And toil-bent workmen groping to their bed.  
But insalubrious demons of the airs,  
Like business people, wake to their affairs  
And, flying, knock, like bats, on walls and shutters.  
Now Prostitution lights up in the gutters  
Across the glimmering jets the wind torments.  
Like a huge ant-hive it unseals its vents.  
On every side it weaves its hidden tracks  
Like enemies preparing night-attacks.  
It squirms within the City's breast of mire,  
A worm that steals the food that men desire.  
One hears the kitchens hissing here and there,  
Operas squealing, orchestras ablare.

Cheap tables d'hôte, where gaming lights the eyes,  
Fill up with whores, and sharpers, their allies :  
And thieves, whose office knows no truce nor rest,  
Will shortly now start working, too, with zest,  
Gently unhinging doors and forcing tills,  
To live some days and buy their sweethearts frills.  
Collect yourself, my soul, in this grave hour  
And shut your ears against the din and stour.  
It is the hour when sick men's pains increase.  
Death grips them by the throat, and soon they cease  
Their destined task, to find the common pit.  
The ward is filled with sighings. Out of it  
Not all return the scented soup to taste,  
Warm at the hearthside, by some loved-one placed.  
But then how few among them can recall  
Joys of the hearth, or ever lived at all !

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# Le Jeu

## Le Jeu

Dans des fauteuils fanés des courtisanes vieilles,  
Pâles, le sourcil peint, l'oeil câlin et fatal,  
Minaudant, et faisant de leurs maigres oreilles  
Tomber un cliquetis de pierre et de métal ;

Autour des verts tapis des visages sans lèvre,  
Des lèvres sans couleur, des mâchoires sans dent,  
Et des doigts convulsés d'une infernale fièvre,  
Fouillant la poche vide ou le sein palpitant ;

Sous de sales plafonds un rang de pâles lustres  
Et d'énormes quinquets projetant leurs lueurs  
Sur des fronts ténébreux de poètes illustres  
Qui viennent gaspiller leurs sanglantes sueurs ;

Voilà le noir tableau qu'en un rêve nocturne  
Je vis se dérouler sous mon oeil clairvoyant.  
Moi-même, dans un coin de l'ancre taciturne,  
Je me vis accoudé, froid, muet, enviant,

Enviant de ces gens la passion tenace,  
De ces vieilles putains la funèbre gaieté,  
Et tous gaillardement trafiquant à ma face,  
L'un de son vieil honneur, l'autre de sa beauté !

Et mon coeur s'effraya d'envier maint pauvre homme  
Courant avec ferveur à l'abîme béant,  
Et qui, soûl de son sang, préférerait en somme  
La douleur à la mort et l'enfer au néant !

## Gambling

In faded armchairs aged courtesans,  
Pale, eyebrows penciled, with alluring fatal eyes,  
Smirking and sending forth from wizened ears  
A jingling sound of metal and of gems ;  
Around the gaming tables faces without lips,  
Lips without color and jaws without teeth,  
Fingers convulsed with a hellborn fever  
Searching empty pockets and fluttering bosoms ;  
Under dirty ceilings a row of bright lusters  
And enormous oil-lamps casting their rays  
On the tenebrous brows of distinguished poets  
Who come there to squander the blood they have sweated ;  
That is the black picture that in a dream one night  
I saw unfold before my penetrating eyes.  
I saw myself at the back of that quiet den,  
Leaning on my elbows, cold, silent, envying,  
Envyng the stubborn passion of those people,  
The dismal merriment of those old prostitutes,  
All blithely selling right before my eyes,  
One his ancient honor, another her beauty !  
My heart took fright at its envy of so many  
Wretches running fiercely to the yawning chasm,  
Who, drunk with their own blood, would prefer, in a word,  
Suffering to death and hell to nothingness !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Gamblers

In faded armchairs, harlots of past years  
Pale, with false eyebrows, wheedling, fatal eyes,  
And weird, affected airs, clink from thin ears  
A feeble sound, where tin with crystal vies.  
Round the green tables, faces without lips,  
Lips without colour, jaws their teeth surviving,  
And fingers which a hellish fever grips  
Convulsively in breasts and pockets diving



Under the dirty ceiling, lustres flame  
And chandeliers, that blaze without remittance  
On shady brows of poets dear to fame,  
Who come to waste their sorely-sweated pittance.  
Such was the picture, in nocturnal dreaming,  
I saw unfurled to my clairvoyant eye.  
In that grim vault, one form on elbows leaning,  
Unspeaking, cold, and envious – was I! –  
Yes! envying, for their all-tenacious passion,  
These raddled tarts in their funereal glee,  
Who trafficked there, in such a merry fashion,  
Dead virtue and lost beauty on the spree.  
My heart was chilled with fear at envying  
Wretches who, headlong, rush to be destroyed,  
And, drunk with their own blood, seek anything –  
Hell, death, or torture – rather than the Void!

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Danse macabre (1861)

### Danse macabre

*À Ernest Christophe*

Fière, autant qu'un vivant, de sa noble stature  
Avec son gros bouquet, son mouchoir et ses gants  
Elle a la nonchalance et la désinvolture  
D'une coquette maigre aux airs extravagants.  
Vit-on jamais au bal une taille plus mince ?  
Sa robe exagérée, en sa royale ampleur,  
S'écroule abondamment sur un pied sec que pince  
Un soulier pomponné, joli comme une fleur.  
La ruche qui se joue au bord des clavicules,  
Comme un ruisseau lascif qui se frotte au rocher,  
Défend pudiquement des lazzi ridicules  
Les funèbres appas qu'elle tient à cacher.  
Ses yeux profonds sont faits de vide et de ténèbres,  
Et son crâne, de fleurs artistement coiffé,  
Oscille mollement sur ses frêles vertèbres.  
Ô charme d'un néant follement attifé.  
Aucuns t'appelleront une caricature,  
Qui ne comprennent pas, amants ivres de chair,  
L'élégance sans nom de l'humaine armature.  
Tu réponds, grand squelette, à mon goût le plus cher !  
Viens-tu troubler, avec ta puissante grimace,  
La fête de la Vie ? ou quelque vieux désir,  
Eperonnant encor ta vivante carcasse,  
Te pousse-t-il, crédule, au sabbat du Plaisir ?  
Au chant des violons, aux flammes des bougies,  
Espères-tu chasser ton cauchemar moqueur,  
Et viens-tu demander au torrent des orgies

De rafraîchir l'enfer allumé dans ton coeur ?  
Inépuisable puits de sottise et de fautes !  
De l'antique douleur éternel alambic !  
À travers le treillis recourbé de tes côtes  
Je vois, errant encor, l'insatiable aspic.  
Pour dire vrai, je crains que ta coquetterie  
Ne trouve pas un prix digne de ses efforts  
Qui, de ces coeurs mortels, entend la raillerie ?  
Les charmes de l'horreur n'enivrent que les forts !  
Le gouffre de tes yeux, plein d'horribles pensées,  
Exhale le vertige, et les danseurs prudents  
Ne contempleront pas sans d'amères nausées  
Le sourire éternel de tes trente-deux dents.  
Pourtant, qui n'a serré dans ses bras un squelette,  
Et qui ne s'est nourri des choses du tombeau ?  
Qu'importe le parfum, l'habit ou la toilette ?  
Qui fait le dégoûté montre qu'il se croit beau.  
Bayadère sans nez, irrésistible gouge,  
Dis donc à ces danseurs qui font les offusqués :  
« Fiers mignons, malgré l'art des poudres et du rouge  
Vous sentez tous la mort ! Ô squelettes musqués,  
Antinoüs flétris, dandys à face glabre,  
Cadavres vernissés, lovelaces chenus,  
Le branle universel de la danse macabre  
Vous entraîne en des lieux qui ne sont pas connus !  
Des quais froids de la Seine aux bords brûlants du Gange,  
Le troupeau mortel saute et se pâme, sans voir  
Dans un trou du plafond la trompette de l'Ange  
Sinistrement béante ainsi qu'un tromblon noir.  
En tout climat, sous tout soleil, la Mort t'admire  
En tes contorsions, risible Humanité  
Et souvent, comme toi, se parfumant de myrrhe,  
Mêle son ironie à ton insanité ! »

– Charles Baudelaire

## The Dance of Death

To Ernest Christophe

Proud as a living person of her noble stature,  
With her big bouquet, her handkerchief and gloves,  
She has the nonchalance and easy manner  
Of a slender coquette with bizarre ways.  
Did one ever see a slimmer waist at a ball?  
Her ostentatious dress in its queenly fullness  
Falls in ample folds over thin feet, tightly pressed  
Into slippers with pompons pretty as flowers.  
The swarm of bees that plays along her collar-bones  
Like a lecherous brook that rubs against the rocks  
Modestly protects from cat-calls and jeers  
The funereal charms that she's anxious to hide.  
Her deep eye-sockets are empty and dark,  
And her skull, skillfully adorned with flowers,  
Oscillates gently on her fragile vertebrae.  
Charm of a non-existent thing, madly arrayed!  
Some, lovers drunken with flesh, will call you  
A caricature; they don't understand  
The marvelous elegance of the human frame.  
You satisfy my fondest taste, tall skeleton!  
Do you come to trouble with your potent grimace  
The festival of Life? Or does some old desire  
Still goading your living carcass  
Urge you on, credulous one, toward Pleasure's sabbath?  
With the flames of candles, with songs of violins,  
Do you hope to chase away your mocking nightmare,  
And do you come to ask of the flood of orgies  
To cool the hell set ablaze in your heart?  
Inexhaustible well of folly and of sins!  
Eternal alembic of ancient suffering!  
Through the curved trellis of your ribs  
I see, still wandering, the insatiable asp.  
To tell the truth, I fear your coquetry  
Will not find a reward worthy of its efforts;  
Which of these mortal hearts understands raillery?  
The charms of horror enrapture only the strong!

The abyss of your eyes, full of horrible thoughts,  
Exhales vertigo, and discreet dancers  
Cannot look without bitter nausea  
At the eternal smile of your thirty-two teeth.  
Yet who has not clasped a skeleton in his arms,  
Who has not fed upon what belongs to the grave?  
What matters the perfume, the costume or the dress?  
He who shows disgust believes that he is handsome.  
Noseless dancer, irresistible whore,  
Tell those dancing couples who act so offended:  
"Proud darlings, despite the art of make-up  
You all smell of death! Skeletons perfumed with musk,  
Withered Antinoi, dandies with smooth faces,  
Varnished corpses, hoary-haired Lovclaces,  
The universal swing of the danse macabre  
Sweeps you along into places unknown!  
From the Seine's cold quays to the Ganges' burning shores,  
The human troupe skips and swoons with delight, sees not  
In a hole in the ceiling the Angel's trumpet  
Gaping ominously like a black blunderbuss.  
In all climes, under every sun, Death admires you  
At your antics, ridiculous Humanity,  
And frequently, like you, scenting herself with myrrh,  
Mingles her irony with your insanity!"

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Dance of Death

To Ernest Christophe

Proud, as a living person, of her height,  
Her scarf and gloves and huge bouquet of roses,  
She shows such nonchalance and ease as might  
A thin coquette excessive in her poses.  
Who, at a ball, has seen a form so slim?  
Her sumptuous skirts extravagantly shower  
To a dry foot that, exquisitely trim,  
Her footwear pinches, dainty as a flower.  
The frills that rub her collarbone, and feel,

Like a lascivious rill against a rock,  
The charms she is so anxious to conceal,  
Defend them, too, from ridicule and mock.  
Her eyes are formed of emptiness and shade.  
Her skull, with flowers so deftly decked about,  
Upon her dainty vertebrae is swayed.  
Oh what a charm when nullity tricks out!  
"Caricature," some might opine, but wrongly,  
Whose hearts, too drunk with flesh that runs to waste,  
Ignore the grace of what upholds so strongly.  
Tall skeleton, you match my dearest taste!  
Come you to trouble with your strong grimace,  
The feast of life? Or has some old desire  
Rowelled your living carcase from its place  
And sent you, credulous, to feed its fire?  
With tunes of fiddles and the flames of candles,  
Hope you to chase the nightmare far apart,  
Or with a flood of orgies, feasts, and scandals  
To quench the bell that's lighted in your heart?  
Exhaustless well of follies and of faults,  
Of the old woe the alembic and the urn,  
Around your trellised ribs, in new assaults,  
I see the insatiable serpent turn.  
I fear your coquetry's not worth the strain,  
The prize not worth the effort you prolong.  
Could mortal hearts your railleries explain?  
The joys of horror only charm the strong.  
The pits of your dark eyes dread fancies breathe,  
And vertigo. Among the dancers prudent,  
Hope not your sixteen pairs of smiling teeth  
Will ever find a contemplative student.  
Yet who's not squeezed a skeleton with passion?  
Nor ravened with his kisses on the meat  
Of charnels. What of costume, scent, or fashion?  
The man who feigns disgust, betrays conceit.  
O noseless geisha, unresisted gouge!  
Tell these fastidious feigners, from your husk –  
"Proud fondling fools, in spite of talc and rouge,  
You smell of death. Anatomies of musk,  
Withered Antinouses, beaux of dunder,

Corpses in varnish, Lovelaces of bone,  
The dance of death, with universal thunder,  
Is whirling you to places yet unknown!  
From Seine to Ganges frolicking about,  
You see not, through a black hole in the ceiling,  
Like a great blunderbus, with funnelled snout,  
The Angel's trumpet, on the point of pealing.  
in every clime, Death studies your devices  
And vain contortions, laughable Humanity,  
And oft, like you, perfumes herself with spices  
Mixing her irony with your insanity!"

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## L'Amour du mensonge (1861)

### L'Amour du mensonge

Quand je te vois passer, ô ma chère indolente,  
Au chant des instruments qui se brise au plafond  
Suspendant ton allure harmonieuse et lente,  
Et promenant l'ennui de ton regard profond ;  
Quand je contemple, aux feux du gaz qui le colore,  
Ton front pâle, embelli par un morbide attrait,  
Où les torches du soir allument une aurore,  
Et tes yeux attirants comme ceux d'un portrait,  
Je me dis : Qu'elle est belle ! et bizarrement fraîche !  
Le souvenir massif, royale et lourde tour,  
La couronne, et son coeur, meurtri comme une pêche,  
Est mûr, comme son corps, pour le savant amour.  
Es-tu le fruit d'automne aux saveurs souveraines ?  
Es-tu vase funèbre attendant quelques pleurs,  
Parfum qui fait rêver aux oasis lointaines,  
Oreiller caressant, ou corbeille de fleurs ?  
Je sais qu'il est des yeux, des plus mélancoliques,  
Qui ne recèlent point de secrets précieux ;  
Beaux écrins sans bijoux, médaillons sans reliques,  
Plus vides, plus profonds que vous-mêmes, ô Cieux !  
Mais ne suffit-il pas que tu sois l'apparence,  
Pour réjouir un coeur qui fuit la vérité ?  
Qu'importe ta bêtise ou ton indifférence ?  
Masque ou décor, salut ! J'adore ta beauté.

– Charles Baudelaire



## The Love of Lies

When I see you pass by, my indolent darling,  
To the sound of music that the ceiling deadens,  
Pausing in your slow and harmonious movements,  
Turning here and there the boredom of your gaze ;  
When I study, in the gaslight which colors it,  
Your pale forehead, embellished with a morbid charm,  
Where the torches of evening kindle a dawn,  
And your eyes alluring as a portrait's,  
I say within : "How fair she is ! How strangely fresh !"  
Huge, massive memory, royal, heavy tower,  
Crowns her ; her heart bruised like a peach  
Is ripe like her body for a skillful lover.  
Are you the autumn fruit with sovereign taste ?  
A funereal urn awaiting a few tears ?  
Perfume that makes one dream of distant oases ?  
A caressive pillow, a basket of flowers ?  
I know that there are eyes, most melancholy ones,  
In which no precious secrets lie hidden ;  
Lovely cases without jewels, locket without relics,  
Emptier and deeper than you are, O Heavens !  
But is it not enough that you are a semblance  
To gladden a heart that flees from the truth ?  
What matter your obtuseness or your indifference ?  
Mask or ornament, hail ! I adore your beauty.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Love of Lies

Dear indolent, I love to watch you so,  
While on the ceiling break the tunes of dances,  
And hesitant, harmoniously slow,  
You turn the wandering boredom of your glances.  
I watch the gas-flares colouring your drawn,  
Pale forehead, which a morbid charm enhances,  
Where evening lamps illuminate a dawn  
In eyes as of a painting that entrances :

And then I say, "She's fair and strangely fresh,  
Whom memory crowns with lofty towers above.  
Her heart is like a peach's murdered flesh,  
Or like her own, most ripe for learned love."  
Are you an autumn fruit of sovereign flavour?  
A funeral urn awaiting tearful showers?  
Of far oases the faint, wafted savour?  
A dreamy pillow? or a sheaf of flowers?  
I have known deep, sad eyes that yet concealed  
No secrets: caskets void of any gem:  
Medallions where no sacred charm lay sealed,  
Deep as the Skies, but vacuous like them!  
It is enough that your appearance flatters,  
Rejoicing one who flies from truth or duty.  
Your listless, cold stupidity – what matters?  
Hail, mask or curtain, I adore your beauty!

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Je n'ai pas oublié, voisine de la ville

### Je n'ai pas oublié, voisine de la ville

Je n'ai pas oublié, voisine de la ville,  
Notre blanche maison, petite mais tranquille ;  
Sa Pomone de plâtre et sa vieille Vénus  
Dans un bosquet chétif cachant leurs membres nus,  
Et le soleil, le soir, ruisselant et superbe,  
Qui, derrière la vitre où se brisait sa gerbe  
Semblait, grand oeil ouvert dans le ciel curieux,  
Contempler nos dîners longs et silencieux,  
Répandant largement ses beaux reflets de cierge  
Sur la nappe frugale et les rideaux de serge.

– Charles Baudelaire

### I Have Not Forgotten Our White Cottage

I have not forgotten our white cottage,  
Small but peaceful, near the city,  
Its plaster Pomona, its old Venus,  
Hiding their bare limbs in a stunted grove.  
In the evening streamed down the radiant sun,  
That great eye which stares from the inquisitive sky.  
From behind the window that scattered its bright rays  
It seemed to gaze upon our long, quiet dinners,  
Spreading wide its candle-like reflections  
On the frugal table-cloth and the serge curtains.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Neighbouring on the City, I Recall

Neighbouring on the city, I recall  
Our snow-white house, so full of peace and small :  
The casts of Venus and Pomona too  
Whose limbs a tiny thicket hid from view.  
The sun at eve, cascading fire and gold,  
Behind the glass, his sheaf of rays unrolled,  
Then, like an eye, inquisitively seemed  
To watch our long, hushed dinners as we dreamed ;  
Like candle-flames his glories, as they poured,  
Lit our serge curtains and our simple board.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# La servante au grand coeur dont vous étiez jalouse

## La servante au grand coeur dont vous étiez jalouse

La servante au grand coeur dont vous étiez jalouse,  
Et qui dort son sommeil sous une humble pelouse,  
Nous devrions pourtant lui porter quelques fleurs.  
Les morts, les pauvres morts, ont de grandes douleurs,  
Et quand Octobre souffle, émondeur des vieux arbres,  
Son vent mélancolique à l'entour de leurs marbres,  
Certe, ils doivent trouver les vivants bien ingrats,  
À dormir, comme ils font, chaudement dans leurs draps,  
Tandis que, dévorés de noires songeries,  
Sans compagnon de lit, sans bonnes causeries,  
Vieux squelettes gelés travaillés par le ver,  
Ils sentent s'égoutter les neiges de l'hiver  
Et le siècle couler, sans qu'amis ni famille  
Remplacent les lambeaux qui pendent à leur grille.  
Lorsque la bûche siffle et chante, si le soir  
Calme, dans le fauteuil je la voyais s'asseoir,  
Si, par une nuit bleue et froide de décembre,  
Je la trouvais tapie en un coin de ma chambre,  
Grave, et venant du fond de son lit éternel  
Couvrir l'enfant grandi de son oeil maternel,  
Que pourrais-je répondre à cette âme pieuse,  
Voyant tomber des pleurs de sa paupière creuse ?

## **The Kind-Hearted Servant of Whom You Were Jealous**

The kind-hearted servant of whom you were jealous,  
Who sleeps her sleep beneath a humble plot of grass,  
We must by all means take her some flowers.  
The dead, ah! the poor dead suffer great pains,  
And when October, the pruner of old trees, blows  
His melancholy breath about their marble tombs,  
Surely they must think the living most ungrateful,  
To sleep, as they do, between warm, white sheets,  
While, devoured by gloomy reveries,  
Without bedfellows, without pleasant causeries,  
Old, frozen skeletons, belabored by the worm,  
They feel the drip of winter's snow,  
The passing of the years; nor friends, nor family  
Replace the dead flowers that hang on their tombs.  
If, some evening, when the fire-log whistles and sings  
I saw her sit down calmly in the great armchair,  
If, on a cold, blue night in December,  
I found her ensconced in a corner of my room,  
Grave, having come from her eternal bed  
Maternally to watch over her grown-up child,  
What could I reply to that pious soul,  
Seeing tears fall from her hollow eyelids?

– William Aggeler, 1954

## **Now the Great-Hearted Servant, Who Aroused**

Now the great-hearted servant, who aroused  
Your jealousy, in humble earth is housed,  
Let's take, at least, some flowers for her relief.  
The dead, the piteous dead, know piercing grief,  
And when October blows, to prune old trees,  
And whistles round the marble where they freeze,  
How thankless then we living must appear  
Between warm sheets to sleep in comfort here,  
While, eaten by black dreams, they lie in woe  
Warm bedmates and their gossip to forego,

Frostbitten skeletons, tunneled by vermin,  
To bear the moulting drip of Winter's ermine,  
For ages, with no friends nor kindred there  
The tatters on their railings to repair.  
On evenings when the hearthlogs hiss and flare  
Were I to see her calmly take her chair :  
Or, in the calm and blue December gloom,  
Huddle within the corner of my room,  
Gravely returning from her bed eternal  
To tend this grown-up child with the maternal  
Care of old times – how could I then reply  
To see the tears roll from each hollow eye ?

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Brumes et pluies

### Brumes et pluies

Ô fins d'automne, hivers, printemps trempés de boue,  
Endormeuses saisons ! je vous aime et vous loue  
D'envelopper ainsi mon cœur et mon cerveau  
D'un linceul vapoureux et d'un vague tombeau.  
Dans cette grande plaine où l'autan froid se joue,  
Où par les longues nuits la girouette s'enroue,  
Mon âme mieux qu'au temps du tiède renouveau  
Ouvrira largement ses ailes de corbeau.  
Rien n'est plus doux au cœur plein de choses funèbres,  
Et sur qui dès longtemps descendent les frimas,  
Ô blafardes saisons, reines de nos climats,  
Que l'aspect permanent de vos pâles ténèbres,  
– Si ce n'est, par un soir sans lune, deux à deux,  
D'endormir la douleur sur un lit hasardeux.

– Charles Baudelaire

### Mist and Rain

O ends of autumn, winters, springtimes drenched with mud,  
Seasons that lull to sleep ! I love you, I praise you  
For enfolding my heart and mind thus  
In a misty shroud and a filmy tomb.  
On that vast plain where the cold south wind plays,  
Where in the long, dark nights the weather-cock grows hoarse,  
My soul spreads wide its raven wings  
More easily than in the warm springtide.  
Nothing is sweeter to a gloomy heart



On which the hoar-frost has long been falling,  
Than the permanent aspect of your pale shadows,  
O wan seasons, queens of our clime  
– Unless it be to deaden suffering, side by side  
In a casual bed, on a moonless night.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Mist and Rain

O Autumns, Winters, Springs! Seasons of mire!  
Soul-drowsing times! I love you. Take my praise  
For shrouding thus my heart and brain entire  
In a vague tomb and winding-sheet of haze.  
Through the long nights when the south-wester swings  
The rusty vanes that shriek upon the towers,  
My soul can fully stretch its raven wings  
More easily than in the warmer hours.  
Nothing is sweeter to funereal hearts  
On whom the frost of ages has been laid –  
Wan seasons, when you queen it round these parts, –  
Than the eternal sight of your pale shade:  
Unless on moonless midnights, pair by pair,  
To lull, upon chance beds, our hearts' despair.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# Rêve parisien (1861)

## Rêve parisien

*À Constantin Guys*

I

De ce terrible paysage,  
Tel que jamais mortel n'en vit,  
Ce matin encore l'image,  
Vague et lointaine, me ravit.  
Le sommeil est plein de miracles !  
Par un caprice singulier  
J'avais banni de ces spectacles  
Le végétal irrégulier,  
Et, peintre fier de mon génie,  
Je savourais dans mon tableau  
L'enivrante monotonie  
Du métal, du marbre et de l'eau.  
Babel d'escaliers et d'arcades,  
C'était un palais infini  
Plein de bassins et de cascades  
Tombant dans l'or mat ou bruni ;  
Et des cataractes pesantes,  
Comme des rideaux de cristal  
Se suspendaient, éblouissantes,  
À des murailles de métal.  
Non d'arbres, mais de colonnades  
Les étangs dormants s'entouraient  
Où de gigantesques naïades,  
Comme des femmes, se miraient.  
Des nappes d'eau s'épanchaient, bleues,

Entre des quais roses et verts,  
Pendant des millions de lieues,  
Vers les confins de l'univers :  
C'étaient des pierres inouïes  
Et des flots magiques, c'étaient  
D'immenses glaces éblouies  
Par tout ce qu'elles reflétaient !  
Insouciantes et taciturnes,  
Des Ganges, dans le firmament,  
Versaient le trésor de leurs urnes  
Dans des gouffres de diamant.  
Architecte de mes féeries,  
Je faisais, à ma volonté,  
Sous un tunnel de pierreries  
Passer un océan dompté ;  
Et tout, même la couleur noire,  
Semblait fourbi, clair, irisé ;  
Le liquide enchâssait sa gloire  
Dans le rayon cristallisé.  
Nul astre d'ailleurs, nuls vestiges  
De soleil, même au bas du ciel,  
Pour illuminer ces prodiges,  
Qui brillaient d'un feu personnel !  
Et sur ces mouvantes merveilles  
Planait (terrible nouveauté !  
Tout pour l'oeil, rien pour les oreilles !)  
Un silence d'éternité.

## II

En rouvrant mes yeux pleins de flamme  
J'ai vu l'horreur de mon taudis,  
Et senti, rentrant dans mon âme,  
La pointe des soucis maudits ;  
La pendule aux accents funèbres  
Sonnait brutalement midi,  
Et le ciel versait des ténèbres  
Sur le triste monde engourdi.

## Parisian Dream

To Constantin Guys

I

This morning I am still entranced  
By the image, distant and dim,  
Of that awe-inspiring landscape  
Such as no mortal ever saw.  
Sleep is full of miracles !  
Obeying a curious whim,  
I had banned from that spectacle  
Irregular vegetation,  
And, painter proud of his genius,  
I savored in my picture  
The delightful monotony  
Of water, marble, and metal.  
Babel of arcades and stairways,  
It was a palace infinite,  
Full of basins and of cascades  
Falling on dull or burnished gold,  
And heavy waterfalls,  
Like curtains of crystal,  
Were hanging, bright and resplendent,  
From ramparts of metal.  
Not with trees but with colonnades  
The sleeping ponds were encircled ;  
In these mirrors huge naiads  
Admired themselves like women.  
Streams of blue water flowed along  
Between rose and green embankments,  
Stretching away millions of leagues  
Toward the end of the universe ;  
There were indescribable stones  
And magic waves ; there were  
Enormous glaciers bedazzled  
By everything they reflected !  
Insouciant and taciturn,  
Ganges, in the firmament,

Poured out the treasure of their urns  
Into chasms made of diamonds.  
Architect of my fairyland,  
Whenever it pleased me I made  
A vanquished ocean flow  
Into a tunnel of jewels ;  
And all, even the color black,  
Seemed polished, bright, iridescent,  
Liquid enchased its own glory  
In the crystallized rays of light.  
Moreover, no star, no glimmer  
Of sun, even at the sky's rim,  
Illuminated these marvels  
That burned with a personal fire !  
And over these shifting wonders  
Hovered (terrible novelty !  
All for the eye, naught for the ear !)  
The silence of eternity.

## II

Opening my eyes full of flames  
I saw my miserable room  
And felt the cursed blade of care  
Sink deep into my heart again ;  
The clock with its death-like accent  
Was brutally striking noon ;  
The sky was pouring down its gloom  
Upon the dismal, torpid world.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Parisian Dream

To Constantin Guys

## I

Of the dread landscape that I saw,  
Where human eyes were never set,  
I still am ravished by the awe

That, vague and distant, haunts me yet.  
Sleep is of miracles so fain  
That I (O singular caprice!)  
As being formless, could obtain  
That vegetable life should cease.  
A painter, in my genius free,  
I there exulted in the fettle  
Derived from a monotony  
Composed of marble, lymph, and metal.  
Babels of stairways and arcades,  
Endless and topless to behold,  
With ponds, and jets, and steep cascades  
Filling receptacles of gold :  
Ponderous cataracts there swung  
Like crystal curtains, foaming shawls –  
Dazzling and glittering they hung  
Suspended from the metal walls.  
Not trees, but colonnades, enclosed  
Motionless lakes, besides whose shelves  
Gigantic naiades reposed,  
Like women, gazing at themselves.  
Blue sheets of water interlay  
Unnumbered quays of green and rose,  
That stretched a million leagues away  
To where the bounds of space impose.  
'Twas formed of unknown stones that blazed  
And magic waves that intersect,  
Where icebergs floated, seeming dazed  
With all they mirror and reflect.  
Impassive, cold, and taciturn,  
Great Ganges, through the sky's vast prism,  
Each poured the treasures of its urn  
Into a diamond abysm.  
Architect of my fairy scene,  
I willed, by wondrous stratagems,  
An ocean, tamed, to pass between  
A tunnel that was made of gems.  
There all things, even the colour black,  
Seemed irridesciently to play,

And liquid crystalised its lack  
Of outline in a frozen ray.  
No star, no sun could be discerned,  
Even low down, in that vast sky :  
The fire was personal that burned  
To show these marvels to the eye.  
Above these moving wonders sheer  
There soared (that such a thing should be !  
All for the eye, none for the ear !)  
A silence of eternity.

II

My opening eyes, as red as coal,  
The horror of my lodging met.  
I felt re-entering my soul  
The knife of cares and vain regret.  
The clock with brutal accent played  
Funereal chimes. The time was noon  
And heaven covered, with its shade,  
The world, this fatuous balloon !

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# Le Crépuscule du matin

## Le Crépuscule du matin

La diane chantait dans les cours des casernes,  
Et le vent du matin soufflait sur les lanternes.  
C'était l'heure où l'essaim des rêves malfaisants  
Tord sur leurs oreillers les bruns adolescents ;  
Où, comme un oeil sanglant qui palpite et qui bouge,  
La lampe sur le jour fait une tache rouge ;  
Où l'âme, sous le poids du corps revêche et lourd,  
Imite les combats de la lampe et du jour.  
Comme un visage en pleurs que les brises essuient,  
L'air est plein du frisson des choses qui s'enfuient,  
Et l'homme est las d'écrire et la femme d'aimer.  
Les maisons çà et là commençaient à fumer.  
Les femmes de plaisir, la paupière livide,  
Bouche ouverte, dormaient de leur sommeil stupide ;  
Les pauvresses, traînant leurs seins maigres et froids,  
Soufflaient sur leurs tisons et soufflaient sur leurs doigts.  
C'était l'heure où parmi le froid et la lésine  
S'aggravaient les douleurs des femmes en gésine ;  
Comme un sanglot coupé par un sang écumeux  
Le chant du coq au loin déchirait l'air brumeux  
Une mer de brouillards baignait les édifices,  
Et les agonisants dans le fond des hospices  
Poussaient leur dernier râle en hoquets inégaux.  
Les débauchés rentraient, brisés par leurs travaux.  
L'aurore grelottante en robe rose et verte  
S'avavançait lentement sur la Seine déserte,  
Et le sombre Paris, en se frottant les yeux  
Empoignait ses outils, vieillard laborieux.

– Charles Baudelaire



## Dawn

They were sounding reveille in the barracks' yards,  
And the morning wind was blowing on the lanterns.  
It was the hour when swarms of harmful dreams  
Make the sun-tanned adolescents toss in their beds ;  
When, like a bloody eye that twitches and rolls,  
The lamp makes a red splash against the light of day ;  
When the soul within the heavy, fretful body  
Imitates the struggle of the lamp and the sun.  
Like a tear-stained face being dried by the breeze,  
The air is full of the shudders of things that flee,  
And man is tired of writing and woman of making love.  
Here and there the houses were beginning to smoke.  
The ladies of pleasure, with eyelids yellow-green  
And mouths open, were sleeping their stupefied sleep ;  
The beggar-women, their breasts hanging thin and cold,  
Were blowing on their fires, blowing on their fingers.  
It was the hour when amid poverty and cold  
The pains of women in labor grow more cruel ;  
The cock's crow in the distance tore the foggy air  
Like a sob stifled by a bloody froth ;  
The buildings were enveloped in a sea of mist,  
And in the charity-wards, the dying  
Hiccapped their death-sobs at uneven intervals.  
The rakes were going home, exhausted by their work.  
The dawn, shivering in her green and rose garment,  
Was moving slowly along the deserted Seine,  
And somber Paris, the industrious old man,  
Was rubbing his eyes and gathering up his tools.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Morning Twilight

Reveille in the barracks and the camps.  
The wind of morning blew upon the lamps.  
It was the hour when evil dreams in swarms  
On pillows twist brown, adolescent forms :  
When like a bleeding eye that's twitched with pain

Each lantern smudged the day with crimson stain :  
The soul, against its body's weight of brawn,  
Lay struggling, like the lanterns with the dawn :  
Like a sad face whose tears the breezes dry  
The air grew tremulous with things that fly,  
And women tired of love, and men of writing.  
The chimneys, here and there, showed fires were lighting.  
Women of pleasure, slumber to be-slut,  
Lay open-mouthed with livid eyelids shut.  
Dangling thin dugs, cold pauper-women blew  
Upon the embers and their fingers too.  
It was the hour when, what with cold and squalor,  
Women in labour aggravate their dolour,  
And like a sob, choked short with bloody froth,  
The cock-crow tore the foggy air as cloth.  
Like seas the mists round every building poured  
While agonising patients in the ward,  
In broken hiccoughs, rattled out their lives :  
And worn-out rakes reeled homeward to their wives.  
Aurora, in a shift of rose and green,  
Came shivering down the Seine's deserted scene  
And Paris, as he rubbed his eyes, began  
To sort his tools, laborious old man.

– Roy Campbell, 1952





LE VIN  
WINE



## L'Ame du Vin

### L'Ame du Vin

Un soir, l'âme du vin chantait dans les bouteilles :  
« Homme, vers toi je pousse, ô cher déshérité,  
Sous ma prison de verre et mes cires vermeilles,  
Un chant plein de lumière et de fraternité !

Je sais combien il faut, sur la colline en flamme,  
De peine, de sueur et de soleil cuisant  
Pour engendrer ma vie et pour me donner l'âme ;  
Mais je ne serai point ingrat ni malfaisant,

Car j'éprouve une joie immense quand je tombe  
Dans le gosier d'un homme usé par ses travaux,  
Et sa chaude poitrine est une douce tombe  
Où je me plais bien mieux que dans mes froids caveaux.

Entends-tu retentir les refrains des dimanches  
Et l'espoir qui gazouille en mon sein palpitant ?  
Les coudes sur la table et retroussant tes manches,  
Tu me glorifieras et tu seras content ;

J'allumerai les yeux de ta femme ravie ;  
À ton fils je rendrai sa force et ses couleurs  
Et serai pour ce frêle athlète de la vie  
L'huile qui raffermirait les muscles des lutteurs.

En toi je tomberai, végétale ambroisie,  
Grain précieux jeté par l'éternel Semeur,  
Pour que de notre amour naisse la poésie  
Qui jaillira vers Dieu comme une rare fleur ! »

## The Soul of Wine

One night, the soul of wine was singing in the flask :  
"O man, dear disinherited ! to you I sing  
This song full of light and of brotherhood  
From my prison of glass with its scarlet wax seals.  
I know the cost in pain, in sweat,  
And in burning sunlight on the blazing hillside,  
Of creating my life, of giving me a soul :  
I shall not be ungrateful or malevolent,  
For I feel a boundless joy when I flow  
Down the throat of a man worn out by his labor ;  
His warm breast is a pleasant tomb  
Where I'm much happier than in my cold cellar.  
Do you hear the choruses resounding on Sunday  
And the hopes that warble in my fluttering breast ?  
With sleeves rolled up, elbows on the table,  
You will glorify me and be content ;  
I shall light up the eyes of your enraptured wife,  
And give back to your son his strength and his color ;  
I shall be for that frail athlete of life  
The oil that hardens a wrestler's muscles.  
Vegetal ambrosia, precious grain scattered  
By the eternal Sower, I shall descend in you  
So that from our love there will be born poetry,  
Which will spring up toward God like a rare flower !"

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Soul of Wine

One night the wine was singing in the bottles :  
"Mankind, dear waif, I send to you, in spite  
Of prisoning glass and rosy wax that throttles,  
A song that's full of brotherhood and light.  
I know what toil, and pain, and sweat you thole,  
Under the roasting sun on slopes of fire,  
To give me life and to beget my soul –  
So I will not be thankless to my sire,



Because I feel a wondrous joy to dive  
Down, clown the throat of some work-wearied slave.  
His warm chest is a tomb wherein I thrive  
Better than in my subterranean cave.  
Say, can you hear that rousing catch resound  
Which hope within my beating heart sings high?  
(With elbows on the table, sprawl around,  
Contented hearts! my name to glorify.)  
I'll light the eyes of your delighted wife.  
Your son I'll give both rosy health and muscle  
And be to that frail athlete of this life  
Like oil that primes the wrestler for the tussle,  
In you I fall, ambrosia from above,  
Sown by the hand of the eternal Power,  
That poetry may blossom from our love  
And rear to God its rare and deathless flower!"

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# Le Vin de chiffonniers

## Le Vin de chiffonniers

Souvent à la clarté rouge d'un réverbère  
Dont le vent bat la flamme et tourmente le verre,  
Au coeur d'un vieux faubourg, labyrinthe fangeux  
Où l'humanité grouille en ferments orageux,  
On voit un chiffonnier qui vient, hochant la tête,  
Butant, et se cognant aux murs comme un poète,  
Et, sans prendre souci des mouchards, ses sujets,  
Epanche tout son coeur en glorieux projets.  
Il prête des serments, dicte des lois sublimes,  
Terrasse les méchants, relève les victimes,  
Et sous le firmament comme un dais suspendu  
S'enivre des splendeurs de sa propre vertu.  
Oui, ces gens harcelés de chagrins de ménage  
Moulus par le travail et tourmentés par l'âge  
Ereintés et pliant sous un tas de débris,  
Vomissement confus de l'énorme Paris,  
Reviennent, parfumés d'une odeur de futailles,  
Suivis de compagnons, blanchis dans les batailles,  
Dont la moustache pend comme les vieux drapeaux.  
Les bannières, les fleurs et les arcs triomphaux  
Se dressent devant eux, solennelle magie !  
Et dans l'étourdissante et lumineuse orgie  
Des clairons, du soleil, des cris et du tambour,  
Ils apportent la gloire au peuple ivre d'amour !  
C'est ainsi qu'à travers l'Humanité frivole  
Le vin roule de l'or, éblouissant Pactole ;  
Par le gosier de l'homme il chante ses exploits  
Et règne par ses dons ainsi que les vrais rois.

Pour noyer la rancoeur et bercer l'indolence  
De tous ces vieux maudits qui meurent en silence,  
Dieu, touché de remords, avait fait le sommeil ;  
L'Homme ajouta le Vin, fils sacré du Soleil !

– Charles Baudelaire

## The Rag-Picker's Wine

Often, in the red light of a street-lamp  
Of which the wind whips the flame and worries the glass,  
In the heart of some old suburb, muddy labyrinth,  
Where humanity crawls in a seething ferment,  
One sees a rag-picker go by, shaking his head,  
Stumbling, bumping against the walls like a poet,  
And, with no thought of the stool-pigeons, his subjects,  
He pours out his whole heart in grandiose projects.  
He takes oaths, dictates sublime laws,  
Lays low the wicked and succors victims ;  
Beneath the firmament spread like a canopy  
He gets drunk with the splendor of his own virtues.  
Yes, these people harassed by domestic worries,  
Ground down by their work, distorted by age,  
Worn-out, and bending beneath a load of debris,  
The commingled vomit of enormous Paris,  
Come back, smelling of the wine-cask,  
Followed by companions whitened by their battles,  
And whose moustaches bang down like old flags ;  
Banners, flowers, and triumphal arches  
Rise up before them, a solemn magic !  
And in the deafening, brilliant orgy  
Of clarions and drums, of sunlight and of shouts,  
They bring glory to the crowd drunk with love !  
It is thus that throughout frivolous Humanity  
Wine, the dazzling Pactolus, carries flakes of gold ;  
By the throats of men he sings his exploits  
And reigns by his gifts like a veritable king.  
To drown the bitterness and lull the indolence  
Of all these accurst old men who die in silence,

God, touched with remorse, had created sleep ;  
 Man added Wine, divine child of the Sun !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Wine of the Rag Pickers

Often, in some red street-lamp's glare, whose flame  
 The wind flaps, rattling at its glassy frame,  
 In the mired labyrinth of some old slum  
 Where crawling multitudes ferment their scum –  
 With judge-like nods, a rag-picker comes reeling,  
 Bumping on walls, like poets, without feeling,  
 And scorning cops, now vassals of his state,  
 Begins on glorious subjects to dilate,  
 Takes royal oaths, dictates his laws sublime,  
 Exalts the injured, and chastises crime,  
 And, spreading his own dais on the sky,  
 Is dazzled by his virtues, starred on high.  
 Yes, these folk, badgered by domestic care,  
 Ground down by toil, decrepitude, despair,  
 Buckled beneath the foul load that each carries,  
 The motley vomit of enormous Paris –  
 Come home, vat-scented, trailing clouds of glory,  
 Followed by veteran comrades, battle-hoary,  
 Whose whiskers stream like banners as each marches.  
 – Flags, torches, flowers, and steep triumphal arches  
 Rise up for them in magic hues and burn,  
 Since through this dazzling orgy they return,  
 While drums and clarions daze the sun above,  
 With glory to a nation drunk with love !  
 Thus Wine, through giddy human life, is rolled,  
 Like Pactolus, a stream of burning gold ;  
 Through man's own throat his exploits it will sing  
 And reign by gifts, as best befits a king.  
 To lull their laziness and drown their rancour,  
 For storm-tossed wrecks a temporary anchor,  
 God, in remorse, made sleep. Man added Wine,  
 Child of the Sun, immortal and divine !

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# Le Vin de l'assassin

## Le Vin de l'assassin

Ma femme est morte, je suis libre !  
Je puis donc boire tout mon soûl.  
Lorsque je rentrais sans un sou,  
Ses cris me déchiraient la fibre.  
Autant qu'un roi je suis heureux ;  
L'air est pur, le ciel admirable...  
Nous avons un été semblable  
Lorsque j'en devins amoureux !  
L'horrible soif qui me déchire  
Aurait besoin pour s'assouvir  
D'autant de vin qu'en peut tenir  
Son tombeau ; – ce n'est pas peu dire :  
Je l'ai jetée au fond d'un puits,  
Et j'ai même poussé sur elle  
Tous les pavés de la margelle.  
– Je l'oublierai si je le puis !  
Au nom des serments de tendresse,  
Dont rien ne peut nous délier,  
Et pour nous réconcilier  
Comme au beau temps de notre ivresse,  
J'implorai d'elle un rendez-vous,  
Le soir, sur une route obscure.  
Elle y vint – folle créature !  
Nous sommes tous plus ou moins fous !  
Elle était encore jolie,  
Quoique bien fatiguée ! et moi,  
Je l'aimais trop ! voilà pourquoi  
Je lui dis : Sors de cette vie !

Nul ne peut me comprendre. Un seul  
Parmi ces ivrognes stupides  
Songea-t-il dans ses nuits morbides  
À faire du vin un linceul ?  
Cette crapule invulnérable  
Comme les machines de fer  
Jamais, ni l'été ni l'hiver,  
N'a connu l'amour véritable,  
Avec ses noirs enchantements,  
Son cortège infernal d'alarmes,  
Ses fioles de poison, ses larmes,  
Ses bruits de chaîne et d'ossements !  
– Me voilà libre et solitaire !  
Je serai ce soir ivre mort ;  
Alors, sans peur et sans remords,  
Je me coucherai sur la terre,  
Et je dormirai comme un chien !  
Le chariot aux lourdes roues  
Chargé de pierres et de boues,  
Le wagon enragé peut bien  
Ecraser ma tête coupable  
Ou me couper par le milieu,  
Je m'en moque comme de Dieu,  
Du Diable ou de la Sainte Table !

– Charles Baudelaire

## The Murderer's Wine

My wife is dead and I am free !  
Now I can drink my fill ;  
When I'd come home without a sou,  
Her screaming would drive me crazy.  
I am as happy as a king ;  
The air is pure, the sky superb...  
We had a summer like this  
When I fell in love with her !  
To satisfy the awful thirst  
That tortures me, I'd have to drink

All the wine it would take to fill  
Her grave – that is not a little :  
I threw her down a well,  
And what is more, I dropped on her  
All the stones of the well's rim.  
I will forget her if I can !  
In the name of love's vows,  
From which nothing can release us,  
And to become the friends we were  
When we first knew passion's rapture,  
I begged of her a rendezvous  
At night, on a deserted road.  
She came there ! – mad creature !  
We're all more or less mad !  
She was still attractive,  
Although very tired ! and I,  
I loved her too much ! that is why  
I said to her : Depart this life !  
None can understand me. Did one  
Among all those stupid drunkards  
Ever dream in his morbid nights  
Of making a shroud of wine ?  
That dissolute crowd, unfeeling  
As an iron machine,  
Never, nor summer, nor winter,  
Has known what true love is,  
With its black enchantments,  
Its hellish cortege of alarms,  
Its phials of poison, and its tears,  
Its noise of chains and dead men's bones !  
– Here I am free and all alone !  
I'll get blind drunk tonight ;  
Then without fear, without remorse,  
I'll lie down on the ground  
And I'll sleep like a dog !  
The dump-cart with its heavy wheels  
Loaded with mud and rocks,  
The careening wagon may well  
Crush in my guilty head

Or cut my body in two ;  
I laugh at God, at the Devil,  
And at the Holy Table as well !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Wine of the Murderer

My wife is dead. I'm free. From hence  
I'll drink my fill, and that's the truth !  
Each time I came back with no pence,  
Her screechings drilled me like a tooth.  
Now I'm as happy as a king...  
Air pure, a cloudless sky above.  
I can remember such a thing  
The summer that we fell in love.  
To quench the thirst that tears my throat  
It would require the vats to flow  
Enough to set her tomb afloat –  
And that's no thimbleful, oh no !  
I threw her in a well to drown,  
With the walled rocks that round it stood,  
To keep her there, and hold her down –  
I would forget her if I could !  
Pleading our early tender vows,  
Which naught could break for evermore,  
To reconcile us, spouse to spouse,  
In the same raptures as before –  
I begged of her a rendezvous  
One evening in a gloomy lane.  
She came – a crazy thing to do !  
We all are more-or-less insane !  
She still was quite attractive, though  
A little tired and ill : and I  
Still loved her more than ever : so  
I said, "Get out of life, and die !"  
None understand me. Could a single  
"Drunk" of the stupid sort design,  
On morbid nights, by his own inge,



To make a winding sheet of wine ?  
Of dense invulnerable stuff,  
Like engines built to shunt or shove,  
They've never known, through smooth or rough,  
The veritable power of love,  
its black enchantments, fiery trials,  
Processions of infernal pains,  
Its burning tears, its poison phials,  
Its rattling bones, and jingling chains.  
Now I am free and all alone.  
Tonight I'll get dead-drunk, of course.  
My head I'll pillow on a stone  
Without repentance or remorse.  
And there I'll sleep like any dog.  
The lumbering cart with massive wheels  
Piled up with stones, or peat, or bog,  
Or hurtling wagon, as it reels  
May crush my skull in, like a clod,  
Or halve me at the crossing-level.  
I'd care as little as for God,  
The Ten Commandments, or the Devil.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Le Vin du solitaire

### Le Vin du solitaire

Le regard singulier d'une femme galante  
Qui se glisse vers nous comme le rayon blanc  
Que la lune onduleuse envoie au lac tremblant,  
Quand elle y veut baigner sa beauté nonchalante ;  
Le dernier sac d'écus dans les doigts d'un joueur ;  
Un baiser libertin de la maigre Adeline ;  
Les sons d'une musique énervante et câline,  
Semblable au cri lointain de l'humaine douleur,  
Tout cela ne vaut pas, ô bouteille profonde,  
Les baumes pénétrants que ta panse féconde  
Garde au coeur altéré du poète pieux ;  
Tu lui verses l'espoir, la jeunesse et la vie,  
– Et l'orgueil, ce trésor de toute gueuserie,  
Qui nous rend triomphants et semblables aux Dieux !

– Charles Baudelaire

### The Wine of the Solitary

The strange look of a lady of pleasure  
Turned slyly toward us like the white beam  
Which the undulous moon casts on the trembling lake  
When she wishes to bathe her nonchalant beauty ;  
The last bag of crowns between a gambler's fingers ;  
A lustful kiss from slender Adeline ;  
The sound of music, tormenting and caressing,  
Resembling the distant cry of a man in pain,  
All that is not worth, O deep, deep bottle,

The penetrating balm that your fruitful belly  
Holds for the thirsty heart of the pious poet ;  
You pour out for him hope, and youth, and life  
– And pride, the treasure of all beggary,  
Which makes us triumphant and equal to the gods !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Wine of the Solitary Man

The love-glance of a courtesan that swims  
With undulating ray like that the moon  
Sends to the waiting, tremulous lagoon  
Where she's about to lave her languid limbs :  
The last few florins in a gambler's fingers :  
The lustful kiss of slender Adeline :  
A haunting tune that wheedles and malingers,  
Wherein all human anguish seems to pine :  
All these aren't worth, O bottle kind and deep,  
The penetrating balms that swell your paunch  
The pious poet's wounded heart to staunch.  
You pour him hope, youth, life, and healing sleep –  
And pride, all Beggary's diadem and treasure,  
By which our triumphs with the Gods' we measure.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Le Vin des amants

### Le Vin des amants

Aujourd'hui l'espace est splendide !  
Sans mors, sans éperons, sans bride,  
Partons à cheval sur le vin  
Pour un ciel féérique et divin !  
Comme deux anges que torture  
Une implacable calenture  
Dans le bleu cristal du matin  
Suivons le mirage lointain !  
Mollement balancés sur l'aile  
Du tourbillon intelligent,  
Dans un délire parallèle,  
Ma soeur, côte à côte nageant,  
Nous fuirons sans repos ni trêves  
Vers le paradis de mes rêves !

– Charles Baudelaire

### The Wine of Lovers

Today space is magnificent !  
Without bridle or bit or spurs  
Let us ride away on wine  
To a divine, fairy-like heaven !  
Like two angels who are tortured  
By a relentless delirium,  
Let us follow the far mirage  
Through the crystal blue of the morning !  
Gently balanced upon the wings

Of the intelligent whirlwind,  
In a similar ecstasy,  
My sister, floating side by side,  
We'll flee without ever stopping  
To the paradise of my dreams !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Wine of Lovers

Oh, what a splendour fills all space !  
Without bit, spur, or rein to race,  
Let's gallop on the steeds of wine  
To heavens magic and divine !  
Now like two angels off the track,  
Whom wild relentless fevers rack,  
On through the morning's crystal blue  
The swift mirages we'll pursue.  
Now softly poised upon the wings  
That a sagacious cyclone brings,  
In parallel delirium twinned,  
While side by side we surf the wind,  
We'll never cease from such extremes,  
To seek the Eden of our dreams !

– Roy Campbell, 1952



FLEURS DU MAL  
FLOWERS OF EVIL





## Épigraphe pour un livre condamné (1868)

### Épigraphe pour un livre condamné

Lecteur paisible et bucolique,  
Sobre et naïf homme de bien,  
Jette ce livre saturnien,  
Orgiaque et mélancolique.  
Si tu n'as fait ta rhétorique  
Chez Satan, le rusé doyen,  
Jette ! tu n'y comprendrais rien,  
Ou tu me croirais hysthérique.  
Mais si, sans se laisser charmer,  
Ton oeil sait plonger dans les gouffres,  
Lis-moi, pour apprendre à m'aimer ;  
Âme curieuse qui souffres  
Et vas cherchant ton paradis,  
Plains-moi !... Sinon, je te maudis !

– Charles Baudelaire

### Epigraph for a Condemned Book

Quiet and bucolic reader,  
Upright man, sober and naive,  
Throw away this book, saturnine,  
Orgiac and melancholy.  
If you did not do your rhetoric  
With Satan, that artful dean,  
Throw it away, you'd grasp nothing,

Or else think me hysterical.  
But if, without being entranced,  
Your eye can plunge in the abyss,  
Read me, to learn to love me ;  
Inquisitive soul that suffers  
And keeps on seeking paradise,  
Pity me !... or else, I curse you !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Epigraph for a Condemned Book

Dear reader, peaceful and bucolic,  
Ingenuous, sober, hierophantic,  
Lay by this book so corybantic,  
So Saturnine, and melancholic.  
If elsewhere than in Satan's school  
You learned your syntax and your grammar,  
Lay by ! You'll think I rave and stammer  
And am a stark, hysteric fool.  
But if, not yielding to their charm,  
Your eye can plumb the gulfs of harm –  
Then learn to love me, read my verses.  
Inquiring sufferer, who seek  
Your Paradise, to you I speak :  
Pity me !... else, receive my curses !

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# La Destruction

## La Destruction

Sans cesse à mes côtés s'agite le Démon ;  
Il nage autour de moi comme un air impalpable ;  
Je l'avale et le sens qui brûle mon poumon  
Et l'emplit d'un désir éternel et coupable.  
Parfois il prend, sachant mon grand amour de l'Art,  
La forme de la plus séduisante des femmes,  
Et, sous de spécieux prétextes de cafard,  
Accoutume ma lèvre à des philtres infâmes.  
Il me conduit ainsi, loin du regard de Dieu,  
Haletant et brisé de fatigue, au milieu  
Des plaines de l'Ennui, profondes et désertes,  
Et jette dans mes yeux pleins de confusion  
Des vêtements souillés, des blessures ouvertes,  
Et l'appareil sanglant de la Destruction !

– Charles Baudelaire

## Destruction

The Demon is always moving about at my side ;  
He floats about me like an impalpable air ;  
I swallow him, I feel him burn my lungs  
And fill them with an eternal, sinful desire.  
Sometimes, knowing my deep love for Art, he assumes  
The form of a most seductive woman,  
And, with pretexts specious and hypocritical,  
Accustoms my lips to infamous philtres.  
He leads me thus, far from the sight of God,

Panting and broken with fatigue, into the midst  
Of the plains of Ennui, endless and deserted,  
And thrusts before my eyes full of bewilderment,  
Dirty filthy garments and open, gaping wounds,  
And all the bloody instruments of Destruction !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## **Destruction**

Always the Demon fidgets here beside me  
And swims around, impalpable as air :  
I drink him, feel him burn the lungs inside me  
With endless evil longings and despair.  
Sometimes, knowing my love of Art, he uses  
Seductive forms of women : and has thus,  
With specious, hypocritical excuses,  
Accustomed me to philtres infamous.  
Leading me wayworn into wastes untrod  
Of boundless Boredom, out of sight of God,  
Using all baits to compass my abduction,  
Into my eyes, confused and full of woe,  
Soiled clothes and bleeding gashes he will throw  
And all the grim regalia of Destruction.

– Roy Campbell, 1952



# Une Martyre

## Une Martyre

Dessin d'un Maître inconnu

Au milieu des flacons, des étoffes lamées  
Et des meubles voluptueux,  
Des marbres, des tableaux, des robes parfumées  
Qui traînent à plis somptueux,  
Dans une chambre tiède où, comme en une serre,  
L'air est dangereux et fatal,  
Où des bouquets mourants dans leurs cercueils de verre  
Exhalent leur soupir final,  
Un cadavre sans tête épanche, comme un fleuve,  
Sur l'oreiller désaltéré  
Un sang rouge et vivant, dont la toile s'abreuve  
Avec l'avidité d'un pré.  
Semblable aux visions pâles qu'enfante l'ombre  
Et qui nous enchaînent les yeux,  
La tête, avec l'amas de sa crinière sombre  
Et de ses bijoux précieux,  
Sur la table de nuit, comme une renoncule,  
Repose ; et, vide de pensers,  
Un regard vague et blanc comme le crépuscule  
S'échappe des yeux révulsés.  
Sur le lit, le tronc nu sans scrupules étale  
Dans le plus complet abandon  
La secrète splendeur et la beauté fatale  
Dont la nature lui fit don ;  
Un bas rosâtre, orné de coins d'or, à la jambe,  
Comme un souvenir est resté ;  
La jarretière, ainsi qu'un oeil secret qui flambe,

Darde un regard diamanté.  
Le singulier aspect de cette solitude  
Et d'un grand portrait langoureux,  
Aux yeux provocateurs comme son attitude,  
Révèle un amour ténébreux,  
Une coupable joie et des fêtes étranges  
Pleines de baisers infernaux,  
Dont se réjouissait l'essaim des mauvais anges  
Nageant dans les plis des rideaux ;  
Et cependant, à voir la maigreur élégante  
De l'épaule au contour heurté,  
La hanche un peu pointue et la taille fringante  
Ainsi qu'un reptile irrité,  
Elle est bien jeune encor ! – Son âme exaspérée  
Et ses sens par l'ennui mordus  
S'étaient-ils entr'ouverts à la meute altérée  
Des désirs errants et perdus ?  
L'homme vindicatif que tu n'as pu, vivante,  
Malgré tant d'amour, assouvir,  
Combla-t-il sur ta chair inerte et complaisante  
L'immensité de son désir ?  
Réponds, cadavre impur ! et par tes tresses roides  
Te soulevant d'un bras fiévreux,  
Dis-moi, tête effrayante, a-t-il sur tes dents froides  
Collé les suprêmes adieux ?  
– Loin du monde railleur, loin de la foule impure,  
Loin des magistrats curieux,  
Dors en paix, dors en paix, étrange créature,  
Dans ton tombeau mystérieux ;  
Ton époux court le monde, et ta forme immortelle  
Veille près de lui quand il dort ;  
Autant que toi sans doute il te sera fidèle,  
Et constant jusques à la mort.

– Charles Baudelaire

## A Martyr

Drawing by an unknown master

In the midst of perfume flasks, of sequined fabrics  
And voluptuous furniture,  
Of marble statues, pictures, and perfumed dresses  
That trail in sumptuous folds,

In a warm room where, as in a hothouse,  
The air is dangerous, fatal,  
Where bouquets dying in their glass coffins  
Exhale their final breath,

A headless cadaver pours out, like a river,  
On the saturated pillow  
Red, living blood, that the linen drinks up  
As greedily as a meadow.

Like the pale visions engendered by shadows  
And which hold our eyes riveted,  
The head, its mane of hair piled up in a dark mass  
And wearing precious jewels,

On the bedside table, like a ranunculus,  
Reposes ; and, empty of thoughts,  
A stare, blank and pallid as the dawn,  
Escapes from the upturned eyeballs.

On the bed, the nude torso shamelessly displays  
With the most complete abandon  
The secret splendor and fatal beauty  
That nature had bestowed on her ;

A rose stocking embroidered with gold clocks remains  
On her leg like a souvenir ;  
The garter, like a hidden flashing eye,  
Darts its glance of diamond brilliance.

The bizarre aspect of that solitude  
And of a large, languid portrait  
With eyes as provocative as the pose,  
Reveals an unwholesome love,  
Guilty joys and exotic revelries,  
With infernal kisses  
That delighted the swarm of bad angels  
Hovering in the curtains' folds ;



And yet one sees from the graceful slimness  
Of the angular shoulders.  
The haunches slightly sharp, and the waist sinuous  
As a snake poised to strike,  
That she's still quite young! – Had her exasperated soul  
And her senses gnawed by ennui  
Thrown open their gates to the thirsty pack  
Of lost and wandering desires?  
The vengeful man whom you could not with all your love  
Satisfy when you were alive,  
Did he use your inert, complacent flesh to fill  
The immensity of his lust?  
Reply, impure cadaver! and by your stiffened tresses  
Raising you with a fevered arm,  
Tell me, ghastly head, did he glue on your cold teeth  
The kisses of the last farewell?  
– Far from the sneering world, far from the impure crowd,  
Far from curious magistrates,  
Sleep in peace, sleep in peace, bizarre creature,  
In your mysterious tomb;  
Your mate roams o'er the world, and your immortal form  
Watches over him when he sleeps;  
Even as you, he will doubtless be faithful  
And constant until death.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Martyr

(Drawing by an Unknown Master)

Amongst gilt fabrics, flasks of scent and wine,  
Rich furniture, white marble, precious moulds.  
Fine paintings, and rich, perfumed robes that shine  
Swirled into sumptuous folds,  
In a warm room, that like a hot-house stifles  
With dangerous and fatal breath, where lie  
Pale flowers in crystal tombs, exquisite trifles,  
Exhaling their last sigh –  
A headless corpse, cascading in a flood

Hot, living blood, that soaks, with crimson stain  
A pillow slaked and sated with blood  
As any field with rain.  
Like those pale visions which the gloom aborts  
Which fix us in a still, hypnotic stare,  
The bead, tricked out with gems of sorts,  
In its huge mass of hair,  
Like a ranunculous beside the bed,  
Rests on the table, empty of all thought.  
From eyes revulsed, like twilight, seems to spread  
A gaze that looks at naught.  
Upon the bed the carcass, unabashed,  
Shows, in complete abandon, without shift,  
The secret splendour that, in life, it flashed  
Superbly, Nature's gift.  
A rosy stocking, freaked with clocks of gold,  
Clings to one leg : a souvenir, it seems :  
The garter, from twin diamonds, with the cold  
Stare of a viper gleams.  
The singular effect of solitude  
And of a languorous portrait, with its eyes  
Provocative as is its attitude,  
Dark loves would advertise –  
And guilty joys, with feasts of strange delight,  
Full of infernal kisses, omens certain  
To please the gloating angels of the Night  
Who swim behind each curtain.  
And yet to see her nimble strength, the risky  
Swerve of the rounded shoulder, and its rake,  
The tented haunch, the figure lithe and frisky,  
Flexed like an angry snake,  
You'd know that she was young.  
Her soul affronted, Her senses stung with boredom – were they  
bayed  
By packs of wandering, lost desires, and hunted,  
And finally betrayed?  
The vengeful man, whose lust you could not sate,  
(In spite of much love) nor quench his fire –  
Did he on your dead flesh then consummate  
His monstrous, last desire?

Answer me, corpse impure! With fevered fist,  
Grim visage, did he raise you up on high,  
And, as your silver frosty teeth he kissed,  
Bid you his last goodbye?  
Far from inquiring magistrates that sneer,  
Far from this world of raillery and riot,  
Sleep peacefully, strange creature, on your bier,  
Of mystery and quiet.  
Your lover roams the world. Your deathless shape  
Watches his sleep and hears each indrawn breath.  
No more than you can he ever escape  
From constancy till death!

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Lesbos (1857)

### Lesbos

Mère des jeux latins et des voluptés grecques,  
Lesbos, où les baisers, languissants ou joyeux,  
Chauds comme les soleils, frais comme les pastèques,  
Font l'ornement des nuits et des jours glorieux,  
Mère des jeux latins et des voluptés grecques,  
Lesbos, où les baisers sont comme les cascades  
Qui se jettent sans peur dans les gouffres sans fonds,  
Et courent, sanglotant et gloussant par saccades,  
Orageux et secrets, fourmillants et profonds ;  
Lesbos, où les baisers sont comme les cascades !  
Lesbos, où les Phrynés l'une l'autre s'attirent,  
Où jamais un soupir ne resta sans écho,  
À l'égal de Paphos les étoiles t'admirent,  
Et Vénus à bon droit peut jalouser Sapho !  
Lesbos où les Phrynés l'une l'autre s'attirent,  
Lesbos, terre des nuits chaudes et langoureuses,  
Qui font qu'à leurs miroirs, stérile volupté !  
Les filles aux yeux creux, de leur corps amoureuses,  
Caressent les fruits mûrs de leur nubilité ;  
Lesbos, terre des nuits chaudes et langoureuses,  
Laisse du vieux Platon se froncer l'oeil austère ;  
Tu tires ton pardon de l'excès des baisers,  
Reine du doux empire, aimable et noble terre,  
Et des raffinements toujours inépuisés.  
Laisse du vieux Platon se froncer l'oeil austère.  
Tu tires ton pardon de l'éternel martyre,  
Infligé sans relâche aux coeurs ambitieux,  
Qu'attire loin de nous le radieux sourire

Entrevu vaguement au bord des autres cieux !  
Tu tires ton pardon de l'éternel martyr !  
Qui des Dieux osera, Lesbos, être ton juge  
Et condamner ton front pâli dans les travaux,  
Si ses balances d'or n'ont pesé le déluge  
De larmes qu'à la mer ont versé tes ruisseaux ?  
Qui des Dieux osera, Lesbos, être ton juge ?  
Que nous veulent les lois du juste et de l'injuste ?  
Vierges au coeur sublime, honneur de l'archipel,  
Votre religion comme une autre est auguste,  
Et l'amour se rira de l'Enfer et du Ciel !  
Que nous veulent les lois du juste et de l'injuste ?  
Car Lesbos entre tous m'a choisi sur la terre  
Pour chanter le secret de ses vierges en fleurs,  
Et je fus dès l'enfance admis au noir mystère  
Des rires effrénés mêlés aux sombres pleurs ;  
Car Lesbos entre tous m'a choisi sur la terre.  
Et depuis lors je veille au sommet de Leucate,  
Comme une sentinelle à l'oeil perçant et sûr,  
Qui guette nuit et jour brick, tartane ou frégate,  
Dont les formes au loin frissonnent dans l'azur ;  
Et depuis lors je veille au sommet de Leucate,  
Pour savoir si la mer est indulgente et bonne,  
Et parmi les sanglots dont le roc retentit  
Un soir ramènera vers Lesbos, qui pardonne,  
Le cadavre adoré de Sapho, qui partit  
Pour savoir si la mer est indulgente et bonne !  
De la mâle Sapho, l'amante et le poète,  
Plus belle que Vénus par ses mornes pâleurs !  
– L'oeil d'azur est vaincu par l'oeil noir que tachète  
Le cercle ténébreux tracé par les douleurs  
De la mâle Sapho, l'amante et le poète !  
– Plus belle que Vénus se dressant sur le monde  
Et versant les trésors de sa sérénité  
Et le rayonnement de sa jeunesse blonde  
Sur le vieil Océan de sa fille enchanté ;  
Plus belle que Vénus se dressant sur le monde !  
– De Sapho qui mourut le jour de son blasphème,  
Quand, insultant le rite et le culte inventé,  
Elle fit son beau corps la pâture suprême

D'un brutal dont l'orgueil punit l'impiété  
 De celle qui mourut le jour de son blasphème.  
 Et c'est depuis ce temps que Lesbos se lamente,  
 Et, malgré les honneurs que lui rend l'univers,  
 S'enivre chaque nuit du cri de la tourmente  
 Que poussent vers les cieux ses rivages déserts.  
 Et c'est depuis ce temps que Lesbos se lamente !

– Charles Baudelaire

## Lesbos

Mother of Latin games and Greek delights,  
 Lesbos, where kisses, languishing or joyous,  
 Burning as the sun's light, cool as melons,  
 Adorn the nights and the glorious days ;  
 Mother of Latin games and Greek delights,  
 Lesbos, where the kisses are like cascades  
 That throw themselves boldly into bottomless chasms  
 And flow, sobbing and gurgling intermittently,  
 Stormy and secret, teeming and profound ;  
 Lesbos, where the kisses are like cascades !  
 Lesbos, where courtesans feel drawn toward each other,  
 Where for every sigh there is an answering sigh,  
 The stars admire you as much as Paphos,  
 And Venus may rightly be jealous of Sappho !  
 Lesbos, where courtesans feel drawn toward each other,  
 Lesbos, land of hot and languorous nights,  
 That make the hollow-eyed girls, amorous  
 Of their own bodies, caress before their mirrors  
 The ripe fruits of their nubility, O sterile pleasure !  
 Lesbos, land of hot and languorous nights,  
 Let old Plato look on you with an austere eye ;  
 You earn pardon by the excess of your kisses  
 And the inexhaustible refinements of your love,  
 Queen of the sweet empire, pleasant and noble land.  
 Let old Plato look on you with an austere eye.  
 You earn pardon by the eternal martyrdom  
 Inflicted ceaselessly upon aspiring hearts

Who are lured far from us by radiant smiles  
Vaguely glimpsed at the edge of other skies !  
You earn pardon by that eternal martyrdom !  
Which of the gods will dare to be your judge, Lesbos,  
And condemn your brow, grown pallid from your labors,  
If his golden scales have not weighed the flood  
Of tears your streams have poured into the sea ?  
Which of the gods will dare to be your judge, Lesbos ?  
What are to us the laws of the just and unjust  
Virgins with sublime hearts, honor of these islands ;  
Your religion, like any other, is august,  
And love will laugh at Heaven and at Hell !  
What are to us the laws of the just and unjust ?  
For Lesbos chose me among all other poets  
To sing the secret of her virgins in their bloom,  
And from childhood I witnessed the dark mystery  
Of unbridled laughter mingled with tears of gloom ;  
For Lesbos chose me among all other poets.  
And since then I watch from Leucadia's summit,  
Like a sentry with sure and piercing eyes  
Who looks night and day for tartane, brig or frigate,  
Whose forms in the distance flutter against the blue ;  
And since then I watch from Leucadia's summit,  
To find out if the sea is indulgent and kind,  
If to the sobs with which the rocks resound  
It will bring back some night to Lesbos, who forgives,  
The worshipped body of Sappho, who departed  
To find out if the sea is indulgent and kind !  
Of the virile Sappho, paramour and poet,  
With her wan pallor, more beautiful than Venus !  
– The blue eyes were conquered by the black eyes, ringed  
With dark circles, traced by the sufferings  
Of the virile Sappho, paramour and poet !  
– Lovelier than Venus dominating the world,  
Pouring out the treasures of her serenity  
And the radiance of her golden-haired youth  
Upon old Ocean, delighted with his daughter ;  
Lovelier than Venus dominating the world !  
– Of Sappho who died the day of her blasphemy,  
When, insulting the rite and the established cult,

She made of her body the supreme pabulum  
Of a cruel brute whose pride punished the sacrilege  
Of her who died on the day of her blasphemy.  
And it is since that time that Lesbos mourns,  
And in spite of the homage the world renders her,  
Gets drunk every night with the tempest's howls  
Which are hurled at the skies by her deserted shores.  
And it is since that time that Lesbos mourns.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Lesbos

Mother of Grecian joys and Latin games,  
Lesbos, where kisses, languishing or gay,  
As melons cool, or warm as solar flames,  
Adorn alike the glorious night and day :  
Mother of Grecian joys and Latin games,  
Lesbos of kisses reckless as cascades  
That hurl themselves to bottomless abysses,  
Stormy and secret, myriad-swarving kisses,  
That cluck and sob and gurgle in the shades.  
Lesbos of kisses reckless as cascades !  
Lesbos where Phrynes each to each are plighted,  
Where never yet unanswered went a sigh,  
Where Paphos with a rival is requited,  
And Venus with a Sappho has to vie !  
Lesbos where Phrynes each to each are plighted,  
Lesbos, the land of warm and languid night,  
Where gazing in their mirrors as they dress  
The cave-eyed girls, in barren, vain delight,  
The fruits of their nubility caress.  
Lesbos, the land of warm and languid night,  
Let Plato frown austerely all the while.  
Your pardon's from excess of kisses won,  
Queen of sweet empire, rare and noble isle –  
And from refinements which are never done.  
Let Plato frown austerely all the while.  
From martyrdom your pardon you beguile,



Inflicted without stint on hearts that soar  
Far, far away, drawn by some radiant smile  
Seen vaguely on a strange celestial shore.  
From martyrdom your pardon you beguile.  
Lesbos, what God to judge you would make bold,  
Or damn your brows so pale and sadly grave,  
Not having weighed upon the scales of gold  
The floods of tears you've poured into the wave.  
Lesbos which God to judge you would make bold ?  
For us, what mean the statutes of the just ?  
Pride of the isles, whose hearts sublimely swell,  
Your faith as any other is august  
And Love can laugh alike at Heaven and Hell.  
For us, what mean the statues of the just ?  
For Lesbos chose me of all men on earth  
To sing the secrets of her virgin flowers,  
Taught as a child the sacred rites of mirth  
And mysteries of sorrow which are ours.  
So Lesbos chose me of all men on earth.  
Since then I watch on the Leucadian height.  
Like a lone sentry with a piercing view  
Who sees the vessels ere they heave in sight  
With forms that faintly tremble in the blue.  
Since then I watch on the Leucadian height  
To find out if the sea's heart still is hardened  
And from the sobs that drench the rock with spray  
If it will bring back Sappho, who has pardoned,  
The corpse of the adored, who went away  
To find out that the sea its heart has hardened ;  
Of the male Sappho, lover, queen of singers,  
More beautiful than Venus by her woes.  
The blue eye cannot match the black, where lingers  
The shady circle that her grief bestows  
On the male Sappho, lover, queen of singers –  
Fairer than Venus towering on the world  
And pouring down serenity like water  
In the blond radiance of her tresses curled  
To daze the very Ocean with her daughter,  
Fairer than Venus towering on the world –  
Of Sappho, whom her blasphemy requited

The day she quit the rite and scorned the cult,  
And gave her lovely body to be slighted  
By a rough brute, whose scorn was the result  
For Sappho, whom the blasphemy requited.  
And since that time has Lesbos lived lamenting  
In spite of all the honours of mankind,  
And lives upon the storm-howl unrelenting  
Of its bleak shores, the sport of wave and wind :  
For since that time has Lesbos lived lamenting.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Femmes Damnés (Delphine et Hippolyte) (1857)

### Femmes Damnés (Delphine et Hippolyte)

À la pâle clarté des lampes languissantes,  
Sur de profonds coussins tout imprégnés d'odeur  
Hippolyte rêvait aux caresses puissantes  
Qui levaient le rideau de sa jeune candeur.  
Elle cherchait, d'un oeil troublé par la tempête,  
De sa naïveté le ciel déjà lointain,  
Ainsi qu'un voyageur qui retourne la tête  
Vers les horizons bleus dépassés le matin.  
De ses yeux amortis les paresseuses larmes,  
L'air brisé, la stupeur, la morne volupté,  
Ses bras vaincus, jetés comme de vaines armes,  
Tout servait, tout paraît sa fragile beauté.  
Étendue à ses pieds, calme et pleine de joie,  
Delphine la couvait avec des yeux ardents,  
Comme un animal fort qui surveille une proie,  
Après l'avoir d'abord marquée avec les dents.  
Beauté forte à genoux devant la beauté frêle,  
Superbe, elle humait voluptueusement  
Le vin de son triomphe, et s'allongeait vers elle,  
Comme pour recueillir un doux remerciement.  
Elle cherchait dans l'oeil de sa pâle victime  
Le cantique muet que chante le plaisir,  
Et cette gratitude infinie et sublime  
Qui sort de la paupière ainsi qu'un long soupir.  
– « Hippolyte, cher coeur, que dis-tu de ces choses ?  
Comprends-tu maintenant qu'il ne faut pas offrir

L'holocauste sacré de tes premières roses  
Aux souffles violents qui pourraient les flétrir ?  
Mes baisers sont légers comme ces éphémères  
Qui caressent le soir les grands lacs transparents,  
Et ceux de ton amant creuseront leurs ornières  
Comme des chariots ou des socs déchirants ;  
Ils passeront sur toi comme un lourd attelage  
De chevaux et de boeufs aux sabots sans pitié...  
Hippolyte, ô ma soeur ! tourne donc ton visage,  
Toi, mon âme et mon tout, mon tout et ma moitié,  
Tourne vers moi tes yeux pleins d'azur et d'étoiles !  
Pour un de ces regards charmants, baume divin,  
Des plaisirs plus obscurs je lèverai les voiles,  
Et je t'endormirai dans un rêve sans fin ! »

Mais Hippolyte alors, levant sa jeune tête :  
– « Je ne suis point ingrate et ne me repens pas,  
Ma Delphine, je souffre et je suis inquiète,  
Comme après un nocturne et terrible repas.  
Je sens fondre sur moi de lourdes épouvantes  
Et de noirs bataillons de fantômes épars,  
Qui veulent me conduire en des routes mouvantes  
Qu'un horizon sanglant ferme de toutes parts.  
Avons-nous donc commis une action étrange ?  
Explique, si tu peux, mon trouble et mon effroi :  
Je frissonne de peur quand tu me dis : 'Mon ange !'  
Et cependant je sens ma bouche aller vers toi.  
Ne me regarde pas ainsi, toi, ma pensée !  
Toi que j'aime à jamais, ma soeur d'élection,  
Quand même tu serais une embûche dressée  
Et le commencement de ma perdition ! »

Delphine secouant sa crinière tragique,  
Et comme trépignant sur le trépied de fer,  
L'oeil fatal, répondit d'une voix despotique :  
– « Qui donc devant l'amour ose parler d'enfer ?  
Maudit soit à jamais le rêveur inutile  
Qui voulut le premier, dans sa stupidité,  
S'éprenant d'un problème insoluble et stérile,  
Aux choses de l'amour mêler l'honnêteté !  
Celui qui veut unir dans un accord mystique

L'ombre avec la chaleur, la nuit avec le jour,  
Ne chauffera jamais son corps paralytique  
À ce rouge soleil que l'on nomme l'amour !  
Va, si tu veux, chercher un fiancé stupide ;  
Cours offrir un coeur vierge à ses cruels baisers ;  
Et, pleine de remords et d'horreur, et livide,  
Tu me rapporteras tes seins stigmatisés...  
On ne peut ici-bas contenter qu'un seul maître ! »  
Mais l'enfant, épanchant une immense douleur,  
Cria soudain : – « Je sens s'élargir dans mon être  
Un abîme béant ; cet abîme est mon coeur !  
Brûlant comme un volcan, profond comme le vide !  
Rien ne rassasiera ce monstre gémissant  
Et ne rafraîchira la soif de l'Euménide  
Qui, la torche à la main, le brûle jusqu'au sang.  
Que nos rideaux fermés nous séparent du monde,  
Et que la lassitude amène le repos !  
Je veux m'anéantir dans ta gorge profonde,  
Et trouver sur ton sein la fraîcheur des tombeaux ! »  
– Descendez, descendez, lamentables victimes,  
Descendez le chemin de l'enfer éternel !  
Plongez au plus profond du gouffre, où tous les crimes  
Flagellés par un vent qui ne vient pas du ciel,  
Bouillonnent pêle-mêle avec un bruit d'orage.  
Ombres folles, courez au but de vos désirs ;  
Jamais vous ne pourrez assouvir votre rage,  
Et votre châtement naîtra de vos plaisirs.  
Jamais un rayon frais n'éclaira vos cavernes ;  
Par les fentes des murs des miasmes fiévreux  
Filtrent en s'enflammant ainsi que des lanternes  
Et pénètrent vos corps de leurs parfums affreux.  
L'âpre stérilité de votre jouissance  
Altère votre soif et roidit votre peau,  
Et le vent furibond de la concupiscence  
Fait claquer votre chair ainsi qu'un vieux drapeau.  
Loin des peuples vivants, errantes, condamnées,  
À travers les déserts courez comme les loups ;  
Faites votre destin, âmes désordonnées,  
Et fuyez l'infini que vous portez en vous !

– Charles Baudelaire

## Damned Women (Delphine and Hippolyta)

In the pallid light of languishing lamps,  
In deep cushions redolent of perfume,  
Hippolyta dreamed of the potent caresses  
That drew aside the veil of her young innocence.  
She was seeking, with an eye disturbed by the storm,  
The already distant skies of her naiveté,  
Like a voyager who turns to look back  
Toward the blue horizons passed early in the day.  
The listless tears from her lacklustrous eyes,  
The beaten, bewildered look, the dulled delight,  
Her defeated arms thrown wide like futile weapons,  
All served, all adorned her fragile beauty.  
Lying at her feet, calm and filled with joy,  
Delphine gazed at her hungrily, with burning eyes,  
Like a strong animal watching a prey  
Which it has already marked with its teeth.  
The strong beauty kneeling before the frail beauty,  
Superb, she savored voluptuously  
The wine of her triumph and stretched out toward the girl  
As if to reap her reward of sweet thankfulness.  
She was seeking in the eyes of her pale victim  
The silent canticle that pleasure sings  
And that gratitude, sublime and infinite,  
Which the eyes give forth like a long drawn sigh.  
“Hippolyta, sweet, what do you think of our love ?  
Do you understand now that you need not offer  
The sacred burnt-offering of your first roses  
To a violent breath which could make them wither ?  
My kisses are as light as the touch of May flies  
That caress in the evening the great limpid lakes,  
But those of your lover will dig furrows  
As a wagon does, or a tearing ploughshare ;  
They will pass over you like heavy teams  
Of horses or oxen, with cruel iron-shod hooves...  
Hippolyta, sister ! please turn your face to me,  
You, my heart and soul, my all, half of my own self,  
Turn toward me your eyes brimming with azure and stars !  
For one of those bewitching looks, O divine balm,

I will lift the veil of the more subtle pleasures  
And lull you to sleep in an endless dream!"

Hippolyta then raised her youthful head :  
"I am not ungrateful and I do not repent,  
Delphine darling ; I feel restless and ill,  
As I do after a rich midnight feast.

I feel heavy terrors pouncing on me  
And black battalions of scattered phantoms  
Who wish to lead me onto shifting roads  
That a bloody horizon shuts in on all sides.

Is there something strange in what we have done ?  
Explain if you can my confusion and my fright :  
I shudder with fear when you say : 'My angel !'  
And yet I feel my mouth moving toward you.

Do not look at me that way, you, my dearest thought :  
The sister of my choice whom I'd love forever  
Even if you were an ambush prepared for me  
And the beginning of my perdition."

Delphine, shaking her tragic mane and stamping her foot  
As if she were stamping on the iron Tripod,  
Her eyes fatal, replied in a despotic voice :  
"Who dares to speak of hell in the presence of love ?  
May he be cursed forever, that idle dreamer,  
The first one who in his stupidity  
Entranced by a sterile, insoluble problem,  
Wished to mix honesty with what belongs to love !  
He who would unite in a mystic harmony  
Coolness with warmth and the night with the day  
Will never warm his palsied flesh  
With that red sun whose name is love !  
Go if you wish and find a stupid sweetheart, run  
To offer your virgin heart to his cruel kisses ;  
Full of remorse and horror, and livid,  
You will bring back to me your stigmatized breasts...  
Woman here below can serve only one master !"  
But the girl pouring out the vast grief in her heart,  
Suddenly cried : "I feel opening within me  
A yawning abyss ; that abyss is my heart !  
Burning like a volcano and deep as the void !

Nothing will satiate that wailing monster  
Nor cool the thirst of the Eumenides  
Who with torch in hand burn his very blood.  
Let our drawn curtains separate us from the world  
And let lassitude bring to us repose !  
I want to bury my head in your deep bosom  
And find in your breast the cool of the tomb !”  
– Go down, go down, lamentable victims,  
Go down the pathway to eternal hell !  
Plunge to the bottom of the abyss where all crime  
Whipped by a wind that comes not from heaven,  
Boil pell-mell with the sound of a tempest.  
Mad shades, run to the goal of your desires ;  
You will never be able to sate your passion  
And your punishment will be born of your pleasures.  
Never will a cool ray light your caverns ;  
Through the chinks in the walls feverish miasmas  
Filter through, burst into flame like lanterns  
And permeate your bodies with frightful odors.  
The bleak sterility of your pleasures  
Increases your thirst and makes your skin taut  
And the raging wind of carnal desire  
Makes your flesh snap like an old flag.  
Damned, wandering, far from living people,  
Roam like the wolves across the desert waste ;  
Fulfill your destinies, dissolute souls,  
And flee the infinite you carry in your hearts !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## **Damned Women (Delphine and Hippolyta)**

Over deep cushions, drenched with drowsy scents  
Where fading lamplight shed its dying glow,  
Hippolyta recalls and half-repents  
The kisses that first thawed her youthful snow.  
She sought, with tempest-troubled gaze, the skies  
Of her first innocence, now far away,  
As travellers who backward turn their eyes

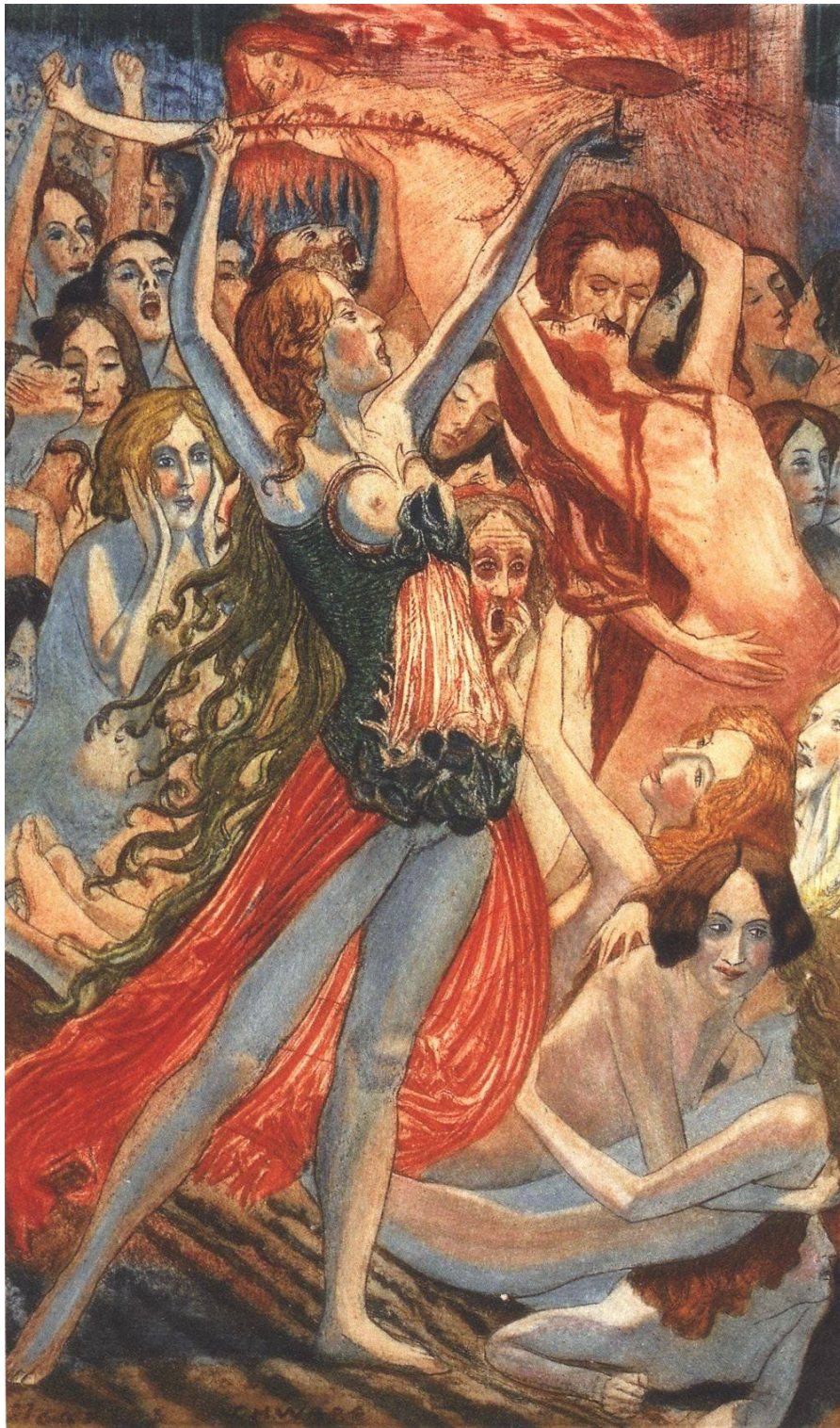


To blue horizons passed at break of day.  
Within her haggard eyes the tears were bright.  
Her broken look, her dazed, voluptuous air,  
Her vanquished arms like weapons shed in Right,  
Enhanced her fragile beauty with despair.  
Stretched at her feet Delphine contented lay  
And watched with burning eyeballs from beneath  
Like a fierce tigress who, to guard her prey,  
Has set a mark upon it with her teeth.  
Strong beauty there to fragile beauty kneeling,  
Superb, she seemed to sniff the heady wine  
Of triumph : and stretched out to her, appealing  
For the reward of raptures half-divine.  
She sought within her victim's pallid eye  
Dumb hymns that pleasure sings without a choir,  
And gratitude that, like a long-drawn sigh,  
Swells from the eyelid, swooning with fire.  
"Hippolyta, dear heart, have you no trust ?  
Do you not know the folly that exposes  
To the fierce pillage of the brawling gust  
The sacred holocaust of early roses ?  
My kisses are as light as fairy midges  
That on calm evenings skim the crystal lake.  
Those of your man would plough such ruts and ridge  
As lumbering carts or tearing coulter make.  
They'll tramp across you, like a ruthless team  
Of buffaloes or horses, yoked in lust.  
Dear sister, turn your face to me, my dream,  
My soul, my all, my twin, to whom I trust !  
Turn me your eyes of deepest, starry blue.  
For one of those deep glances that you send,  
I'd lift the veil of darkest joys for you  
And rock you in a dream that has no end."  
But then Hippolyta raised up her head,  
"No blame nor base ingratitude I feel,  
But, as it were, a kind of nauseous dread  
After some terrible, nocturnal meal.  
I feel a swooping terror that explodes  
In legions of black ghosts towards me speeding

Who crowd me on to swiftly moving roads,  
That, sliced by sheer horizons, end up bleeding.  
Have we done something monstrous that I tremble?  
Explain, then, if you can; for when you say,  
'Angel', I cower. Yet I cannot dissemble  
That, when you speak, my lips are drawn your way.  
Oh, do not fix me with a stare so steady  
You whom I love till death in still submission,  
Yes, even though you, like an ambush ready,  
Are the beginning of my own perdition."  
Then Delphine stamped and shook her tragic mane,  
And, like a priestess, foaming and fierce, and fell,  
Spoke in a lordly and prophetic strain  
– "Who dares, in front of Love, to mention Hell?  
Curbed forever be that useless dreamer  
Who first imagined, in his brutish mind,  
Of sheer futility the fatuous schemer,  
Honour with Love could ever be combined.  
He who in mystic union would enmesh  
Shadow with warmth, and daytime with the night,  
Will never warm his paralytic flesh  
At the red sun of amorous delight.  
Go, if you wish, and seek some boorish lover:  
Offer your virgin heart to his crude hold,  
Full of remorse and horror you'll recover,  
And bring me your scarred breast to be consoled...  
Down here, a soul can only serve one master."  
But the girl, venting her tremendous woe,  
Cried out "I feel a huge pit of disaster  
Yawning within: it is my heart, I know!  
Like a volcano burning, deep as death,  
There's naught that groaning monster can assuage  
Nor quench of thirst the Fury's burning breath  
Who brands it with a torch to make it rage.  
Let our closed curtains isolate the rest,  
Until exhaustion bring us sleep, while I  
Annihilate myself upon your breast  
And find in you a tomb on which to die."  
Go down, go down, poor victims, it is time;

The road to endless hell awaits your lusts.  
Plunge to the bottom of the gulf, where crime  
Is flagellated by infernal gusts.  
Swirling pell-mell, and with a tempest's roar,  
Mad shades, pursue your craving without measure :  
Your rages will be sated nevermore,  
Your torture is begotten of your pleasure.  
No sunbeam through your dungeon will come leaking :  
Only miasmatic fevers, through each chink,  
Will filter, like sick lanterns, redly streaking,  
And penetrate your bodies with their stink.  
The harsh sterility of all you relish  
Will swell your thirst, and turn you both to hags.  
The wind of your desire, with fury hellish  
Will flog your flapping carrion like wet flags.  
Far from live folk, like werewolves howling high,  
Gallop the boundless deserts you unroll.  
Fulfill your doom, disordered minds, and fly  
The infinite you carry in your soul.

– Roy Campbell, 1952



# Femmes damnées

## Femmes damnées

Comme un bétail pensif sur le sable couchées,  
Elles tournent leurs yeux vers l'horizon des mers,  
Et leurs pieds se cherchent et leurs mains rapprochées  
Ont de douces langueurs et des frissons amers.  
Les unes, coeurs épris des longues confidences,  
Dans le fond des bosquets où jasant les ruisseaux,  
Vont épelant l'amour des craintives enfances  
Et creusent le bois vert des jeunes arbrisseaux ;  
D'autres, comme des soeurs, marchent lentes et graves  
À travers les rochers pleins d'apparitions,  
Où saint Antoine a vu surgir comme des laves  
Les seins nus et pourprés de ses tentations ;  
Il en est, aux lueurs des résines croulantes,  
Qui dans le creux muet des vieux antres païens  
T'appellent au secours de leurs fièvres hurlantes,  
Ô Bacchus, endormeur des remords anciens !  
Et d'autres, dont la gorge aime les scapulaires,  
Qui, recélant un fouet sous leurs longs vêtements,  
Mêlent, dans le bois sombre et les nuits solitaires,  
L'écume du plaisir aux larmes des tourments.  
Ô vierges, ô démons, ô monstres, ô martyres,  
De la réalité grands esprits contempteurs,  
Chercheuses d'infini dévotes et satyres,  
Tantôt pleines de cris, tantôt pleines de pleurs,  
Vous que dans votre enfer mon âme a poursuivies,  
Pauvres soeurs, je vous aime autant que je vous plains,  
Pour vos mornes douleurs, vos soifs inassouvies,  
Et les urnes d'amour dont vos grands coeurs sont pleins !

– Charles Baudelaire

## Damned Women

Lying on the sand like ruminating cattle,  
They turn their eyes toward the horizon of the sea,  
And their clasped hands and their feet which seek the other's  
Know both sweet languor and shudders of pain.  
Some, whose hearts grew amorous from long confessions,  
In the depth of the woods, among the babbling brooks,  
Spell out the love of their timid adolescence  
By carving the green wood of young saplings ;  
Others, like sisters, walk gravely and with slow steps  
Among the high rocks peopled with apparitions,  
Where Saint Anthony saw the naked, purple breasts  
Of his temptations rise up like lava ;  
There are some who by the light of crumbling resin  
In the silent void of the old pagan caverns  
Call out for help from their screaming fevers to you  
O Bacchus, who lull to sleep the ancient remorse !  
And others, whose breasts love the feel of scapulars,  
Who, concealing a whip under their long habits,  
Mingle, in the dark woods and solitary nights,  
The froth of pleasure with tears of torment.  
O virgins, O demons, O monsters, O martyrs,  
Great spirits, contemptuous of reality,  
Seekers of the infinite, pious and satyric,  
Sometimes full of cries, sometimes full of tears,  
You whom my spirit has followed into your hell,  
Poor sisters, I love you as much as I pity you,  
For your gloomy sorrows, your unsatisfied thirsts,  
And the urns of love with which your great hearts are filled !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Damned Women

Like pensive cattle lying on the sand  
They scan the far horizon of the ocean,  
Foot seeking foot, hand magnetising hand,  
With sweet or bitter tremors of emotion.

Some with their hearts absorbed in confidences,  
Deep in the woods, where streamlets chatter free,  
Spell the loved names of childish, timid fancies,  
And carve the green wood of the fresh, young tree.

Others, like sisters wander, slow and grave,  
Through craggy haunts of ghostly emanations,  
Where once Saint Anthony was wont to brave  
The purple-breasted pride of his temptations.

Some by the light of resin-scented torches  
In the dumb hush of caverns seek their shrine,  
Invoking Bacchus, killer of remorse,  
To liven their delirium with wine.

Others who deal with scapulars and hoods  
Hiding the whiplash under their long train,  
Mingle, on lonely nights in sombre woods,  
The foam of pleasure with the tears of pain.

O demons, monsters, virgins, martyrs, you  
Who trample base reality in scorn,  
Whether as nuns or satyrs you pursue  
The infinite, with cries or tears forlorn,  
You, whom my soul has tracked to lairs infernal,  
Poor sisterhood, I pity and adore,  
For your despairing griefs, your thirst eternal,  
And love that floods your hearts for evermore !

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Les Deux Bonnes Soeurs

### Les Deux Bonnes Soeurs

La Débauche et la Mort sont deux aimables filles,  
Prodigues de baisers et riches de santé,  
Dont le flanc toujours vierge et drapé de guenilles  
Sous l'éternel labeur n'a jamais enfanté.  
Au poète sinistre, ennemi des familles,  
Favori de l'enfer, courtisan mal renté,  
Tombeaux et lupanars montrent sous leurs charmilles  
Un lit que le remords n'a jamais fréquenté.  
Et la bière et l'alcôve en blasphèmes fécondes  
Nous offrent tour à tour, comme deux bonnes soeurs,  
De terribles plaisirs et d'affreuses douceurs.  
Quand veux-tu m'enterrer, Débauche aux bras immondes ?  
Ô Mort, quand viendras-tu, sa rivale en attraits,  
Sur ses myrtes infects enter tes noirs cyprès ?

– Charles Baudelaire

### The Two Good Sisters

Debauchery and Death are two lovable girls,  
Lavish with their kisses and rich with health,  
Whose ever-virgin loins, draped with tattered clothes and  
Burdened with constant work, have never given birth.  
To the sinister poet, foe of families,  
Poorly paid courtier, favorite of hell,  
Graves and brothels show beneath their bowers  
A bed in which remorse has never slept.  
The bier and the alcove, fertile in blasphemies



Like two good sisters, offer to us in turn  
Terrible pleasures and frightful sweetness.  
When will you bury me, Debauch with the filthy arms?  
Death, her rival in charms, when will you come  
To graft black cypress on her infected myrtle?

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Two Good Sisters

Debauchery and Death are pleasant twins,  
And lavish with their charms, a buxom pair!  
Under the rags that clothe their virgin skins,  
Their wombs, though still in labour, never bear.  
For the curst poet, foe to married rest,  
The friend of hell, and courtier on half-pay –  
Brothels and tombs reserve for such a guest  
A bed on which repentance never lay.  
Both tomb and bed, in blasphemy so fecund  
Each other's hospitality to second,  
Prepare grim treats, and hatch atrocious things.  
Debauch, when will you bury me? When, Death,  
Mingle your Cypress in the selfsame wreath  
With the infected Myrtles that she brings?

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# La Fontaine de Sang

## La Fontaine de Sang

Il me semble parfois que mon sang coule à flots,  
Ainsi qu'une fontaine aux rythmiques sanglots.  
Je l'entends bien qui coule avec un long murmure,  
Mais je me tâte en vain pour trouver la blessure.  
À travers la cité, comme dans un champ clos,  
Il s'en va, transformant les pavés en îlots,  
Désaltérant la soif de chaque créature,  
Et partout colorant en rouge la nature.  
J'ai demandé souvent à des vins captieux  
D'endormir pour un jour la terreur qui me mine ;  
Le vin rend l'oeil plus clair et l'oreille plus fine !  
J'ai cherché dans l'amour un sommeil oublieux ;  
Mais l'amour n'est pour moi qu'un matelas d'aiguilles  
Fait pour donner à boire à ces cruelles filles !

– Charles Baudelaire

## The Fountain of Blood

It seems to me at times my blood flows out in waves  
Like a fountain that gushes in rhythmical sobs.  
I hear it clearly, escaping with long murmurs,  
But I feel my body in vain to find the wound.  
Across the city, as in a tournament field,  
It courses, making islands of the paving stones,  
Satisfying the thirst of every creature  
And turning the color of all nature to red.  
I have often asked insidious wines

To lull to sleep for a day my wasting terror ;  
Wine makes the eye sharper, the ear more sensitive !  
I have sought in love a forgetful sleep ;  
But love is to me only a bed of needles  
Made to slake the thirst of those cruel prostitutes !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Fountain of Blood

My blood in waves seems sometimes to be spouting  
As though in rhythmic sobs a fountain swooned.  
I hear its long, low, rushing sound till, doubting,  
I feel myself all over for the wound.  
Across the town, as in the lists of battle,  
It flows, transforming paving stones to isles,  
Slaking the thirst of creatures, men, and cattle,  
And colouring all nature red for miles.  
Sometimes I've sought relief in precious wines  
To lull in me the fear that undermines,  
But found they sharpened every sense the more.  
I've also sought forgetfulness in lust,  
But love's a bed of needles, and they thrust  
To give more drink to each rapacious whore.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# Allégorie

## Allégorie

C'est une femme belle et de riche encolure,  
Qui laisse dans son vin traîner sa chevelure.  
Les griffes de l'amour, les poisons du tripot,  
Tout glisse et tout s'émousse au granit de sa peau.  
Elle rit à la Mort et nargue la Débauche,  
Ces monstres dont la main, qui toujours gratte et fauche,  
Dans ses jeux destructeurs a pourtant respecté  
De ce corps ferme et droit la rude majesté.  
Elle marche en déesse et repose en sultane ;  
Elle a dans le plaisir la foi mahométane,  
Et dans ses bras ouverts, que remplissent ses seins,  
Elle appelle des yeux la race des humains.  
Elle croit, elle sait, cette vierge inféconde  
Et pourtant nécessaire à la marche du monde,  
Que la beauté du corps est un sublime don  
Qui de toute infamie arrache le pardon.  
Elle ignore l'Enfer comme le Purgatoire,  
Et quand l'heure viendra d'entrer dans la Nuit noire  
Elle regardera la face de la Mort,  
Ainsi qu'un nouveau-né, – sans haine et sans remords.

– Charles Baudelaire

## Allegory

She's a beautiful woman with opulent shoulders  
Who lets her long hair trail in her goblet of wine.  
The claws of love, the poisons of brothels,

All slips and all is blunted on her granite skin.  
She laughs at Death and snaps her fingers at Debauch.  
The hands of those monsters, ever cutting and scraping,  
Have respected nonetheless the pristine majesty  
Of her firm, straight body at its destructive games.  
She walks like a goddess, rests like a sultana ;  
She has a Mohammedan's faith in pleasure  
And to her open arms which are filled by her breasts,  
She lures all mortals with her eyes.  
She believes, she knows, this virgin, sterile  
And yet essential to the march of the world,  
That a beautiful body is a sublime gift  
That wrings a pardon for any foul crime.  
She is unaware of Hell and Purgatory  
And when the time comes for her to enter  
The black Night, she will look into the face of Death  
As a new-born child, – without hatred or remorse.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Allegory

She is a woman of appearance fine  
Who lets her tresses trail into her wine.  
Love's claws and poisons, brewed in sinks of sin,  
Fall blunted from the granite of her skin.  
She mocks Debauchery, Death leaves her blithe,  
Two monsters always handy with the scythe.  
In their grim games, where so much beauty's wrecked,  
They treat her majesty with due respect.  
Half goddess, half sultana, without scathe,  
In pleasure she's a Moslem's steady faith.  
Between her open arms, filled by her breasts,  
For all mankind with burning eyes she quests,  
And she believes, this fruitless virgin-wife,  
Who's yet so necessary to this life,  
That beauty of the body is a gift  
Sublime enough all infamy to shift,  
And win forgiveness. She knows naught of Hell.  
When the Night comes, in which she is to dwell,

Straight in the face she'll look her deadly Fate,  
Like one new-born – without remorse or hate.

– **Roy Campbell**, 1952

# La Béatrice

## La Béatrice

Dans des terrains cendreaux, calcinés, sans verdure,  
Comme je me plaignais un jour à la nature,  
Et que de ma pensée, en vaguant au hasard,  
J'aiguissais lentement sur mon coeur le poignard,  
Je vis en plein midi descendre sur ma tête  
Un nuage funèbre et gros d'une tempête,  
Qui portait un troupeau de démons vicieux,  
Semblables à des nains cruels et curieux.  
À me considérer froidement ils se mirent,  
Et, comme des passants sur un fou qu'ils admirent,  
Je les entendis rire et chuchoter entre eux,  
En échangeant maint signe et maint clignement d'yeux :

– « Contemplons à loisir cette caricature  
Et cette ombre d'Hamlet imitant sa posture,  
Le regard indécis et les cheveux au vent.  
N'est-ce pas grand'pitié de voir ce bon vivant,  
Ce gueux, cet histrion en vacances, ce drôle,  
Parce qu'il sait jouer artistement son rôle,  
Vouloir intéresser au chant de ses douleurs  
Les aigles, les grillons, les ruisseaux et les fleurs,  
Et même à nous, auteurs de ces vieilles rubriques,  
Réciter en hurlant ses tirades publiques ? »

J'aurais pu (mon orgueil aussi haut que les monts  
Domine la nuée et le cri des démons)  
Détourner simplement ma tête souveraine,  
Si je n'eusse pas vu parmi leur troupe obscène,  
Crime qui n'a pas fait chanceler le soleil !

La reine de mon coeur au regard nonpareil  
 Qui riait avec eux de ma sombre détresse  
 Et leur versait parfois quelque sale caresse.

– Charles Baudelaire

## Beatrice

One day as I was making complaint to nature  
 In a burnt, ash-gray land without vegetation,  
 And as I wandered aimlessly, slowly whetting  
 Upon my heart the dagger of my thought,  
 I saw in broad daylight descending on my head  
 A leaden cloud, pregnant with a tempest,  
 That carried a herd of vicious demons  
 Who resembled curious, cruel dwarfs.  
 They began to look at me coldly,  
 And I heard them laugh and whisper to each other,  
 Exchanging many a sign and many a wink  
 Like passers-by who discuss a fool they admire :  
 – “Let us look leisurely at this caricature,  
 This shade of Hamlet who imitates his posture  
 With indecisive look, hair streaming in the wind.  
 Is it not a pity to see this bon vivant,  
 This tramp, this queer fish, this actor without a job,  
 Because he knows how to play skillfully his role,  
 Wish to interest in the song of his woes  
 The eagles, the crickets, the brooks, and the flowers,  
 And even to us, authors of that hackneyed drivel,  
 Bellow the recital of his public tirades ?”  
 I could have (my pride as high as mountains  
 Dominates the clouds and the cries of the demons)  
 Simply turned away my sovereign head  
 If I had not seen in that obscene troop  
 A crime which did not make the sun reel in its course !  
 The queen of my heart with the peerless gaze  
 Laughing with them at my somber distress  
 And giving them at times a lewd caress.

– William Aggeler, 1954



## Beatrice

In charred and ashen fields without a leaf,  
While I alone to Nature told my grief,  
I sharpened, as I went, like any dart,  
My thought upon the grindstone of my heart –  
When by a troop of vicious demons led,  
A great black cloud rushed down towards my head.  
As loafers at a lunatic they leered  
And in my face inquisitively peered.  
With nods and signs, like dwarfed and apish elves,  
They laughed, and winked, and spoke among themselves.  
“This parody of Hamlet, take his measure,  
And contemplate the travesty at leisure.  
Is it not sad to see the puzzled stare,  
The halting gait, and the dishevelled hair  
With which this clownish actor, on half-pay,  
Because he is an artist in his way,  
Attempts to interest, in the griefs he sings,  
Eagles, and crickets, flowers, and running springs,  
And even us, the authors of his woe,  
Howling his sorrows as a public show?”  
I could have dominated with my pride  
That horde of demons and the taunts they cried,  
Just by the mere aversion of my face –  
Had I not seen, amongst that evil race,  
(A crime that did not even daze the sun!)  
Queen of my heart, the peerless, only one,  
Laughing with them to see my dark distress,  
And giving them, at times, some lewd caress.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Les Métamorphoses du vampire (1857)

### Les Métamorphoses du vampire

La femme cependant, de sa bouche de fraise,  
En se tordant ainsi qu'un serpent sur la braise,  
Et pétrissant ses seins sur le fer de son busc,  
Laisait couler ces mots tout imprégnés de musc :  
– « Moi, j'ai la lèvre humide, et je sais la science  
De perdre au fond d'un lit l'antique conscience.  
Je sèche tous les pleurs sur mes seins triomphants,  
Et fais rire les vieux du rire des enfants.  
Je remplace, pour qui me voit nue et sans voiles,  
La lune, le soleil, le ciel et les étoiles !  
Je suis, mon cher savant, si docte aux voluptés,  
Lorsque j'étouffe un homme en mes bras redoutés,  
Ou lorsque j'abandonne aux morsures mon buste,  
Timide et libertine, et fragile et robuste,  
Que sur ces matelas qui se pâment d'émoi,  
Les anges impuissants se damneraient pour moi ! »

Quand elle eut de mes os sucé toute la moelle,  
Et que languissamment je me tournai vers elle  
Pour lui rendre un baiser d'amour, je ne vis plus  
Qu'une outre aux flancs gluants, toute pleine de pus !  
Je fermai les deux yeux, dans ma froide épouvante,  
Et quand je les rouvris à la clarté vivante,  
À mes côtés, au lieu du mannequin puissant  
Qui semblait avoir fait provision de sang,  
Tremblaient confusément des débris de squelette,

Qui d'eux-mêmes rendaient le cri d'une girouette  
Ou d'une enseigne, au bout d'une tringle de fer,  
Que balance le vent pendant les nuits d'hiver.

– Charles Baudelaire

## The Vampire's Metamorphoses

The woman meanwhile, twisting like a snake  
On hot coals and kneading her breasts against the steel  
Of her corset, from her mouth red as strawberries  
Let flow these words impregnated with musk :  
– “I, I have moist lips, and I know the art  
Of losing old Conscience in the depths of a bed.  
I dry all tears on my triumphant breasts  
And make old men laugh with the laughter of children.  
I replace, for him who sees me nude, without veils,  
The moon, the sun, the stars and the heavens !  
I am, my dear scholar, so learned in pleasure  
That when I smother a man in my fearful arms,  
Or when, timid and licentious, frail and robust,  
I yield my bosom to biting kisses  
On those two soft cushions which swoon with emotion,  
The powerless angels would damn themselves for me !”  
When she had sucked out all the marrow from my bones  
And I languidly turned toward her  
To give back an amorous kiss, I saw no more  
Than a wine-skin with gluey sides, all full of pus !  
Frozen with terror, I closed both my eyes,  
And when I opened them to the bright light,  
At my side, instead of the robust manikin  
Who seemed to have laid in a store of blood,  
There quivered confusedly a heap of old bones,  
Which of themselves gave forth the cry of a weather-cock  
Or of a sign on the end of an iron rod  
That the wind swings to and fro on a winter night.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Metamorphoses of the Vampire

The crimson-fruited mouth that I desired –  
While, like a snake on coals, she twinged and twired,  
Kneading her breasts against her creaking busk –  
Let fall those words impregnated with musk,  
– “My lips are humid : by my learned science,  
All conscience, in my bed, becomes compliance.  
My breasts, triumphant, staunch all tears ; for me  
Old men, like little children, laugh with glee.  
For those who see me naked, I replace  
Sun, moon, the sky, and all the stars in space.  
I am so skilled, dear sage, in arts of pleasure,  
That, when with man my deadly arms I measure,  
Or to his teeth and kisses yield my bust,  
Timid yet lustful, fragile, yet robust,  
On sheets that swoon with passion – you might see  
Impotent angels damn themselves for me.”  
When of my marrow she had sucked each bone  
And, languishing, I turned with loving moan  
To kiss her in return, with overplus,  
She seemed a swollen wineskin, full of pus.  
I shut my eyes with horror at the sight,  
But when I opened them, in the clear light,  
I saw, instead of the great swollen doll  
That, bloated with my lifeblood, used to loll,  
The debris of a skeleton, assembling  
With shrill squawks of a weathercock, lie trembling,  
Or sounds, with which the howling winds commingle,  
Of an old Inn-sign on a rusty tringle.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# Un Voyage à Cythère

## Un Voyage à Cythère

Mon coeur, comme un oiseau, voltigeait tout joyeux  
Et planait librement à l'entour des cordages ;  
Le navire roulait sous un ciel sans nuages ;  
Comme un ange enivré d'un soleil radieux.  
Quelle est cette île triste et noire ? – C'est Cythère,  
Nous dit-on, un pays fameux dans les chansons  
Eldorado banal de tous les vieux garçons.  
Regardez, après tout, c'est une pauvre terre.  
– Île des doux secrets et des fêtes du coeur !  
De l'antique Vénus le superbe fantôme  
Au-dessus de tes mers plane comme un arôme  
Et charge les esprits d'amour et de langueur.  
Belle île aux myrtes verts, pleine de fleurs écloses,  
Vénérée à jamais par toute nation,  
Où les soupirs des coeurs en adoration  
Roulent comme l'encens sur un jardin de roses  
Ou le roucoulement éternel d'un ramier !  
– Cythère n'était plus qu'un terrain des plus maigres,  
Un désert rocailleux troublé par des cris aigres.  
J'entrevois pourtant un objet singulier !  
Ce n'était pas un temple aux ombres bocagères,  
Où la jeune prêtresse, amoureuse des fleurs,  
Allait, le corps brûlé de secrètes chaleurs,  
Entrebâillant sa robe aux brises passagères ;  
Mais voilà qu'en rasant la côte d'assez près  
Pour troubler les oiseaux avec nos voiles blanches,  
Nous vîmes que c'était un gibet à trois branches,  
Du ciel se détachant en noir, comme un cyprès.

De féroces oiseaux perchés sur leur pâture  
Détruisaient avec rage un pendu déjà mûr,  
Chacun plantant, comme un outil, son bec impur  
Dans tous les coins saignants de cette pourriture ;

Les yeux étaient deux trous, et du ventre effondré  
Les intestins pesants lui coulaient sur les cuisses,  
Et ses bourreaux, gorgés de hideuses délices,  
L'avaient à coups de bec absolument châtré.

Sous les pieds, un troupeau de jaloux quadrupèdes,  
Le museau relevé, tournoyait et rôdait ;  
Une plus grande bête au milieu s'agitait  
Comme un exécuté entouré de ses aides.

Habitant de Cythère, enfant d'un ciel si beau,  
Silencieusement tu souffrais ces insultes  
En expiation de tes infâmes cultes  
Et des péchés qui t'ont interdit le tombeau.

Ridicule pendu, tes douleurs sont les miennes !  
Je sentis, à l'aspect de tes membres flottants,  
Comme un vomissement, remonter vers mes dents  
Le long fleuve de fiel des douleurs anciennes ;

Devant toi, pauvre diable au souvenir si cher,  
J'ai senti tous les becs et toutes les mâchoires  
Des corbeaux lancinants et des panthères noires  
Qui jadis aimaient tant à triturer ma chair.

– Le ciel était charmant, la mer était unie ;  
Pour moi tout était noir et sanglant désormais,  
Hélas ! et j'avais, comme en un suaire épais,  
Le coeur enseveli dans cette allégorie.

Dans ton île, ô Vénus ! je n'ai trouvé debout  
Qu'un gibet symbolique où pendait mon image...  
– Ah ! Seigneur ! donnez-moi la force et le courage  
De contempler mon coeur et mon corps sans dégoût !

– Charles Baudelaire

## A Voyage to Cythera

My heart like a bird was fluttering joyously  
And soaring freely around the rigging ;  
Beneath a cloudless sky the ship was rolling  
Like an angel drunken with the radiant sun.  
What is this black, gloomy island ? – It's Cythera,  
They tell us, a country celebrated in song,  
The banal Eldorado of old bachelors.  
Look at it ; after all, it is a wretched land.  
– Island of sweet secrets, of the heart's festivals !  
The beautiful shade of ancient Venus  
Hovers above your seas like a perfume  
And fills all minds with love and languidness.  
Fair isle of green myrtle filled with full-blown flowers  
Ever venerated by all nations,  
Where the sighs of hearts in adoration  
Roll like incense over a garden of roses  
Or like the eternal cooing of wood-pigeons !  
– Cythera was now no more than the barrenest land,  
A rocky desert disturbed by shrill cries.  
But I caught a glimpse of a singular object !  
It was not a temple in the shade of a grove  
Where the youthful priestess, amorous of flowers,  
Was walking, her body hot with hidden passion,  
Half-opening her robe to the passing breezes ;  
But behold ! as we passed, hugging the shore  
So that we disturbed the sea-birds with our white sails,  
We saw it was a gallows with three arms  
Outlined in black like a cypress against the sky.  
Ferocious birds perched on their feast were savagely  
Destroying the ripe corpse of a hanged man ;  
Each plunged his filthy beak as though it were a tool  
Into every corner of that bloody putrescence ;  
The eyes were two holes and from the gutted belly  
The heavy intestines hung down along his thighs  
And his torturers, gorged with hideous delights,  
Had completely castrated him with their sharp beaks.  
Below his feet a pack of jealous quadrupeds  
Prowled with upraised muzzles and circled round and round ;

One beast, larger than the others, moved in their midst  
Like a hangman surrounded by his aides.  
Cytherean, child of a sky so beautiful,  
You endured those insults in silence  
To expiate your infamous adorations  
And the sins which denied to you a grave.  
Ridiculous hanged man, your sufferings are mine!  
I felt at the sight of your dangling limbs  
The long, bitter river of my ancient sorrows  
Rise up once more like vomit to my teeth;  
Before you, poor devil of such dear memory  
I felt all the stabbing beaks of the crows  
And the jaws of the black panthers who loved so much  
In other days to tear my flesh to shreds.  
– The sky was charming and the sea was smooth;  
For me thenceforth all was black and bloody,  
Alas! and I had in that allegory  
Wrapped up my heart as in a heavy shroud.  
On your isle, O Venus! I found upright only  
A symbolic gallows from which hung my image...  
O! Lord! give me the strength and the courage  
To contemplate my body and soul without loathing!

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Voyage to Cythera

My heart, a bird, seemed joyfully to fly  
And round the rigging cruised with nimble gyre.  
The vessel rolled beneath the cloudless sky  
Like a white angel, drunk with solar fire.  
What is that sad, black island like a pall?  
Why, Cytherea, famed in many a book,  
The Eldorado of old-stagers. Look:  
It's but a damned poor country after all!  
Isle of sweet secrets and heart-feasting fire!  
Of antique Venus the majestic ghost  
Rolls like a storm of fragrance from your coast  
Filling our souls with languor and desire!



Isle of green myrtles, where each flower uncloses,  
Adored by nations till the end of time :  
Sighs of adoring hearts, like incense, climb.  
And pour their perfume over sheaves of roses,  
Or groves of turtles in an endless coo !  
But no ! it was a waste where nothing grows,  
Torn only by the raucous cries of crows :  
Yet there a curious object rose in view.  
This was no temple hid in bosky trees,  
Where the young priestess, amorous of flowers,  
Whom secretly a loving flame devours,  
Walks with her robe half-open to the breeze.  
For as we moved inshore to coast the shallows  
And our white canvas scared the crows to fly,  
Like a tall cypress, blackened on the sky,  
We saw it was a gaunt three-forking gallows.  
Fierce birds, perched on their meal, began to slash  
And rip with rage a rotten corpse that swung.  
Each screwed and chiselled with its beak among  
The crisp and bleeding crannies of the hash.  
His eyes were holes : from open stomach direly  
His heavy tripes cascaded to his thighs.  
Gorged with such ghastly dainties to the eyes,  
His torturers had gelded him entirely.  
Beneath, some jealous prowling quadrupeds,  
With lifted muzzles, for the leavings scrambled.  
The largest seemed, as in the midst he gambolled,  
An executioner among his aides.  
Native of Cytherea's cloudless clime  
In silent suffering you paid the price,  
And expiated ancient cults of vice  
With generations of forbidden crime.  
Ridiculous hanged man ! Your griefs I know.  
I felt, to see you swing above the heath,  
Like nausea slowly rising to my teeth,  
The bilious stream of ancient human woe.  
Poor devil, dear to memory ! before me  
I seemed to feel each talon, fang, and beak  
Of all the stinking crows and panthers sleek  
That in my lifetime ever chewed and tore me.

The sky was charming and the sea unclouded,  
But all was black and bloody to my mind.  
As in a dismal winding-sheet entwined,  
My heart was in this allegory shrouded.  
A gallows where my image hung apart  
Was all I found on Venus' isle of sighs.  
O God, give me the strength to scrutinise,  
Without disgust, my body and my heart !

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# L'Amour et le Crâne

## L'Amour et le Crâne

Vieux cul-de-lampe

L'Amour est assis sur le crâne  
De l'Humanité,  
Et sur ce trône le profane,  
Au rire effronté,  
Souffle gaiement des bulles rondes  
Qui montent dans l'air,  
Comme pour rejoindre les mondes  
Au fond de l'éther.  
Le globe lumineux et frêle  
Prend un grand essor,  
Crève et crache son âme grêle  
Comme un songe d'or.  
J'entends le crâne à chaque bulle  
Prier et gémir :  
– « Ce jeu féroce et ridicule,  
Quand doit-il finir ?  
Car ce que ta bouche cruelle  
Eparpille en l'air,  
Monstre assassin, c'est ma cervelle,  
Mon sang et ma chair ! »

– Charles Baudelaire

## Cupid and the Skull

An Old Lamp Base

Cupid is seated on the skull  
Of Humanity ;  
On this throne the impious one  
With the shameless laugh  
Is gaily blowing round bubbles  
That rise in the air  
As if they would rejoin the globes  
At the ether's end.  
The sphere, fragile and luminous,  
Takes flight rapidly,  
Bursts and spits out its flimsy soul  
Like a golden dream.  
I hear the skull groan and entreat  
At every bubble :  
"When is this fierce, ludicrous game  
To come to an end ?  
Because what your pitiless mouth  
Scatters in the air,  
Monstrous murderer – is my brain,  
My flesh and my blood !"

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Love and the Skull

(Old Tail-piece)

With bold and insolent grimace,  
Love laughingly bestrides  
The bare skull of the Human Race,  
And, as enthroned he rides,  
Blows bubbles from his rosy cheek  
Which soar into the sky  
As if, beyond the blue, to seek  
The other worlds on high.  
They ride with wondrous verve at first,

Reflect the sunny beams,  
Then spit their flimsy souls, to burst  
And fade like golden dreams.  
I hear the skull at each renewal  
Expostulate aghast –  
“This game, ridiculous and cruel –  
When will it end at last?  
For what your cruel mouthpiece drains  
And scatters, sud by sud,  
Monstrous Assassin! is my brains,  
My substance, and my blood.”

– Roy Campbell, 1952



RÉVOLTE  
REVOLT





# Le Reniement de Saint Pierre

## Le Reniement de Saint Pierre

Qu'est-ce que Dieu fait donc de ce flot d'anathèmes  
Qui monte tous les jours vers ses chers Séraphins ?  
Comme un tyran gorgé de viande et de vins,  
Il s'endort au doux bruit de nos affreux blasphèmes.  
Les sanglots des martyrs et des suppliciés  
Sont une symphonie enivrante sans doute,  
Puisque, malgré le sang que leur volupté coûte,  
Les cieux ne s'en sont point encore rassasiés !  
– Ah ! Jésus, souviens-toi du Jardin des Olives !  
Dans ta simplicité tu priais à genoux  
Celui qui dans son ciel riait au bruit des clous  
Que d'ignobles bourreaux plantaient dans tes chairs vives,  
Lorsque tu vis cracher sur ta divinité  
La crapule du corps de garde et des cuisines,  
Et lorsque tu sentis s'enfoncer les épines  
Dans ton crâne où vivait l'immense Humanité ;  
Quand de ton corps brisé la pesanteur horrible  
Allongeait tes deux bras distendus, que ton sang  
Et ta sueur coulaient de ton front pâissant,  
Quand tu fus devant tous posé comme une cible,  
Rêvais-tu de ces jours si brillants et si beaux  
Où tu vins pour remplir l'éternelle promesse,  
Où tu foulais, monté sur une douce ânesse,  
Des chemins tout jonchés de fleurs et de rameaux,  
Où, le coeur tout gonflé d'espoir et de vaillance,  
Tu fouettais tous ces vils marchands à tour de bras,  
Où tu fus maître enfin ? Le remords n'a-t-il pas  
Pénétré dans ton flanc plus avant que la lance ?

– Certes, je sortirai, quant à moi, satisfait  
 D'un monde où l'action n'est pas la soeur du rêve ;  
 Puissé-je user du glaive et périr par le glaive !  
 Saint Pierre a renié Jésus... il a bien fait !

– Charles Baudelaire

## The Denial of Saint Peter

What does God do with the wave of curses  
 That rises every day toward his dear Seraphim ?  
 Like a tyrant gorged with food and wine, he falls asleep  
 To the sweet sound of our horrible blasphemies.  
 The sobs of martyrs and of tortured criminals  
 Are doubtless an enchanting symphony,  
 Since, despite the blood that this pleasure costs,  
 The heavens have not yet been surfeited with it !  
 – Ah Jesus, remember the Garden of Olives !  
 In your naïveté you prayed on your knees to  
 Him Who in His heaven laughed at the sound of the nails  
 Being driven into your living flesh ;  
 When you saw them spitting on your divinity,  
 That vile mob of body-guards and scullions,  
 And when you felt the thorns go deep  
 Into your skull where lived immense Humanity,  
 When the horrible weight of your broken body  
 Lengthened your two outstretched arms, when your blood  
 And sweat flowed from your paling brow,  
 When you were placed before them all like a target,  
 Did you dream of those days so brilliant and so fair  
 When you came to fulfill the eternal promise,  
 When the gentle donkey you were riding trampled  
 The branches and flowers strewn in your path,  
 When, your heart swollen with courage and hope,  
 You lashed those vile money-changers with all your might,  
 In a word, when you were master ? Did not remorse  
 Penetrate your side deeper than the spear ?  
 – For my part, I shall indeed be content to leave  
 A world where action is not the sister of dreams ;

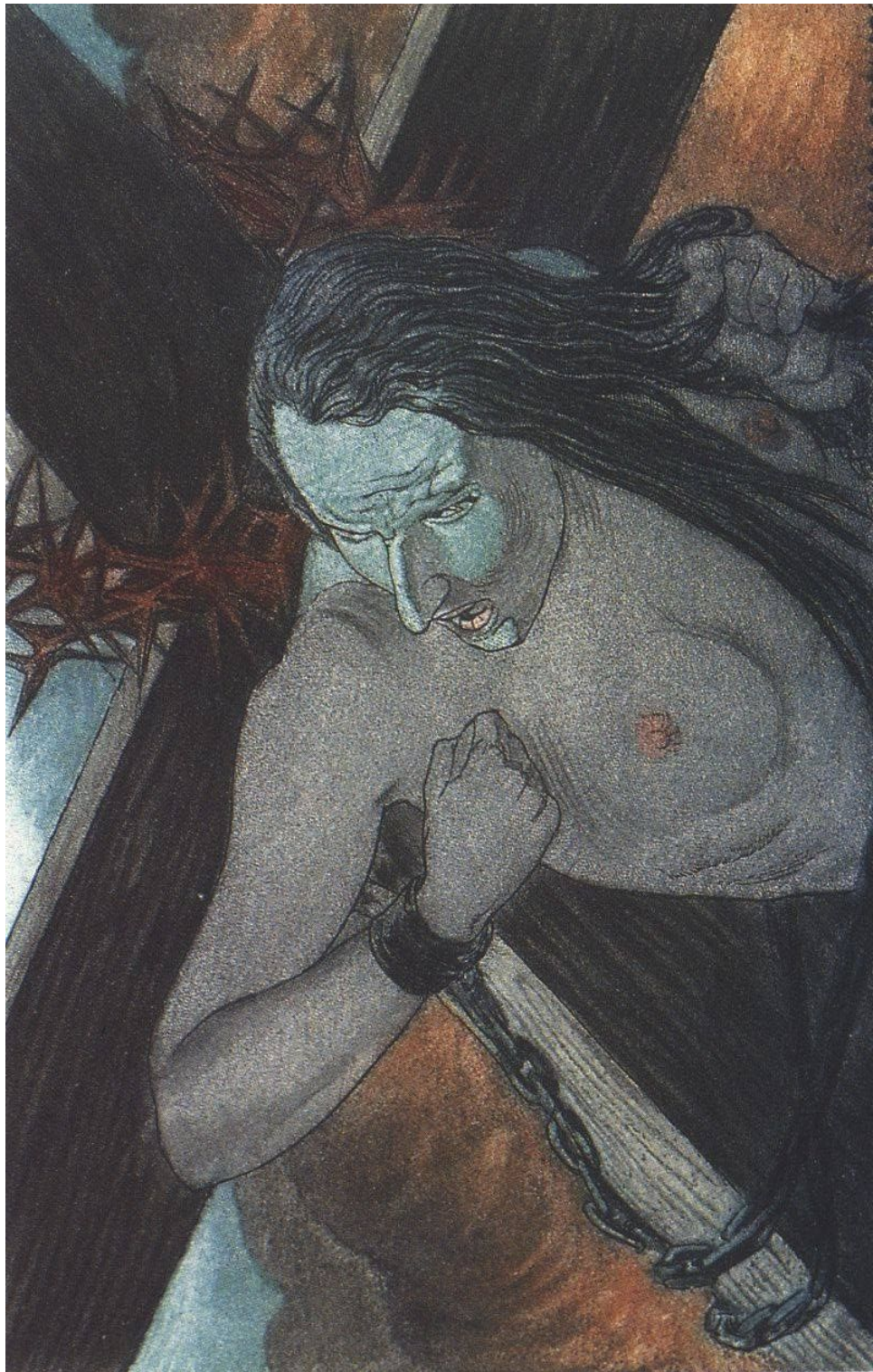
Would that I could take up the sword and perish by the sword !  
Saint Peter denied Jesus – he did well !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Denial of Saint Peter

What does God do with that huge storm of curses  
That rises daily to the seraphim ?  
Like some gorged tyrant, while his guts he nurses,  
Our blasphemies are lullabies to him.  
Martyrs and tortured victims with their cries  
Compose delicious symphonies, no doubt,  
Because, despite the blood they cost, the skies  
Can always do with more when they give out.  
Jesus, remember, in the olive trees –  
In all simplicity you prayed afresh  
To One whom your own butchers seemed to please  
In hammering the nails into your flesh.  
To see your godhead spat on by the like  
Of scullions, and of troopers, and such scum,  
And feel the thorns into your temples strike  
Which held, of all Humanity, the sum :  
To feel your body's horrifying weight  
Lengthen your arms, to feel the blood and sweat  
Itching your noble forehead pale with fate,  
And as a target to the world be set,  
Then did you dream of brilliant days of song,  
When, the eternal promise to fulfill,  
You mounted on an ass and rode along,  
Trampling the flowers and palms beneath your feet,  
When whirling whips, and full of valiant force,  
The money-lenders quailed at your advance :  
When you, in short, were master ? Did remorse  
Not pierce your body further than the lance ?  
I am quite satisfied to leave so bored  
A world, where dream and action disunite.  
I'd use the sword, to perish by the sword.  
Peter denied his Master ?... He did right !

– Roy Campbell, 1952



# Abel et Caïn

## Abel et Caïn

### I

Race d'Abel, dors, bois et mange ;  
Dieu te sourit complaisamment.  
Race de Caïn, dans la fange  
Rampe et meurs misérablement.  
Race d'Abel, ton sacrifice  
Flatte le nez du Séraphin !  
Race de Caïn, ton supplice  
Aura-t-il jamais une fin ?  
Race d'Abel, vois tes semailles  
Et ton bétail venir à bien ;  
Race de Caïn, tes entrailles  
Hurlent la faim comme un vieux chien.  
Race d'Abel, chauffe ton ventre  
À ton foyer patriarcal ;  
Race de Caïn, dans ton antre  
Tremble de froid, pauvre chacal !  
Race d'Abel, aime et pullule !  
Ton or fait aussi des petits.  
Race de Caïn, coeur qui brûle,  
Prends garde à ces grands appétits.  
Race d'Abel, tu crois et broutes  
Comme les punaises des bois !  
Race de Caïn, sur les routes  
Traîne ta famille aux abois.

## II

Ah ! race d'Abel, ta charogne  
 Engraissera le sol fumant !  
 Race de Caïn, ta besogne  
 N'est pas faite suffisamment ;  
 Race d'Abel, voici ta honte :  
 Le fer est vaincu par l'épieu !  
 Race de Caïn, au ciel monte,  
 Et sur la terre jette Dieu !

– Charles Baudelaire

## Cain and Abel

## I

Race of Abel, sleep, eat and drink ;  
 God smiles on you complacently.  
 Race of Cain, crawl on your belly,  
 Die in the mire wretchedly.  
 Race of Abel, your sacrifice  
 Delights the nose of the Seraphim !  
 Race of Cain, will there ever be  
 An ending to your punishment ?  
 Race of Abel, see your sowing  
 And your cattle thrive and flourish ;  
 Race of Cain, your bowels  
 Howl with hunger like an old dog.  
 Race of Abel, warm your belly  
 At your patriarchal hearth ;  
 Race of Cain, shiver with the cold  
 In your cavern, wretched jackal !  
 Race of Abel, love, pullulate !  
 Even your gold has progeny.  
 Race of Cain, with the burning heart,  
 Beware of those intense desires.  
 Race of Abel, you browse and grow  
 Like the insects of the forest !

Race of Cain, along the highways  
Drag your destitute family.

## II

Ah ! race of Abel, your carcass  
Will fertilize the steaming soil !  
Race of Cain, your appointed task  
Has not been adequately done ;  
Race of Abel, your disgrace is :  
The sword is conquered by the pike !  
Race of Cain, ascend to heaven,  
And cast God down upon the earth !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Abel and Cain

## I

Race of Abel ! eat, sleep, drink.  
God smiles on those that he prefers.  
Race of Cain ! in swamps that stink,  
Crawl, and die the death of curs.  
Race of Abel ! your crops sprout,  
And your flocks are safe and sound.  
Race of Cain ! your guts howl out  
In hunger, like an ancient hound.  
Race of Abel ! warm your guts  
At the patriarchal fire.  
Race of Cain ! in caves and huts  
Shiver like jackals in the mire.  
Race of Abel ! Pullulate :  
Your gold too procreates its kind.  
Race of Cain ! Hearts hot with hate,  
Leave all such appetites behind.  
Race of Abel ! grow and graze,  
Like woodlice that on timbers prey.  
Race of Cain ! along rough ways  
Lead forth your family at bay.

## II

Ah! Race of Abel! your fat carrion  
Will well manure the soil it presses.  
Race of Cain! One task to carry on  
Remains for you, a task that presses.  
Race of Abel! Shame is nigh.  
The coulter's beaten by the sword.  
Race of Cain, climb up the sky,  
And to the earth hurl down the Lord.

– Roy Campbell, 1952



# Les Litanies de Satan

## Les Litanies de Satan

Ô toi, le plus savant et le plus beau des Anges,  
Dieu trahi par le sort et privé de louanges,  
Ô Satan, prends pitié de ma longue misère !  
Ô Prince de l'exil, à qui l'on a fait tort  
Et qui, vaincu, toujours te redresses plus fort,  
Ô Satan, prends pitié de ma longue misère !  
Toi qui sais tout, grand roi des choses souterraines,  
Guérisseur familier des angoisses humaines,  
Ô Satan, prends pitié de ma longue misère !  
Toi qui, même aux lépreux, aux parias maudits,  
Enseignes par l'amour le goût du Paradis,  
Ô Satan, prends pitié de ma longue misère !  
Ô toi qui de la Mort, ta vieille et forte amante,  
Engendras l'Espérance, – une folle charmante !  
Ô Satan, prends pitié de ma longue misère !  
Toi qui fais au proscrit ce regard calme et haut  
Qui damne tout un peuple autour d'un échafaud.  
Ô Satan, prends pitié de ma longue misère !  
Toi qui sais en quels coins des terres envieuses  
Le Dieu jaloux cacha les pierres précieuses,  
Ô Satan, prends pitié de ma longue misère !  
Toi dont l'oeil clair connaît les profonds arsenaux  
Où dort enseveli le peuple des métaux,  
Ô Satan, prends pitié de ma longue misère !  
Toi dont la large main cache les précipices  
Au somnambule errant au bord des édifices,  
Ô Satan, prends pitié de ma longue misère !

Toi qui, magiquement, assouplis les vieux os  
 De l'ivrogne attardé foulé par les chevaux,  
 Ô Satan, prends pitié de ma longue misère !  
 Toi qui, pour consoler l'homme frêle qui souffre,  
 Nous appris à mêler le salpêtre et le soufre,  
 Ô Satan, prends pitié de ma longue misère !  
 Toi qui poses ta marque, ô complice subtil,  
 Sur le front du Crésus impitoyable et vil,  
 Ô Satan, prends pitié de ma longue misère !  
 Toi qui mets dans les yeux et dans le coeur des filles  
 Le culte de la plaie et l'amour des guenilles,  
 Ô Satan, prends pitié de ma longue misère !  
 Bâton des exilés, lampe des inventeurs,  
 Confesseur des pendus et des conspirateurs,  
 Ô Satan, prends pitié de ma longue misère !  
 Père adoptif de ceux qu'en sa noire colère  
 Du paradis terrestre a chassés Dieu le Père,  
 Ô Satan, prends pitié de ma longue misère !

Prière

Gloire et louange à toi, Satan, dans les hauteurs  
 Du Ciel, où tu régnas, et dans les profondeurs  
 De l'Enfer, où, vaincu, tu rêves en silence !  
 Fais que mon âme un jour, sous l'Arbre de Science,  
 Près de toi se repose, à l'heure où sur ton front  
 Comme un Temple nouveau ses rameaux s'épandront !

– Charles Baudelaire

## The Litany of Satan

O you, the wisest and fairest of the Angels,  
 God betrayed by destiny and deprived of praise,  
 O Satan, take pity on my long misery !  
 O Prince of Exile, you who have been wronged  
 And who vanquished always rise up again more strong,  
 O Satan, take pity on my long misery !  
 You who know all, great king of hidden things,

The familiar healer of human sufferings,  
O Satan, take pity on my long misery!  
You who teach through love the taste for Heaven  
To the cursed pariah, even to the leper,  
O Satan, take pity on my long misery!  
You who of Death, your mistress old and strong,  
Have begotten Hope, – a charming madcap!  
O Satan, take pity on my long misery!  
You who give the outlaw that calm and haughty look  
That damns the whole multitude around his scaffold.  
O Satan, take pity on my long misery!  
You who know in what nooks of the miserly earth  
A jealous God has hidden precious stones,  
O Satan, take pity on my long misery!  
You whose clear eye sees the deep arsenals  
Where the tribe of metals sleeps in its tomb,  
O Satan, take pity on my long misery!  
You whose broad hand conceals the precipice  
From the sleep-walker wandering on the building's ledge,  
O Satan, take pity on my long misery!  
You who soften magically the old bones  
Of belated drunkards trampled by the horses,  
O Satan, take pity on my long misery!  
You who to console frail mankind in its sufferings  
Taught us to mix sulphur and saltpeter,  
O Satan, take pity on my long misery!  
You who put your mark, O subtle accomplice,  
Upon the brow of Croesus, base and pitiless,  
O Satan, take pity on my long misery!  
You who put in the eyes and hearts of prostitutes  
The cult of sores and the love of rags and tatters,  
O Satan, take pity on my long misery!  
Staff of those in exile, lamp of the inventor,  
Confessor of the hanged and of conspirators,  
O Satan, take pity on my long misery!  
Adopted father of those whom in black rage  
– God the Father drove from the earthly paradise,  
O Satan, take pity on my long misery!

### Prayer

Glory and praise to you, O Satan, in the heights  
Of Heaven where you reigned and in the depths  
Of Hell where vanquished you dream in silence!  
Grant that my soul may someday repose near to you  
Under the Tree of Knowledge, when, over your brow,  
Its branches will spread like a new Temple!

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Litanies of Satan

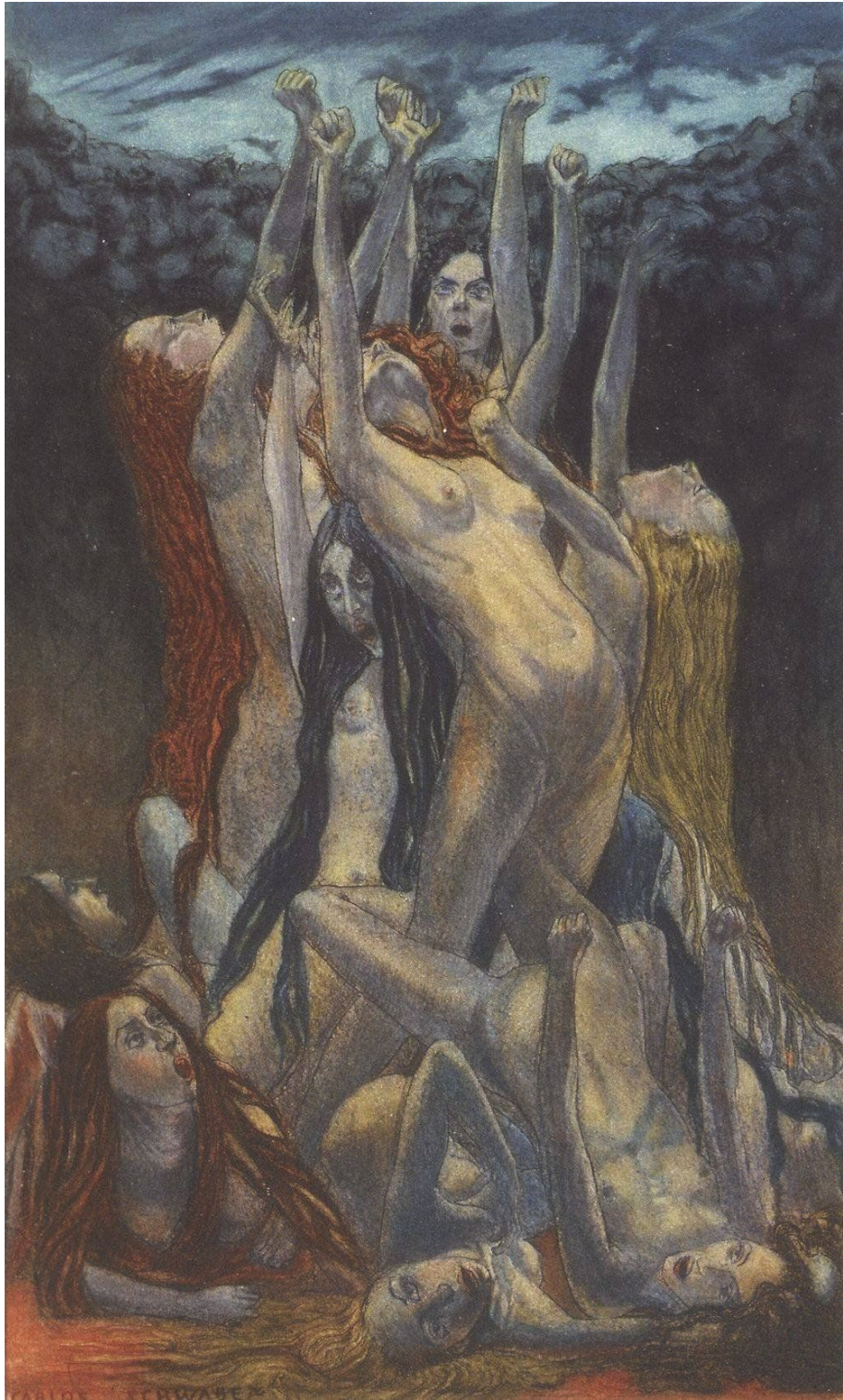
Wisest of Angels, whom your fate betrays,  
And, fairest of them all, deprives of praise,  
Satan have pity on my long despair!  
O Prince of exiles, who have suffered wrong,  
Yet, vanquished, rise from every fall more strong,  
Satan have pity on my long despair!  
All-knowing lord of subterranean things,  
Who remedy our human sufferings,  
Satan have pity on my long despair!  
To lepers and lost beggars full of lice,  
You teach, through love, the taste of Paradise.  
Satan have pity on my long despair!  
You who on Death, your old and sturdy wife,  
Engendered Hope – sweet folly of this life –  
Satan have pity on my long despair!  
You give to the doomed man that calm, unbaffled  
Gaze that rebukes the mob around the scaffold,  
Satan have pity on my long despair!  
You know in what closed corners of the earth  
A jealous God has hidden gems of worth.  
Satan have pity on my long despair!  
You know the deepest arsenals, where slumber  
The breeds of buried metals without number.  
Satan have pity on my long despair!  
You whose huge hand has hidden the abyss

From sleepwalkers that skirt the precipice,  
Satan have pity on my long despair !  
You who give suppleness to drunkards' bones  
When trampled down by horses on the stones,  
Satan have pity on my long despair !  
You who, to make his sufferings the lighter,  
Taught man to mix the sulphur with the nitre,  
Satan have pity on my long despair !  
You fix your mask, accomplice full of guile,  
On rich men's foreheads, pitiless and vile.  
Satan have pity on my long despair !  
You who fill the hearts and eyes of whores  
With love of trifles and the cult of sores,  
Satan have pity on my long despair !  
The exile's staff, inventor's lamp, caresser  
Of hanged men, and of plotters the confessor,  
Satan have pity on my long despair !  
Step-father of all those who, robbed of pardon,  
God drove in anger out of Eden's garden  
Satan have pity on my long despair !

#### Prayer

Praise to you, Satan ! in the heights you lit,  
And also in the deeps where now you sit,  
Vanquished, in Hell, and dream in hushed defiance  
O that my soul, beneath the Tree of Science  
Might rest near you, while shadowing your brows,  
It spreads a second Temple with its boughs.

– Roy Campbell, 1952



LA MORT  
DEATH





# La Mort des Amants

## La Mort des Amants

Nous aurons des lits pleins d'odeurs légères,  
Des divans profonds comme des tombeaux,  
Et d'étranges fleurs sur des étagères,  
Ecluses pour nous sous des cieux plus beaux.  
Usant à l'envi leurs chaleurs dernières,  
Nos deux coeurs seront deux vastes flambeaux,  
Qui réfléchiront leurs doubles lumières  
Dans nos deux esprits, ces miroirs jumeaux.  
Un soir fait de rose et de bleu mystique,  
Nous échangerons un éclair unique,  
Comme un long sanglot, tout chargé d'adieux ;  
Et plus tard un Ange, entr'ouvrant les portes,  
Viendra ranimer, fidèle et joyeux,  
Les miroirs ternis et les flammes mortes.

– Charles Baudelaire

## The Death of Lovers

We shall have beds full of subtle perfumes,  
Divans as deep as graves, and on the shelves  
Will be strange flowers that blossomed for us  
Under more beautiful heavens.  
Using their dying flames emulously,  
Our two hearts will be two immense torches  
Which will reflect their double light  
In our two souls, those twin mirrors.  
Some evening made of rose and of mystical blue

A single flash will pass between us  
Like a long sob, charged with farewells ;  
And later an Angel, setting the doors ajar,  
Faithful and joyous, will come to revive  
The tarnished mirrors, the extinguished flames.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Death of Lovers

We shall have beds round which light scents are wafted,  
Divans which are as deep and wide as tombs ;  
Strange flowers that under brighter skies were grafted  
Will scent our shelves with rare exotic blooms.  
When, burning to the last their mortal ardour,  
Our torch-like hearts their bannered flames unroll,  
Their double light will kindle all the harder  
Within the deep, twinned mirror of our soul.  
One evening made of mystic rose and blue,  
I will exchange a lightning-flash with you,  
Like a long sob that bids a last adieu.  
Later, the Angel, opening the door  
Faithful and happy, will at last renew  
Dulled mirrors, and the flames that leap no more.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## La Mort des pauvres

### La Mort des pauvres

C'est la Mort qui console, hélas ! et qui fait vivre ;  
C'est le but de la vie, et c'est le seul espoir  
Qui, comme un élixir, nous monte et nous enivre,  
Et nous donne le coeur de marcher jusqu'au soir ;  
À travers la tempête, et la neige, et le givre,  
C'est la clarté vibrante à notre horizon noir  
C'est l'auberge fameuse inscrite sur le livre,  
Où l'on pourra manger, et dormir, et s'asseoir ;  
C'est un Ange qui tient dans ses doigts magnétiques  
Le sommeil et le don des rêves extatiques,  
Et qui refait le lit des gens pauvres et nus ;  
C'est la gloire des Dieux, c'est le grenier mystique,  
C'est la bourse du pauvre et sa patrie antique,  
C'est le portique ouvert sur les Cieux inconnus !

– Charles Baudelaire

### The Death of the Poor

It's Death that comforts us, alas ! and makes us live ;  
It is the goal of life ; it is the only hope  
Which, like an elixir, makes us inebriate  
And gives us the courage to march until evening ;  
Through the storm and the snow and the hoar-frost  
It is the vibrant light on our black horizon ;  
It is the famous inn inscribed upon the book,  
Where one can eat, and sleep, and take his rest ;  
It's an Angel who holds in his magnetic hands

Sleep and the gift of ecstatic dreams  
And who makes the beds for the poor, naked people ;  
It's the glory of the gods, the mystic granary,  
It is the poor man's purse, his ancient fatherland,  
It is the portal opening on unknown Skies !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Death of Paupers

It's Death comforts us, alas ! and makes us live.  
It is the goal of life, it brings us hope,  
And, like a rich elixir, seems to give  
Courage to march along the darkening slope.  
Across the tempest, hail, and hoarfrost, look !  
Along the black horizon, a faint gleam !  
It is the inn that's written in the book  
Where one can sleep, and eat, and sit and dream.  
An Angel, in magnetic hands it holds  
Sleep and the gift of sweet ecstatic dreams,  
And makes a bed for poor and naked souls.  
It is God's glory and the mystic grange :  
The poor man's purse and fatherland it seems,  
And door that opens Heavens vast and strange.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## La Mort des artistes

### La Mort des artistes

Combien faut-il de fois secouer mes grelots  
Et baiser ton front bas, morne caricature ?  
Pour piquer dans le but, de mystique nature,  
Combien, ô mon carquois, perdre de javelots ?  
Nous userons notre âme en de subtils complots,  
Et nous démolirons mainte lourde armature,  
Avant de contempler la grande Créature  
Dont l'inferral désir nous remplit de sanglots !  
Il en est qui jamais n'ont connu leur Idole,  
Et ces sculpteurs damnés et marqués d'un affront,  
Qui vont se martelant la poitrine et le front,  
N'ont qu'un espoir, étrange et sombre Capitole !  
C'est que la Mort, planant comme un soleil nouveau,  
Fera s'épanouir les fleurs de leur cerveau !

– Charles Baudelaire

### The Death of Artists

How many times must I shake my bauble and bells  
And kiss your low forehead, dismal caricature ?  
To strike the target of mystic nature,  
How many javelins must I waste, O my quiver ?  
We shall wear out our souls in subtle schemes  
And we shall demolish many an armature  
Before contemplating the glorious Creature  
For whom a tormenting desire makes our hearts grieve !  
There are some who have never known their Idol

And those sculptors, damned and branded with shame,  
Who are always hammering their brows and their breasts,  
Have but one hope, bizarre and somber Capitol!  
It is that Death, soaring like a new sun,  
Will bring to bloom the flowers of their brains!

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Death of Artists

How often must I shake my bells, and kiss  
Your brow, sad Travesty? How many a dart,  
My quiver, shoot at Nature's mystic heart  
Before I hit the target that I miss?  
We'll still consume our souls in subtle schemes,  
Demolishing tough harness, long before  
We see the giant Creature of our dreams  
Whom all the world is weeping to adore.  
Some never knew their Idol, though they prayed:  
And these doomed sculptors, with an insult branded,  
Hammer your brows and bosom, heavy-handed,  
In the one hope, O Capitol of shade!  
That Death like some new sun should rise and give  
Warmth to their wasted flowers, and make them live.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## La Fin de la Journée (1861)

### La Fin de la Journée

Sous une lumière blafarde  
Court, danse et se tord sans raison  
La Vie, impudente et criarde.  
Aussi, sitôt qu'à l'horizon  
La nuit voluptueuse monte,  
Apaisant tout, même la faim,  
Effaçant tout, même la honte,  
Le Poète se dit : « Enfin !  
Mon esprit, comme mes vertèbres,  
Invoque ardemment le repos ;  
Le cœur plein de songes funèbres,  
Je vais me coucher sur le dos  
Et me rouler dans vos rideaux,  
Ô rafraîchissantes ténèbres ! »

– Charles Baudelaire

### The End of the Day

Under a pallid light, noisy,  
Impudent Life runs and dances,  
Twists and turns, for no good reason  
So, as soon as voluptuous  
Night rises from the horizon,  
Assuaging all, even hunger,  
Effacing all, even shame,  
The Poet says to himself : “ At last !  
My spirit, like my vertebrae,

Passionately invokes repose ;  
With a heart full of gloomy dreams,  
I shall lie down flat on my back  
And wrap myself in your curtains,  
O refreshing shadows !"

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The End of the Day

Under the wan, dejected skies,  
Impudent, raucous, full of treason,  
This life runs dancing without reason.  
Voluptuous night begins to rise,  
Appeasing even those who fast,  
Ravenous hunger making tame,  
And hiding all things, even shame,  
Until the Poet says, "At last  
My spirit, like my weary spine,  
Can do with slumber, that is certain,  
Sad dreams invade this heart of mine.  
I'm off to lie down on my back,  
And roll myself into your curtain,  
Refreshing shadows, dense and black !"

– Roy Campbell, 1952



## Le Rêve d'un Curieux (1861)

### Le Rêve d'un Curieux

*À Félix Nadar*

Connais-tu, comme moi, la douleur savoureuse  
Et de toi fais-tu dire : « Oh ! l'homme singulier ! »  
– J'allais mourir. C'était dans mon âme amoureuse  
Désir mêlé d'horreur, un mal particulier ;  
Angoisse et vif espoir, sans humeur factieuse.  
Plus allait se vidant le fatal sablier,  
Plus ma torture était âpre et délicieuse ;  
Tout mon coeur s'arrachait au monde familial.  
J'étais comme l'enfant avide du spectacle,  
Haïssant le rideau comme on hait un obstacle...  
Enfin la vérité froide se révéla :  
J'étais mort sans surprise, et la terrible aurore  
M'enveloppait. – Eh quoi ! n'est-ce donc que cela ?  
La toile était levée et j'attendais encore.

– Charles Baudelaire

### The Dream of a Curious Man

To F.N.

Do you know as I do, delectable suffering ?  
And do you have them say of you : "O ! the strange man !"  
– I was going to die. In my soul, full of love,  
A peculiar illness ; desire mixed with horror,  
Anguish and bright hopes ; without internal strife.  
The more the fatal hour-glass continued to flow,

The fiercer and more delightful grew my torture ;  
My heart was being torn from this familiar world.  
I was like a child eager for the play,  
Hating the curtain as one hates an obstacle...  
Finally the cold truth revealed itself :  
I had died and was not surprised ; the awful dawn  
Enveloped me. – What ! is that all there is to it ?  
The curtain had risen and I was still waiting.

– William Aggeler, 1954

## Dream of a Curious Person

To F.N.

Have you known such a savoury grief as I ?  
Do people say “Strange fellow !,” whom you meet ?  
– My amorous soul, when I was due to die,  
Felt longing mixed with horror ; pain seemed sweet.  
Anguish and ardent hope (no factious whim)  
Were mixed : and as the sands of life ran low  
My torture grew delicious yet more grim,  
And of this dear old world would not let go.  
I seemed a child, so keen to see the Show  
He feels a deadly hatred of the Curtain...  
And then I saw the hard, cold truth for certain.  
I felt that dreadful dawn around me grow  
With no surprise or vestige of a thrill.  
The curtain rose – and I stayed waiting still.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

# Le Voyage (1861)

## Le Voyage

*À Maxime du Camp*

I

Pour l'enfant, amoureux de cartes et d'estampes,  
L'univers est égal à son vaste appétit.  
Ah ! que le monde est grand à la clarté des lampes !  
Aux yeux du souvenir que le monde est petit !  
Un matin nous partons, le cerveau plein de flamme,  
Le coeur gros de rancune et de désirs amers,  
Et nous allons, suivant le rythme de la lame,  
Berçant notre infini sur le fini des mers :  
Les uns, joyeux de fuir une patrie infâme ;  
D'autres, l'horreur de leurs berceaux, et quelques-uns,  
Astrologues noyés dans les yeux d'une femme,  
La Circé tyrannique aux dangereux parfums.  
Pour n'être pas changés en bêtes, ils s'enivrent  
D'espace et de lumière et de cieux embrasés ;  
La glace qui les mord, les soleils qui les cuivrent,  
Effacent lentement la marque des baisers.  
Mais les vrais voyageurs sont ceux-là seuls qui partent  
Pour partir ; coeurs légers, semblables aux ballons,  
De leur fatalité jamais ils ne s'écartent,  
Et, sans savoir pourquoi, disent toujours : Allons !  
Ceux-là dont les désirs ont la forme des nues,  
Et qui rêvent, ainsi qu'un conscrit le canon,  
De vastes voluptés, changeantes, inconnues,  
Et dont l'esprit humain n'a jamais su le nom !

## II

Nous imitons, horreur ! la toupie et la boule  
Dans leur valse et leurs bonds ; même dans nos sommeils  
La Curiosité nous tourmente et nous roule  
Comme un Ange cruel qui fouette des soleils.  
Singulière fortune où le but se déplace,  
Et, n'étant nulle part, peut être n'importe où !  
Où l'Homme, dont jamais l'espérance n'est lasse,  
Pour trouver le repos court toujours comme un fou !  
Notre âme est un trois-mâts cherchant son Icarie ;  
Une voix retentit sur le pont : « Ouvre l'oeil ! »  
Une voix de la hune, ardente et folle, crie :  
« Amour... gloire... bonheur ! » Enfer ! c'est un écueil !  
Chaque îlot signalé par l'homme de vigie  
Est un Eldorado promis par le Destin ;  
L'Imagination qui dresse son orgie  
Ne trouve qu'un récif aux clartés du matin.  
Ô le pauvre amoureux des pays chimériques !  
Faut-il le mettre aux fers, le jeter à la mer,  
Ce matelot ivrogne, inventeur d'Amériques  
Dont le mirage rend le gouffre plus amer ?  
Tel le vieux vagabond, piétinant dans la boue,  
Rêve, le nez en l'air, de brillants paradis ;  
Son oeil ensorcelé découvre une Capoue  
Partout où la chandelle illumine un taudis.

## III

Etonnants voyageurs ! quelles nobles histoires  
Nous lisons dans vos yeux profonds comme les mers !  
Montrez-nous les écrins de vos riches mémoires,  
Ces bijoux merveilleux, faits d'astres et d'éthers.  
Nous voulons voyager sans vapeur et sans voile !  
Faites, pour égayer l'ennui de nos prisons,  
Passer sur nos esprits, tendus comme une toile,  
Vos souvenirs avec leurs cadres d'horizons.  
Dites, qu'avez-vous vu ?

## IV

« Nous avons vu des astres  
Et des flots, nous avons vu des sables aussi ;

Et, malgré bien des chocs et d'imprévus désastres,  
Nous nous sommes souvent ennuyés, comme ici.  
La gloire du soleil sur la mer violette,  
La gloire des cités dans le soleil couchant,  
Allumaient dans nos coeurs une ardeur inquiète  
De plonger dans un ciel au reflet alléchant.  
Les plus riches cités, les plus grands paysages,  
Jamais ne contenaient l'attrait mystérieux  
De ceux que le hasard fait avec les nuages.  
Et toujours le désir nous rendait soucieux !  
– La jouissance ajoute au désir de la force.  
Désir, vieil arbre à qui le plaisir sert d'engrais,  
Cependant que grossit et durcit ton écorce,  
Tes branches veulent voir le soleil de plus près !  
Grandiras-tu toujours, grand arbre plus vivace  
Que le cyprès ? – Pourtant nous avons, avec soin,  
Cueilli quelques croquis pour votre album vorace  
Frères qui trouvez beau tout ce qui vient de loin !  
Nous avons salué des idoles à trompe ;  
Des trônes constellés de joyaux lumineux ;  
Des palais ouvragés dont la féérique pompe  
Serait pour vos banquiers un rêve ruineux ;  
Des costumes qui sont pour les yeux une ivresse ;  
Des femmes dont les dents et les ongles sont teints,  
Et des jongleurs savants que le serpent caresse. »

V

Et puis, et puis encore ?

VI

« Ô cerveaux enfantins !  
Pour ne pas oublier la chose capitale,  
Nous avons vu partout, et sans l'avoir cherché,  
Du haut jusques en bas de l'échelle fatale,  
Le spectacle ennuyeux de l'immortel péché :  
La femme, esclave vile, orgueilleuse et stupide,  
Sans rire s'adorant et s'aimant sans dégoût ;  
L'homme, tyran goulu, paillard, dur et cupide,  
Esclave de l'esclave et ruisseau dans l'égout ;  
Le bourreau qui jouit, le martyr qui sanglote ;

La fête qu'assaisonne et parfume le sang ;  
Le poison du pouvoir énervant le despote,  
Et le peuple amoureux du fouet abrutissant ;  
Plusieurs religions semblables à la nôtre,  
Toutes escaladant le ciel ; la Sainteté,  
Comme en un lit de plume un délicat se vautre,  
Dans les clous et le crin cherchant la volupté ;  
L'Humanité bavarde, ivre de son génie,  
Et, folle maintenant comme elle était jadis,  
Criant à Dieu, dans sa furibonde agonie :  
"Ô mon semblable, mon maître, je te maudis !"  
Et les moins sots, hardis amants de la Démence,  
Fuyant le grand troupeau parqué par le Destin,  
Et se réfugiant dans l'opium immense !  
– Tel est du globe entier l'éternel bulletin. »

## VII

Amer savoir, celui qu'on tire du voyage !  
Le monde, monotone et petit, aujourd'hui,  
Hier, demain, toujours, nous fait voir notre image :  
Une oasis d'horreur dans un désert d'ennui !  
Faut-il partir ? rester ? Si tu peux rester, reste ;  
Pars, s'il le faut. L'un court, et l'autre se tapit  
Pour tromper l'ennemi vigilant et funeste,  
Le Temps ! Il est, hélas ! des coureurs sans répit,  
Comme le Juif errant et comme les apôtres,  
À qui rien ne suffit, ni wagon ni vaisseau,  
Pour fuir ce rétiaire infâme ; il en est d'autres  
Qui savent le tuer sans quitter leur berceau.  
Lorsque enfin il mettra le pied sur notre échine,  
Nous pourrons espérer et crier : En avant !  
De même qu'autrefois nous partions pour la Chine,  
Les yeux fixés au large et les cheveux au vent,  
Nous nous embarquerons sur la mer des Ténèbres  
Avec le coeur joyeux d'un jeune passager.  
Entendez-vous ces voix charmantes et funèbres,  
Qui chantent : « Par ici vous qui voulez manger  
Le Lotus parfumé ! c'est ici qu'on vendange  
Les fruits miraculeux dont votre coeur a faim ;  
Venez vous enivrer de la douceur étrange

De cette après-midi qui n'a jamais de fin ! »  
 À l'accent familier nous devinons le spectre ;  
 Nos Pylades l'aggrave-bas tendent leurs bras vers nous.  
 « Pour rafraîchir ton coeur nage vers ton Electre ! »  
 Dit celle dont jadis nous baisions les genoux.

## VIII

Ô Mort, vieux capitaine, il est temps ! levons l'ancre !  
 Ce pays nous ennuie, ô Mort ! Appareillons !  
 Si le ciel et la mer sont noirs comme de l'encre,  
 Nos coeurs que tu connais sont remplis de rayons !  
 Verse-nous ton poison pour qu'il nous reconforte !  
 Nous voulons, tant ce feu nous brûle le cerveau,  
 Plonger au fond du gouffre, Enfer ou Ciel, qu'importe ?  
 Au fond de l'Inconnu pour trouver du *nouveau* !

– Charles Baudelaire

## The Voyage

To Maxime du Camp

## I

To a child who is fond of maps and engravings  
 The universe is the size of his immense hunger.  
 Ah ! how vast is the world in the light of a lamp !  
 In memory's eyes how small the world is !  
 One morning we set out, our brains aflame,  
 Our hearts full of resentment and bitter desires,  
 And we go, following the rhythm of the wave,  
 Lulling our infinite on the finite of the seas :  
 Some, joyful at fleeing a wretched fatherland ;  
 Others, the horror of their birthplace ; a few,  
 Astrologers drowned in the eyes of some woman,  
 Some tyrannic Circe with dangerous perfumes.  
 Not to be changed into beasts, they get drunk  
 With space, with light, and with fiery skies ;  
 The ice that bites them, the suns that bronze them,  
 Slowly efface the bruise of the kisses.

But the true voyagers are only those who leave  
Just to be leaving ; hearts light, like balloons,  
They never turn aside from their fatality  
And without knowing why they always say : "Let's go!"  
Those whose desires have the form of the clouds,  
And who, as a raw recruit dreams of the cannon,  
Dream of vast voluptuousness, changing and strange,  
Whose name the human mind has never known !

## II

Horror ! We imitate the top and bowling ball,  
Their bounding and their waltz ; even in our slumber  
Curiosity torments us, rolls us about,  
Like a cruel Angel who lashes suns.  
Singular destiny where the goal moves about,  
And being nowhere can be anywhere !  
Toward which Man, whose hope never grows weary,  
Is ever running like a madman to find rest !  
Our soul's a three-master seeking Icaria ;  
A voice resounds upon the bridge : "Keep a sharp eye !"  
From aloft a voice, ardent and wild, cries :  
"Love... glory... happiness !" – Damnation ! It's a shoal !  
Every small island sighted by the man on watch  
Is the Eldorado promised by Destiny ;  
Imagination preparing for her orgy  
Finds but a reef in the light of the dawn.  
O the poor lover of imaginary lands !  
Must he be put in irons, thrown into the sea,  
That drunken tar, inventor of Americas,  
Whose mirage makes the abyss more bitter ?  
Thus the old vagabond tramping through the mire  
Dreams with his nose in the air of brilliant Edens ;  
His enchanted eye discovers a Capua  
Wherever a candle lights up a hut.

## III

Astonishing voyagers ! What splendid stories  
We read in your eyes as deep as the seas !  
Show us the chest of your rich memories,  
Those marvelous jewels, made of ether and stars.



We wish to voyage without steam and without sails !  
To brighten the ennui of our prisons,  
Make your memories, framed in their horizons,  
Pass across our minds stretched like canvasses.  
Tell us what you have seen.

## IV

“We have seen stars  
And waves ; we have also seen sandy wastes ;  
And in spite of many a shock and unforeseen  
Disaster, we were often bored, as we are here.  
The glory of sunlight upon the purple sea,  
The glory of cities against the setting sun,  
Kindled in our hearts a troubling desire  
To plunge into a sky of alluring colors.  
The richest cities, the finest landscapes,  
Never contained the mysterious attraction  
Of the ones that chance fashions from the clouds  
And desire was always making us more avid !  
– Enjoyment fortifies desire.  
Desire, old tree fertilized by pleasure,  
While your bark grows thick and hardens,  
Your branches strive to get closer to the sun !  
Will you always grow, tall tree more hardy  
Than the cypress ? – However, we have carefully  
Gathered a few sketches for your greedy album,  
Brothers who think lovely all that comes from afar !  
We have bowed to idols with elephantine trunks ;  
Thrones studded with luminous jewels ;  
Palaces so wrought that their fairy-like splendor  
Would make your bankers have dreams of ruination ;  
And costumes that intoxicate the eyes ;  
Women whose teeth and fingernails are dyed  
And clever mountebanks whom the snake caresses.”

## V

And then, and then what else ?

## VI

"O childish minds !  
 Not to forget the most important thing,  
 We saw everywhere, without seeking it,  
 From the foot to the top of the fatal ladder,  
 The wearisome spectacle of immortal sin :  
 Woman, a base slave, haughty and stupid,  
 Adoring herself without laughter or disgust ;  
 Man, a greedy tyrant, ribald, hard and grasping,  
 A slave of the slave, a gutter in the sewer ;  
 The hangman who feels joy and the martyr who sobs,  
 The festival that blood flavors and perfumes ;  
 The poison of power making the despot weak,  
 And the people loving the brutalizing whip ;  
 Several religions similar to our own,  
 All climbing up to heaven ; Saintliness  
 Like a dilettante who sprawls in a feather bed,  
 Seeking voluptuousness on horsehair and nails ;  
 Prating humanity, drunken with its genius,  
 And mad now as it was in former times,  
 Crying to God in its furious death-struggle :  
 'O my fellow, O my master, may you be damned !'  
 The less foolish, bold lovers of Madness,  
 Fleeing the great flock that Destiny has folded,  
 Taking refuge in opium's immensity !  
 – That's the unchanging report of the entire globe."

## VII

Bitter is the knowledge one gains from voyaging !  
 The world, monotonous and small, today,  
 Yesterday, tomorrow, always, shows us our image :  
 An oasis of horror in a desert of ennui !  
 Must one depart ? Remain ? If you can stay, remain ;  
 Leave, if you must. One runs, another hides  
 To elude the vigilant, fatal enemy,  
 Time ! There are, alas ! those who rove without respite,  
 Like the Wandering Jew and like the Apostles,  
 Whom nothing suffices, neither coach nor vessel,  
 To flee this infamous retiarey ; and others

Who know how to kill him without leaving their cribs.  
 And when at last he sets his foot upon our spine,  
 We can hope and cry out : Forward !  
 Just as in other times we set out for China,  
 Our eyes fixed on the open sea, hair in the wind,  
 We shall embark on the sea of Darkness  
 With the glad heart of a young traveler.  
 Do you hear those charming, melancholy voices  
 Singing : "Come this way ! You who wish to eat  
 The perfumed Lotus ! It's here you gather  
 The miraculous fruits for which your heart hungers ;  
 Come and get drunken with the strange sweetness  
 Of this eternal afternoon ?"  
 By the familiar accent we know the specter ;  
 Our Pylades yonder stretch out their arms towards us.  
 "To refresh your heart swim to your Electra !"  
 Cries she whose knees we kissed in other days.

## VIII

O Death, old captain, it is time ! let's weigh anchor !  
 This country wearies us, O Death ! Let us set sail !  
 Though the sea and the sky are black as ink,  
 Our hearts which you know well are filled with rays of light  
 Pour out your poison that it may refresh us !  
 This fire burns our brains so fiercely, we wish to plunge  
 To the abyss' depths, Heaven or Hell, does it matter ?  
 To the depths of the Unknown to find something new !

– William Aggeler, 1954

## The Voyage

To Maxime du Camp

## I

For children crazed with postcards, prints, and stamps  
 All space can scarce suffice their appetite.  
 How vast the world seems by the light of lamps,  
 But in the eyes of memory how slight !

One morning we set sail, with brains on fire,  
And hearts swelled up with rancorous emotion,  
Balancing, to the rhythm of its lyre,  
Our infinite upon the finite ocean.  
Some wish to leave their venal native skies,  
Some flee their birthplace, others change their ways,  
Astrologers who've drowned in Beauty's eyes,  
Tyrannic Circe with the scent that slays.  
Not to be changed to beasts, they have their fling  
With space, and splendour, and the burning sky,  
The suns that bronze them and the frosts that sting  
Efface the mark of kisses by and by.  
But the true travellers are those who go  
Only to get away : hearts like balloons  
Unballasted, with their own fate aglow,  
Who know not why they fly with the monsoons :  
Those whose desires are in the shape of clouds.  
And dream, as raw recruits of shot and shell,  
Of mighty raptures in strange, transient crowds  
Of which no human soul the name can tell.

## II

Horror ! We imitate the top and bowl  
In swerve and bias. Through our sleep it runs.  
It's Curiosity that makes us roll  
As the fierce Angel whips the whirling suns.  
Singular game ! where the goal changes places ;  
The winning-post is nowhere, yet all round ;  
Where Man tires not of the mad hope he races  
Thinking, some day, that respite will be found.  
Our soul's like a three-master, where one hears  
A voice that from the bridge would warn all hands.  
Another from the foretop madly cheers  
"Love, joy, and glory" ... Hell ! we're on the sands !  
The watchmen think each isle that heaves in view  
An Eldorado, shouting their belief.  
Imagination riots in the crew  
Who in the morning only find a reef.  
The fool that dotes on far, chimeric lands –  
Put him in irons, or feed him to the shark !

The drunken sailor's visionary lands  
Can only leave the bitter truth more stark.  
So some old vagabond, in mud who grovels,  
Dreams, nose in air, of Edens sweet to roam.  
Wherever smoky wicks illumine hovels  
He sees another Capua or Rome.

## III

Amazing travellers, what noble stories  
We read in the deep oceans of your gaze!  
Show us your memory's casket, and the glories  
Streaming from gems made out of stars and rays!  
We, too, would roam without a sail or steam,  
And to combat the boredom of our jail,  
Would stretch, like canvas on our souls, a dream,  
Framed in horizons, of the seas you sail.  
What have you seen?

## IV

"We have seen stars and waves.  
We have seen sands and shores and oceans too,  
In spite of shocks and unexpected graves,  
We have been bored, at times, the same as you.  
The solar glories on the violet ocean  
And those of spires that in the sunset rise,  
Lit, in our hearts, a yearning, fierce emotion  
To plunge into those ever-luring skies.  
The richest cities and the scenes most proud  
In nature, have no magic to enamour  
Like those which hazard traces in the cloud  
While wistful longing magnifies their glamour.  
Enjoyment adds more fuel for desire,  
Old tree, to which all pleasure is manure;  
As the bark hardens, so the boughs shoot higher,  
And nearer to the sun would grow mature.  
Tree, will you always flourish, more vivacious  
Than cypress? – None the less, these views are yours:  
We took some photographs for your voracious  
Album, who only care for distant shores.  
We have seen idols elephantine-snouted,

And thrones with living gems bestarred and pearled,  
 And palaces whose riches would have routed  
 The dreams of all the bankers in the world.  
 We have seen wonder-striking robes and dresses,  
 Women whose nails and teeth the betel stains  
 And jugglers whom the rearing snake caresses.”

V

What then ? What then ?

VI

“O childish little brains,  
 Not to forget the greatest wonder there –  
 We’ve seen in every country, without searching,  
 From top to bottom of the fatal stair  
 Immortal sin ubiquitously lurching :  
 Woman, a vile slave, proud in her stupidity,  
 Self-worshipping, without the least disgust :  
 Man, greedy, lustful, ruthless in cupidity,  
 Slave to a slave, and sewer to her lust :  
 The torturer’s delight, the martyr’s sobs,  
 The feasts where blood perfumes the giddy rout :  
 Power sapping its own tyrants : servile mobs  
 In amorous obeisance to the knout :  
 Some similar religions to our own,  
 All climbing skywards : Sanctity who treasures,  
 As in his downy couch some dainty drone,  
 In horsehair, nails, and whips, his dearest pleasures.  
 Prating Humanity, with genius raving,  
 As mad today as ever from the first,  
 Cries in fierce agony, its Maker braving,  
 ‘O God, my Lord and likeness, be thou cursed !’  
 But those less dull, the lovers of Dementia,  
 Fleeing the herd which fate has safe impounded,  
 In opium seek for limitless adventure.  
 – That’s all the record of the globe we rounded.”

VII

It’s bitter knowledge that one learns from travel.  
 The world so small and drab, from day to day,

The horror of our image will unravel,  
A pool of dread in deserts of dismay.  
Must we depart, or stay ? Stay if you can.  
Go if you must. One runs : another hides  
To baffle Time, that fatal foe to man.  
And there are runners, whom no rest betides,  
Like the Apostles or the Wandering Jew,  
Whom neither ship nor waggon can enable  
To cheat the retiary. But not a few  
Have killed him without stirring from their cradle.  
But when he sets his foot upon our nape  
We still can hope and cry "Leave all behind !"  
As in old times to China we'll escape  
With eyes turned seawards, hair that fans the wind,  
We'll sail once more upon the sea of Shades  
With heart like that of a young sailor beating.  
I hear the rich, sad voices of the Trades  
Who cry "This Way ! all you who would be eating  
The scented Lotus. Here it is they range  
The piles of magic fruit. O hungry friend,  
Come here and swoon away into the strange  
Trance of an afternoon that has no end."  
In the familiar tones we sense the spectre.  
Our Pylades stretch arms across the seas,  
"To salve your heart, now swim to your Electra"  
She cries, of whom we used to kiss the knees.

## VIII

O Death, old Captain, it is time. Weigh anchor !  
To sail beyond the doldrums of our days.  
Though black as pitch the sea and sky, we hanker  
For space ; you know our hearts are full of rays.  
Pour us your poison to revive our soul !  
It cheers the burning quest that we pursue,  
Careless if Hell or Heaven be our goal,  
Beyond the known world to seek out the New !

– Roy Campbell, 1952





# LES ÉPAVES

SCRAPS

1866



# Les Promesses d'un visage

## Les Promesses d'un visage

J'aime, ô pâle beauté, tes sourcils surbaissés,  
D'où semblent couler des ténèbres ;  
Tes yeux, quoique très-noirs, m'inspirent des pensers  
Qui ne sont pas du tout funèbres.  
Tes yeux, qui sont d'accord avec tes noirs cheveux,  
Avec ta crinière élastique,  
Tes yeux, languissamment, me disent : « Si tu veux,  
Amant de la muse plastique,  
Suivre l'espoir qu'en toi nous avons excité,  
Et tous les goûts que tu professes,  
Tu pourras constater notre véracité  
Depuis le nombril jusqu'aux fesses ;  
Tu trouveras au bout de deux beaux seins bien lourds,  
Deux larges médailles de bronze,  
Et sous un ventre uni, doux comme du velours,  
Bistré comme la peau d'un bonze,  
Une riche toison qui, vraiment, est la soeur  
De cette énorme chevelure,  
Souple et frisée, et qui t'égale en épaisseur,  
Nuit sans étoiles, Nuit obscure ! »

– Charles Baudelaire

## The Promises of a Face

I love your elliptical eyebrows, my pale beauty,  
From which darkness seems to flow ;  
Although so black, your eyes suggest to me

Thoughts in no way funereal.  
Your eyes, in harmony with your black hair,  
With your buoyant mane,  
Your swooning eyes now tell me : "If you wish,  
O lover of the plastic muse,  
To follow the hope we have excited in you,  
And all the fancies you profess,  
You will be able to prove our truthfulness  
From the navel to the buttocks ;  
You will find at the tips of two heavy breasts  
Two slack bronze medallions,  
And under a smooth belly, soft as velvet,  
Swarthy as the skin of a Buddhist,  
A rich fleece, which truly is the sister  
Of this huge head of hair,  
Compliant and curly, its thickness equals  
Black night, night without stars !"

– **Geoffrey Wagner**, 1974

# Le Monstre

## Le Monstre

I

Tu n'es certes pas, ma très-chère,  
Ce que Veillot nomme un tendron.  
Le jeu, l'amour, la bonne chère,  
Bouillonnent en toi, vieux chaudron !  
Tu n'es plus fraîche, ma très-chère,  
Ma vieille infante ! Et cependant  
Tes caravanes insensées  
T'ont donné ce lustre abondant  
Des choses qui sont très-usées,  
Mais qui séduisent cependant.  
Je ne trouve pas monotone  
La verdure de tes quarante ans ;  
Je préfère tes fruits, Automne,  
Aux fleurs banales du Printemps !  
Non ! tu n'es jamais monotone !  
Ta carcasse à des agréments  
Et des grâces particulières ;  
Je trouve d'étranges piments  
Dans le creux de tes deux salières ;  
Ta carcasse à des agréments !  
Nargue des amants ridicules  
Du melon et du giraumont !  
Je préfère tes clavicules  
A celles du roi Salomon,  
Et je plains ces gens ridicules !  
Tes cheveux, comme un casque bleu,  
Ombrent ton front de guerrière,

Qui ne pense et rougit que peu,  
Et puis se sauvent par derrière,  
Comme les crins d'un casque bleu.  
Tes yeux qui semblent de la boue,  
Où scintille quelque fanal,  
Ravivés au fard de ta joue,  
Lancent un éclair infernal !  
Tes yeux sont noirs comme la boue !  
Par sa luxure et son dédain  
Ta lèvre amère nous provoque ;  
Cette lèvre, c'est un Eden  
Qui nous attire et qui nous choque.  
Quelle luxure ! et quel dédain !  
Ta jambe musculeuse et sèche  
Sait gravir au haut des volcans,  
Et malgré la neige et la dèche  
Danser les plus fougueux cancons.  
Ta jambe est musculeuse et sèche ;  
Ta peau brûlante et sans douceur,  
Comme celle des vieux gendarmes,  
Ne connaît pas plus la sueur  
Que ton oeil ne connaît les larmes.  
(Et pourtant elle a sa douceur !)

## II

Sotte, tu t'en vas droit au Diable !  
Volontiers j'irais avec toi,  
Si cette vitesse effroyable  
Ne me causait pas quelque émoi.  
Va-t'en donc, toute seule, au Diable !  
Mon rein, mon poumon, mon jarret  
Ne me laissent plus rendre hommage  
A ce Seigneur, comme il faudrait.  
« Hélas ! c'est vraiment bien dommage ! »  
Disent mon rein et mon jarret.  
Oh ! très-sincèrement je souffre  
De ne pas aller aux sabbats,  
Pour voir, quand il pète du soufre,  
Comment tu lui baisses son cas !  
Oh ! très-sincèrement je souffre !

Je suis diablement affligé  
De ne pas être ta torchère,  
Et de te demander congé,  
Flambeau d'enfer ! Juge, ma chère,  
Combien je dois être affligé,  
Puisque depuis longtemps je t'aime,  
Étant très-logique ! En effet,  
Voulant du Mal chercher la crème  
Et n'aimer qu'un monstre parfait,  
Vraiment oui ! vieux monstre, je t'aime !

– Charles Baudelaire

I

Beloved, certainly you're not  
What Veuillot calls a "tenderling."  
Bubbling in you, as in a pot,  
Dice, lust and revel have their fling.  
My dear old child, you're surely not  
Too fresh these days. However, dear,  
Your tireless game of fast-and-loose  
Has given you that smooth veneer,  
That things acquire from constant use.  
It has its charms, however dear.  
I do not find it growing stale –  
That sap your forty summers bring  
Since autumn fruits with me prevail  
Over the banal flowers of spring.  
No ! you are never dull nor stale.  
Your carcase for your age atones,  
And gives particular delight  
In hollows of your collar bones,  
And other places out of sight.  
Your carcase certainly atones.  
A fig for those poor doting fools  
Who're melon-struck and pumpkin mad,  
Since I prefer your clavicles

To those King Solomon once had.  
A fig for such poor dotting fools!  
A blue-black helmet is your hair.  
It shades your warrior's brow whereon  
Both thoughts and blushes are so rare –  
And then sweeps backward, and is gone!  
A blue black helmet is your hair.  
Your eyes resemble mud and mire,  
Whereon a flaring lantern streaks,  
Reflects the fard upon your checks,  
And glows with pale infernal fire.  
Your eyes are coloured like the mire.  
By its voluptuous disdain  
Your bitter lip provokes our lust.  
It's Eden's apple once again,  
Half is attraction, half disgust,  
In its voluptuous disdain.  
Your leg, so muscular and dry,  
Could climb volcanoes, never stop,  
And, spite of snow, and wind, and rain,  
Perform a cancan at the top.  
Your leg is muscular and dry.  
Your burning skin is void of sweetness :  
Like an old soldier's it appears.  
To sweat it never had the weakness  
More than your eyes could furnish tears.  
And yet it has a kind of sweetness !

## II

Fool! You are driving to the Devil.  
Willingly I would go with you  
If the momentum of your revel  
Did not exasperate me too.  
Fool! go, alone, then, to the Devil.  
My hip, my lung, my hams, my thigh  
Won't let me longer pay respects  
(Although it often makes me sigh)  
To that great Lord, as he expects.  
It's very sad for ham and thigh  
Oh most sincerely do I suffer



Not to accompany your freaks ;  
When he is flatulating sulphur  
To see you kiss him where he leaks.  
O most sincerely do I suffer !  
I feel so devilish annoyed  
No more to serve you as a socket,  
You hellish torch ! Infernal rocket !  
And to declare my duty void ;  
I do feel devilish annoyed,  
Since for a long, long time I love you  
Being so logical. My dream  
Was of all ill to skim the cream,  
Place no monstrosity above you  
And own you in that line supreme.  
Truly, old monster ! yes, I love you.

– Roy Campbell, 1952

## Sur les débuts d'Amina Boschetti

### Sur les débuts d'Amina Boschetti

Amina bondit, – fuit, – puis voltige et sourit ;  
 Le Welche dit : « Tout ça, pour moi, c'est du prâcrit ;  
 Je ne connais, en fait de nymphes bocagères,  
 Que celle de Montagne-aux-Herbes-potagères. »  
 Du bout de son pied fin et de son oeil qui rit,  
 Amina verse à flots le délire et l'esprit ;  
 Le Welche dit : « Fuyez, délices mensongères !  
 Mon épouse n'a pas ces allures légères. »  
 Vous ignorez, sylphide au jarret triomphant,  
 Qui voulez enseigner la valse à l'éléphant,  
 Au hibou la gaieté, le rire à la cigogne,  
 Que sur la grâce en feu le Welche dit : « Haro ! »  
 Et que, le doux Bacchus lui versant du bourgogne,  
 Le monstre répondrait : « J'aime mieux le faro ! »

– Charles Baudelaire

### Amina Boschetti

Amina bounds... is startled... whirls and smiles.  
 The Belgian says, "That's fraud, a pure deceit.  
 As for your woodland nymphs, I know the wiles  
 Only of those on Brussels' Market Street."  
 From shapely foot and lively, laughing eye  
 Amina spills light elegance and wit.  
 The Belgian says, "Be gone, ye joys that fly !  
 My wife's attractions have more merit."  
 Oh, you forget, nymph of the winsome stance,

That though you'd teach an elephant to dance,  
Teach owls new melodies, make dull birds shine,  
All glimmering grace brings but a Belgian sneer :  
Bacchus himself could pour bright southern wine,  
This Boor would say, "Give me thick Brussels beer."

– **Kenneth O. Hanson**, 1955

## À M. Eugène Fromentin

### À M. Eugène Fromentin à propos d'un importun qui se disait son ami

Il me dit qu'il était très riche,  
Mais qu'il craignait le choléra ;  
– Que de son or il était chiche,  
Mais qu'il goûtait fort l'Opéra ;  
– Qu'il raffolait de la nature,  
Ayant connu monsieur Corot ;  
– Qu'il n'avait pas encor voiture,  
Mais que cela viendrait bientôt ;  
– Qu'il aimait le marbre et la brique,  
Les bois noirs et les bois dorés ;  
– Qu'il possédait dans sa fabrique  
Trois contremaîtres décorés ;  
– Qu'il avait, sans compter le reste,  
Vingt mille actions sur le Nord ;  
Qu'il avait trouvé, pour un zeste,  
Des encadrements d'Oppenord ;  
Qu'il donnerait (fût-ce à Luzarches !)  
Dans le bric-à-brac jusqu'au cou,  
Et qu'au Marché des Patriarches  
Il avait fait plus d'un bon coup ;  
Qu'il n'aimait pas beaucoup sa femme,  
Ni sa mère ; – mais qu'il croyait  
A l'immortalité de l'âme,  
Et qu'il avait lu Niboyet !  
– Qu'il penchait pour l'amour physique,  
Et qu'à Rome, séjour d'ennui,  
Une femme, d'ailleurs phtisique,

Etait morte d'amour pour lui.  
Pendant trois heures et demie,  
Ce bavard, venu de Tournai,  
M'a dégoisé toute sa vie ;  
J'en ai le cerveau consterné.  
S'il fallait décrire ma peine,  
Ce serait à n'en plus finir ;  
Je me disais, domptant ma haine :  
« Au moins, si je pouvais dormir ! »  
Comme un qui n'est pas à son aise,  
Et qui n'ose pas s'en aller,  
Je frottais de mon cul ma chaise,  
Rêvant de le faire empaler.  
Ce monstre se nomme Bastogne ;  
Il fuyait devant le fléau.  
Moi, je fuirai jusqu'en Gascogne,  
Ou j'irai me jeter à l'eau,  
Si dans ce Paris, qu'il redoute,  
Quand chacun sera retourné,  
Je trouve encore sur ma route  
Ce fléau, natif de Tournai.

– Charles Baudelaire

## About a Bore Who Claimed His Acquaintance

To M. Eugene Fromentin

He told me just how rich he was,  
But nervous of the cholera ;  
– That he took good care where the money goes,  
But he liked a seat at the Opera.  
– That he was simply wild about nature,  
Monsieur Corot being quite an old chum ;  
– That a carriage was still a missing feature  
Among his goods – but it would come ;  
– That marble and brick divided his fancy,  
Along with ebony and gilded wood ;  
– That there were in his factory  
Three foremen who had been decorated ;

– That, not to mention all the rest,  
He had twenty thousand shares in the Nord ;  
– That he'd found some picture-frames for next  
To nothing, and all by Oppenord.  
– That he'd go as far even as Luzarches  
To steep himself in bric-a-brac ;  
– That the Marché des Patriarches  
Had more than once proved his collector's knack ;  
That he didn't care much for his wife  
Nor for his mother, but – theirs apart –  
He believed in the soul's immortal life,  
Niboyet's works he had by heart !  
– That he quite approved of physical passion,  
And once, on a tedious stay in Rome,  
A consumptive lady, much in fashion,  
Had died away for love of him.  
– For three solid hours and a half,  
This chatterer, born in Tournai,  
Dished up to me the whole of his life,  
Until my brain almost fainted away.  
If I had to tell you all I suffered  
I would never be able to give up.  
I sat in helpless hate, and muttered  
"If only I could lie down and sleep !"  
Like someone whose seat can give no rest  
But who cannot get up and make his escape,  
I squirmed and brooded on all the best  
Methods of torturing the ape.  
Bastogne this monstrosity's called ;  
He was running away from the infection.  
I would drown myself, or take the road  
To Gascony, or in any direction  
If, when everybody gets back  
To the Paris he's so much afraid of,  
I should happen to cross the track  
Of this pest that Tournai bore – and got rid of !

– David Paul, 1955

## Un Cabaret folâtre

### Un Cabaret folâtre

(Sur la route de Bruxelles à Uccle)

Vous qui raffolez des squelettes  
Et des emblèmes détestés,  
Pour épicer les voluptés,  
(Fût-ce de simples omelettes !)  
Vieux Pharaon, ô Monselet !  
Devant cette enseigne imprévue,  
J'ai rêvé de vous : *À la vue*  
*Du Cimetière, Estaminet !*

– Charles Baudelaire

### A Gay Chophouse

(On the road from Brussels to Uccle)

You who adore the skeleton  
And all such horrible devices  
As so many relishes and spices  
To tickle the delicate palate on,  
You old Pharaoh, Monselet,  
Here's a sign I saw that will surely whet  
Your appetite for an omelette ;  
It read : *Cemetery View. Estaminet.*

– David Paul, 1955





# APPENDIX



## Charles Pierre Baudelaire

**Charles Pierre Baudelaire** (April 9, 1821 – August 31, 1867) was an influential nineteenth century French poet, critic and acclaimed translator.

Baudelaire was born in Paris. His father, a senior civil servant and amateur artist, died early in Baudelaire's life in 1827. In the following year, his mother married a lieutenant colonel Jacques Aupick, who later became a French ambassador to various courts. Baudelaire was educated in Lyon and at the Lycée Louis-le-Grand in Paris. Upon gaining his degree in 1839, he decided to embark upon a literary career, and for the next two years led an irregular life. He may have contracted syphilis during this period. In the hope of reforming him, his guardians sent him on a voyage to India in 1841, but he never arrived. When he returned to Paris, after less than a year's absence, he received a small inheritance, but he spent it within a few years. His family obtained a decree to place his property in trust. During this time he met Jeanne Duval, who was to become his longest romantic association.

His art reviews of 1845 and 1846 attracted immediate attention for their boldness; many of his critical opinions were novel in their time, but have since been generally accepted. He took part in the Revolutions of 1848, and for some years was interested in republican politics, but his political convictions spanned the anarchism of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, the history of the Raison d'État of Giuseppe Ferrari, and ultramontane critique of liberalism of Joseph de Maistre.

Baudelaire was a slow and fastidious worker, and it was not until 1857 that he published his first and most famous volume of poems, *Les Fleurs du mal* ("The Flowers of Evil"). Some of these poems had already appeared in the *Revue des deux mondes* (*Review of Two Worlds*), when they were published by Baudelaire's friend Auguste Poulet Malassis, who had inherited a printing business at Alençon. The poems found a small appreciative audience, but greater public attention was given to their subject matter. The principal themes of sex and death were considered scandalous, and the book became a byword for unwholesomeness among mainstream critics

of the day. Baudelaire, his publisher, and the printer were successfully prosecuted for creating an offense against public morals. In the poem "*Au lecteur*" ("*To the Reader*") that prefaces *Les fleurs du mal*, Baudelaire accuses his readers of hypocrisy and of being as guilty of sins and lies as the poet :

... If rape or arson, poison, or the knife  
Has wove no pleasing patterns in the stuff  
Of this drab canvas we accept as life—  
It is because we are not bold enough!

(Roy Campbell's translation)

Six of the poems were suppressed, but printed later as *Les Épaves* ("*The Wrecks*") (Brussels, 1866). Another edition of *Les fleurs du mal*, without these poems, but with considerable additions, appeared in 1861.

His other works include *Petits Poèmes en prose* ("*Small Prose poems*"); a series of art reviews published in the *Pays*, Exposition universelle ("*Country, World Fair*") ; studies on *Gustave Flaubert* (in *L'Artiste*, October 18, 1857) ; on *Théophile Gautier* (*Revue contemporaine*, September, 1858) ; various articles contributed to *Eugene Crepet's Poètes français* ; *Les Paradis artificiels : opium et haschisch* ("*French poets ; Artificial Paradises : opium and hashish*") (1860) ; and *Un Dernier Chapitre de l'histoire des oeuvres de Balzac* ("*A Final Chapter of the history of works of Balzac*") (1880), originally an article entitled "*Comment on paye ses dettes quand on a du génie*" ("*How one pays one's debts when one has genius*"), in which his criticism turns against his friends *Honoré de Balzac*, *Théophile Gautier*, and *Gerard de Nerval*.

Baudelaire learned English in his childhood, and Gothic novels, such as Lewis's *The Monk*, became some of his favourite reading matter. In 1846 and 1847 he became acquainted with the works of Edgar Allan Poe, in which he found tales and poems which had, he claimed, long existed in his own brain but never taken shape. From this time until 1865, he was largely occupied with translating Poe's works ; his translations were widely praised. These were published as *Histoires extraordinaires* ("*Extraordinary stories*") (1852), *Nouvelles histoires extraordinaires* ("*New extraordinary stories*") (1857), *Aventures d'Arthur Gordon Pym, Eureka*, and *Histoires grotesques et sérieuses* ("*Grotesque and serious stories*") (1865). Two essays on Poe are to be found in his *Oeuvres complètes* ("*Complete works*") (Vols. V. and VI.).

His financial difficulties increased, particularly after his publisher Poulet Malassis went bankrupt in 1861, and in 1864 he left Paris for Belgium, partly in the hope of selling the rights to his works. For many years he had a long-standing relationship with a mixed-race woman, *Jeanne Duval*, whom he helped to the end of his life. He smoked opium, and in Brussels

he began to drink to excess. He suffered a massive stroke in 1866 and paralysis followed. The last two years of his life were spent in "*maisons de santé*" in Brussels and in Paris, where he died on August 31, 1867. Many of his works were published posthumously.

He is buried in the *Cimetière du Montparnasse*, Paris.

from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles\\_Baudelaire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Baudelaire)

