

“Au Lecteur”

La sottise, l'erreur, le péché, la lésine
Occupent nos esprits et travaillent nos corps,
Et nous alimentons nos aimables remords,
4 Comme les mendiants nourrissent leur vermine.

Nos péchés sont têtus, nos repentirs sont lâches;
Nous nous faisons payer grassement nos aveux,
Et nous rentrons gaîment dans le chemin bourbeux,
12 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
16 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,
20 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
24 Que nous pressons bien fort comme une vieille orange.

Dans nos cerveaux malsains, comme un million d'helminthes,
Grouille, chante et ripaille un peuple de Démons,
Et, quand nous respirons, la Mort dans nos poumons
28 S'engouffre, comme un fleuve, 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,
32 C'est que notre âme, hélas! n'est pas assez hardie.

Mais parmi les chacals, les panthères, les lyces,
Les singes, les scorpions, les vautours, les serpents,
Les monstres glapissants, hurlants, grognants, rampants,
36 Dans la ménagerie infâme de nos vices

Il en est un plus laid, plus méchant, plus immonde!
Quoiqu'il ne fasse ni grands gestes ni grands cris,
Il ferait volontiers de la terre un débris
40 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.

44 Tu le connais, lecteur, ce monstre délicat,
 — Hypocrite lecteur, — mon semblable, — mon frère!

SPLEEN ET IDÉAL

1. “Bénédiction”

4 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:

8 — «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!

12 Puisque tu m'as choisie entre toutes les femmes
 Pour être le dégoût de mon triste mari,
 Et que je ne puis rejeter dans les flammes,
 Comme un billet d'amour, ce monstre rabougri,

16 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!»

20 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.

24 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.

28 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.

32 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

36 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.

40 Sa femme va criant sur les places publiques:
«Puisqu'il me trouve belle et qu'il veut m'adorer,
Je ferai le métier des idoles antiques,
Que souvent il fallait repeindre et redorer;

44 Et je veux me soûler de nard, d'encens, de myrrhe,
De génuflexions, de viandes et de vins,
Pour savoir si je puis dans un coeur qui m'admire
Usurper en riant les hommages divins!

48 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.

52 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!»

56 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:

60 — «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!

64 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.

68 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.

72 Mais les bijoux perdus de l'antique Palmyre,
Les métaux inconnus, les perles de la mer,
Montés par votre main, 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,
 76 Ne sont que des miroirs obscurcis et plaintifs!»

“Au lecteur” [To the Reader] traces a movement downwards, while in “Bénédiction” [Blessing] the Poet aspires to ascend. Baudelaire in *Mon Coeur mis à nu* [My Heart Laid Bare] declares that these two movements are fundamental to the human soul: “Il y a dans tout homme, à toute heure, deux postulations simultanées, l’une vers Dieu, l’autre vers Satan. L’invocation à Dieu, ou spiritualité, est un désir de monter en grade; celle de Satan, ou animalité, est une joie de descendre” [There is in every man, at every moment, two simultaneous demands, one toward God, the other toward Satan. The invocation to God, or spirituality, is a desire to ascend; that to Satan, or animality, is the joy of falling] (*OC*, I: 682-83). Claude Pichois, the editor of the Pléiade edition of Baudelaire’s works, cites this passage by way of commenting on the heading “Spleen et Idéal,” which comes between “Au lecteur” and “Bénédiction.” He writes, “The meaning of the word *Spleen* is colored by the poem that immediately precedes this title, ‘Au lecteur’: not romantic melancholy, but ‘ennui’ in the theological and existential sense that Baudelaire confers on this word, a sin accompanied by remorse and moroseness” (*OC*, I: 833). Pichois could have added, but didn’t, that just as “Au lecteur” gives us a sense of what Baudelaire means by *Spleen*, “Bénédiction” gives us a sense of what he means by *Idéal*. James Lawler in *Poetry and Moral Dialectic: Baudelaire’s “Secret Architecture”* (Madison, New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1997) comes closer to saying how these first two poems oppose each other by asserting that “The world of ‘Au lecteur’ was dominated by Satan but God now”--in “Bénédiction”--“breaks into mankind’s self-indulgence” (42). Yet apart from the heaven-bound Poet the only member of the human race who is aware of God’s existence is the Poet’s mother, “pleine de blasphèmes” [full of blasphemies], who shakes her fist at the Deity. Both she and everyone else except the Poet continue in their “self-indulgence.”

Nevertheless the two poems are as precisely opposed as the two terms of the heading “Spleen et Idéal.” In “Au lecteur,” “Chaque jour *vers l’Enfer* nous descendons d’un pas” [Each day we descend a step *toward Hell*] (line 19); in “Bénédiction,” “*Vers le Ciel . . . / Le Poète* serein lève ses bras pieux” [*Toward Heaven . . . / The Poet*, serene, lifts up his pious arms] (lines 53, 54). And he will arrive up there, knowing that God reserves “une place au Poète” [a place for the Poet] (line 61) among the holy legions, that God invites him “à l’éternelle fête” [to the eternal feast] (line 63) and that a heavenly crown awaits. In “Au lecteur,” “nous rentrons *gaiment* dans le *chemin bourbeux*” [we *gaily* return to the muddy path] (line 11) that descends to Hell; in “Bénédiction,” the Poet, “*gai* comme un oiseau des bois” [*gay* as a forest bird] (line 28) follows the “*chemin de la croix*” [the way of the cross] (line 26). We--the human race--go gaily down; the Poet goes gaily up, though first passing through a path a suffering that contrasts with the muddy path of pleasure.

In both poems, impurity is a problem. We hell-bound humans are told in “Au lecteur” that we think that by the “vils pleurs” [vile tears] (line 12) of our “repentirs . . . lâches” [acts of lax repentance] (line 5) we can “laver toutes nos taches” [wash out all our stains] (line 12). But the Poet in “Bénédiction” knows that God gives “la souffrance / Comme un divin remède à nos impuretés” [suffering / As a divine remedy for our impurities] (lines 57-58).

2. “Le Soleil”

Le long du vieux faubourg, où pendent aux masures
 Les persiennes, abri des secrètes luxures,
 Quand le soleil cruel frappe à traits redoublés

5 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.

10 Ce père nourricier, ennemi des chloroses,
 Éveille dans les champs les vers comme les roses;
 Il fait s'évaporer les soucis vers le ciel,
 Et remplit les cerveaux et les ruches de miel.
 C'est lui qui rajeunit les porteurs de béquilles
 Et les rend gais et doux comme des jeunes filles,
 15 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,
 20 Dans tous les hôpitaux et dans tous les palais.

God in “Bénédiction” is the “foyer saint des rayons primitifs” [holy source of the original light beams] (line 74) from which radiates the “pure lumière” [pure light] (line 73) that will compose the Poet’s celestial crown. While still on earth, the Poet “s’enivre du soleil” [is intoxicated with the sun] which he consumes as “ambrosie” [ambrosia] and “nectar vermeil” [rosy nectar]. In the first edition of the *Fleurs du mal*, “Bénédiction” was followed, appropriately, by a hymn to the sun: “Le Soleil” [The Sun]. As in “Bénédiction,” so also in this poem the sun is a source of nourishment, a “père nourricier” [nourishing father] (line 9) who “remplit les cerveaux et les ruches de miel” [fills brains and hives with honey] (line 12). As the divine sun in “Bénédiction” makes the Poet “gai,” so too here: “C’est lui qui rajeunit les porteurs de béquilles / Et les rend gais” [It is he who rejuvenates those who carry crutches / And makes them gay] (lines 13-14). By contrast to Satan in “Au lecteur,” by whom “le riche métal de notre volonté / Est tout vaporisé” [the rich metal of our will / Is completely vaporized] (lines 15-16), the Sun “fait s’évaporer les soucis vers le ciel” [makes cares evaporate toward the sky] (line 11). Satan vaporizes our will in order to facilitate our descent “vers l’Enfer” [towards Hell] (line 19), whereas God as the Sun draws the Poet in the other direction in both “Bénédiction” (“*Vers le Ciel*, où son oeil voit un trône splendide, / Le Poète serein lève ses bras pieux” [*Toward Heaven*, where his eye sees a splendid throne, / The Poet, serene, lifts up his pious arms] [lines 53-54]) and “Le Soleil.” The Poet in “Bénédiction” becomes quasi-divine in becoming royal, receiving his “couronne mystique . . . ce beau diadème éblouissant et clair” [mystic crown . . . that beautiful diadem dazzling and bright] (lines 67, 72); in “Le Soleil,” the solar divinity, conversely, becomes like a poet in behaving like a king: “Quand, ainsi qu’un poète, il descend dans les villes, / Il ennoblit le sort des choses les plus viles, / Et s’introduit en roi” [When, like a poet, he goes down to the cities, / He enobles the lot of the vilest things, / And enters as a king] (lines 17-19).

3. “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,

- 4 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 sillannes gaïment l'immensité profonde
 8 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,
 12 Le feu clair qui remplit les espaces limpides.
- Derrière les ennuis et les sombres chagrins
 Qui chargent de leur poids l'existence brumeuse,
 Heureux celui qui peut d'une aile vigoureuse
 16 S'élancer vers les champs lumineux et sereins;
- Celui dont les penses, comme des alouettes,
 Vers les cieus le matin prennent un libre essor,
 — Qui plane sur la vie, et comprend sans effort
 20 Le langage des fleurs et des choses muettes!

The “nectar” of “Bénédiction” that became “miel” [honey] in “Le Soleil” becomes “une pure et divine liqueur” [a pure and divine liquor](line 12) in “Élévation” [Elevation]. Here the poet continues his ascent, going even “Par-delà le soleil” [beyond the sun] (line 3) into what is called in “Bénédiction” the “foyer saint des rayons primitifs” [holy source of the original light beams] (line 74) and described in “Élévation” as “Le feu clair qui *remplit* les espaces limpides” [the bright fire that *fills* the limpid spaces] (line 12). In “Le Soleil,” this nourishing and paternal Sun had the same filling effect when it “*remplit* les cerveaux et les ruches de miel” [*fills* brains and hives with honey] (line 12). In “Élévation,” the Poet continues the ascent begun in “Bénédiction” and with the same gaiety: “Mon esprit, . . . / Tu sillannes gaïment l'immensité profonde” [My mind, . . . / You gaily plow the deep immensity] (lines 5, 7) of the upper reaches of the sky. It is worth recalling just how persistent a motif this has been: “nous rentrons *gaïment* dans le chemin bourbeux” [we *gaily* return to the muddy path] (line 11) in “Au lecteur”; in “Bénédiction,” the Poet is “*gai* comme un oiseau” [gay as a bird] (line 28); the Sun in “Le Soleil” makes the crippled “*gais*” [gay] (line 14). As “soucis” [cares] in “Le Soleil” are made by the Sun to “s'évaporer . . . *vers le ciel*” [evaporate . . . *toward the sky*] (line 11) in “Élévation,” “penses, comme des alouettes, / *Vers les cieus* le matin prennent un libre essor” [thoughts, like larks, / *Towards the sky* in the morning take free flight] (lines 17-18). That prepositional phrase has been nearly as persistent as the gaiety motif. In “Bénédiction” it was the Poet who made a pious gesture “Vers le Ciel” [toward Heaven] (line 53), contrasting with those of us in “Au lecteur” who each day “vers l'Enfer” [toward Hell] (line 19) take a downward step.

4. “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
 4 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,
 8 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,
 11 – Et d'autres, corrompus, riches et triomphants,

Ayant l'expansion des choses infinies,
 Comme l'ambre, le musc, le benjoin et l'encens,
 14 Qui chantent les transports de l'esprit et des sens.

“Élévation” closes with a remarkably obvious connection to “Correspondances” [Correspondences]: “Heureux celui . . . / Qui . . . comprend sans effort / Le langage des fleurs et des choses muettes!” [Happy he . . . / Who . . . effortlessly understands / The language of flowers and mute things!]. In particular, to the beginning of that poem, where Nature is a temple from which “de confuses paroles” [confused words] can sometimes be discerned. Pichois, for instance, acknowledges the connection, noting that the language of flowers and mute things is itself the “correspondances” (*OC*, I: 838).

5. “J’aime le souvenir de ces époques nues . . .”

J'aime le souvenir de ces époques nues,
 Dont le soleil se plaît à dorer les statues.
 Alors l'homme et la femme en leur agilité
 Jouissaient sans mensonge et sans anxiété,
 5 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,
 10 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 dont il était le roi,
 Fruits purs de tout outrage et vierges de gerçures,
 Dont la chair lisse et ferme appelait les morsures!

15 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
 À l'aspect du tableau plein d'épouvantement
 20 Des monstruosités que voile un vêtement;
 Des visages manqués et plus laids que des masques;
 De tous ces pauvres corps, maigres, ventrus ou flasques,
 Que le Dieu de l'Utile, implacable et serein,
 Enfants, emmaillota dans ses langes d'airain,

25 De ces femmes, hélas! pâles comme des cierges,
 Que ronge et que nourrit la honte, et de ces vierges
 Du vice maternel traînant l'hérédité
 Et toutes les hideurs de la fécondité!

30 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
 35 De rendre à la jeunesse un hommage profond,
 — A la sainte jeunesse, à l'air simple, au doux front,
 A 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,
 40 Ses parfums, ses chansons et ses douces chaleurs!

The pattern persists in “Correspondances,” in that what is said at the end of *that* poem is what connects it to the next, “J’aime le souvenir de ces époques nues . . .” [I love the memory of those naked epochs . . .] The tercets of “Correspondances” set up an opposition between two kinds of perfumes, those that are “frais comme des chairs d’enfants” [fresh like the flesh of children] and those that are “corrompus, riches et triomphants” [corrupt, rich, and triumphant]. “J’aime le souvenir . . .” sets up an opposition between humanity in its “sainte jeunesse” [holy youth], its “époques nues” [naked epochs], and the humanity of the 19th century that is so ugly and out of shape it has to wear clothes. There is a correspondence between these oppositions and those in “Correspondances.” At first glance that might seem unlikely, since Baudelaire so highly praises humanity’s youth and so damns its present, while condemning neither sort of perfume. Yet he has more to say about the present state of the human race:

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.

[It is true that we, corrupt nations, have
 Beauties unknown to the ancients:
 Faces eaten away by cankers of the heart,
 And what one might call beauties of languor.]

Is he serious about this? Pichois thought not, saying of “this expression in all likelihood is meant ironically” (*OC*, I: 847). But F. W. Leakey argues convincingly that Baudelaire really did find “authentic beauty . . . in modern life” (*Baudelaire and Nature*, 58). In fact, Leakey finds this part of the poem so out of character with the rest that he suspects “these lines to have been intended originally for some quite separate poem” (58), and that the result is “the signal incoherence of the poem’s structure” (59). In the *Salon de 1846*, as he notes, Baudelaire wrote of “un élément nouveau, qui est la beauté moderne” [a new element, which is modern beauty] (*OC*, II: 496). This comes at the end of a passage in which the poet finds other instances of modern beauty in the defiance of a government minister before his critics and in the courage of a condemned criminal before the guillotine. Pichois, who thinks Baudelaire was being ironic in praising modern beauty

in the poem, did not think he is being ironic in the *Salon*, but argues in light of that apparent contradiction argues that the poem must date from before 1846. But the fact is that the *Fleurs du mal* date from 1857 and are not, as Baudelaire emphasized in a letter to Alfred de Vigny, “un pur album” [just an album] (*Correspondance*, II: 196). They are not just a collection of the poems he had written up until that date. Rather, the poems form “une ténébreuse et profonde unité” [a shadowy and deep unity]--to borrow the language of “Correspondances”--of blending echoes. In “Correspondances” those echoes come “de loin” [from a distance]. But in the *Fleurs du mal* they also come from right next door. The two kinds of perfumes, which, as Pichois aptly notes, form “a relationship of opposition between innocence and corruption” (*OC*, I: 847), correspond with precision to the two ages of man, the “parfums frais comme des chairs d’enfants” [perfumes fresh like the flesh of children] to the fleshy childhood of the “époques nues” [naked epochs], to that innocent time when “sans mensonge et sans anxiété” [without lies and without anxiety] men and women were clothed only in their skin; and the other perfumes, “corrompus” [corrupted], correspond to the modern age of “nations corrompues” [corrupted nations], not simple but complex, not young but old. Pichois, without realizing it, put his finger on what unites the two poems, what makes one the mirror of the other (or at least the second the mirror of the tercets of the first), for the two epochs, naked and clothed, are likewise to each other in ““a relationship of opposition between innocence and corruption.”

6. “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,
4 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
8 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,
12 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
16 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,
20 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

- 24 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
- 28 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
- 32 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;
- 36 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,
- 40 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 ce long hurlement qui roule d'âge en âge,
- 44 Et vient mourir au bord de votre éternité!

Despite their different subjects--perfumes and human history--there is something that persists as we move from “Correspondances” and “J’aime le souvenir” The same phenomenon takes place *within* “Les Phares” [The Beacons], in fact is the argument itself of the poem. From Rubens to da Vinci to Rembrandt to Michelangelo to Puget to Watteau to Goya to Delacroix, despite the varying subjects evoked by their artistic production (“malédictions, . . . blasphèmes, . . . plaintes, / . . . extases, . . . cris, . . . pleurs, . . . Te Deum” [curses, . . . blasphemies, . . . complaints, / . . . extasies, . . . cries, . . . tears, . . . Te Deums]), the narrator sees but a single “écho redit” [restated echo], a single “cri répété” [repeated cry], a single “ordre renvoyé” [order relayed], a single “long hurlement qui roule d’âge en âge” [long wail rolling from age to age]. But at the same time as this assertion parallels the relationship of sameness-despite-difference that exists between “Correspondances” and “J’aime le souvenir” it is nevertheless the opposite of what takes place within the latter poem. For according to its argument there is no continuity “d’âge en âge” [from age to age], between the “époques nues” [naked epochs] and the corrupted present. Things were absolutely different then from what they are now. In other words, “Les Phares” and “J’aime le souvenir” are to each other as are the two ages in the latter and the two sorts of perfumes in “Correspondances”--as opposites.

7. “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 réfléchies sur ton teint

- 4 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,
8 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,
11 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,
14 Phoebus, et le grand Pan, le seigneur des moissons.

But then “La Muse malade” [The Ailing Muse] takes toward the two different ages of “J’aime le souvenir . . .” an attitude akin to that expressed toward two different ages in “Les Phares,” expressing the wish that the pagan past and the sickly present could somehow coexist. In the tercets, the poet “would like that, exhaling the fragrance of health,” his Muse’s “breast be always frequented by strong thoughts,” that her “Christian blood flow in rhythmic waves, / Like the measured sounds of ancient syllables, / Where alternately reign the father of songs, / Phebus, and the great god Pan, lord of harvests.”

The idea of mixing the pagan with the Christian was already broached in “Les Phares” in the stanza devoted to Michelangelo: “lieu vague où l’on voit des Hercules / Se mêler à des Christs” [vague region where one sees Herculeses / Mix with Christs]. As Antoine Adam notes, both “La Muse malade” and “J’aime le souvenir . . .” are based “on the opposition between a strong and healthy primitive epoch and the modern epoch, in which degenerate man falls into folly and horror. The modern muse is an ailing muse” (Garnier ed., 283n). Nevertheless some of the details of the muse’s condition seem to come out of paintings described in “Les Phares”: the narrator sees reflected on her coloration “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 . . . / T’a-t-il noyée . . .?” [Cold and taciturn madness and horror. // The greenish succubus and the rosy elf, / Have they poured your fear and love from their urns? / The nightmare . . . / Has it drowned you . . .?] The nightmare recalls “Goya, --*cauchemar*” [Goya, -- *nightmare*]; the “folie” and the pouring recall Watteau, where “des lustres . . . *versent la folie* à ce bal tournoyant” [chandeliers . . . *poured madness* onto this whirling dance]; the colors of “Le succube verdâtre et le rose lutin” recall those so prevalent in the stanza devoted to Delacroix: “lac de sang . . . / Ombragé par un bois de sapins toujours vert” [lake of blood . . . / Shaded by a forest of pines ever green]. Commenting on these lines, Baudelaire drew out the importance of red and green as complementary colors (OC, II: 535; noted by Pichois, OC, I: 854).

8. “Le 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 guères,

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.

While in “La Muse malade” the Poet wants his muse to adapt her Christian blood to pagan music, in “La Muse vénale” [The Venal Muse] he acknowledges the necessity this the muse sing Christian music: “Il te faut . . . / Chanter des *Te Deum* auxquels tu ne crois guères” [You have to . . . / Sing *Te Deums* in which you hardly believe]. In a kind of chiasmus, Christian identity is combined in one poem with non-Christian (i. e., pagan) song, while in the other, Christian song is combined with a non-Christian identity. The poems are opposed in that in “La Muse malade” the direction to be taken is from Christian to non-Christian, but in “La Muse vénale” the movement is from non-Christian to Christian.

Apart from that, the two muses are remarkably similar. Both suffer or will suffer from the cold: the poet can see reflected in the skin (“ton teint” [your coloration]) of the ailing muse “froides” [cold] folly and horror; he asks the venal muse what she will do when January’s wind and snow arrive. He asks if the winter sky’s “nocturnes rayons” [nocturnal rays] are able to bring back to life her “épaules marbrées” [shoulders turned to marble], echoing the “visions nocturnes” [nocturnal visions] that gave the ailing muse her hollow-eyed look.

9. “Le Mauvais Moine”

Les cloîtres anciens sur leurs grandes murailles
Étalaien en tableaux la sainte Vérité,
Dont l'effet réchauffant les pieuses entrailles
4 Tempéraient 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,
8 Glorifiait la Mort avec simplicité.

— Mon âme est un tombeau que, mauvais cénobite,
Depuis l'éternité je parcours et j'habite;
11 Rien n'embellit les murs de ce cloître odieux.

O moine fainéant! quand saurai-je donc faire
Du spectacle vivant de ma triste misère
14 Le travail de mes mains et l'amour de mes yeux!

Chilliness continues to be a problem in “Le Mauvais Moine” [The Bad Monk], where ancient cloister walls “Étalaien en tableaux la sainte Vérité, / Dont l'effet réchauffant les pieuses

entrailles / Tempéraient la froideur de leur austérité” [Displayed in paintings the holy Truth, / Whose effect, warming pious entrails, / Tempered the coldness of their austerity]. That “rechauffant” recalls the “chauffer” of “Auras-tu . . . / Un tison pour chauffer tes deux pieds violets?” [Will you have . . . / A log to warm your two violet feet?]. In an intriguing inversion, what the cloister walls did when they “Étalait” the holy Truth is what the Poet sees his muse being obliged to do: “étaler tes appas / Et ton rire trempé de pleurs qu’on ne voit pas” [display your charms / And your laughter soaked with tears they cannot see], earning her living by amusing the vulgar. So that what is “étalé” [displayed] in one poem is the holy Truth, but in the other a lie, whether it be the laughter with unseen tears that contradict it or the Te Deums in which the singer does not believe.

Belief versus non-belief is at issue in “Le Mauvais Moine” too, for the poet looks back to the age of belief, to “ces temps où du Christ florissaient les semailles” [those times when what Christ sowed flourished], when a monk could be warmed by paintings that proclaimed a holy Truth. Alas, that was then and this is now. The poet is the bad monk of the title, unable to fulfill that role, his soul a tomb, an odious cloister where “Rien n’embellit les murs” [Nothing embellishes the walls]. Apparently an unbelieving monk, since the paintings that are missing on his walls would be those depicting the holy Truth, he criticizes himself as well for being a “moine fainéant” [a do-nothing monk], and asks himself when will he finally transform the spectacle of his misery into “le travail de mes mains” [the work of my hands]--the work of poetic creation.

Of course, he is doing that here, and each of these poems builds not only on the one that immediately precedes it but also on the one before that, and often on several before. As the Te Deums the venal muse must sing in poem number 8 (“La Muse vénale”) recall the Te Deums in poem number 6 (“Les Phares”: “Ces extases, ses cris, ces pleurs, ces Te Deum, / Sont un écho” [These ecstasies, these cries, these tears, these Te Deums, / Are an echo]), so too does poem 9 (“Le Mauvais Moine”) repeat a theme essential to poem 6 (“La Muse malade”), though it inverts it, too. It is the theme of an earlier, more vigorous age versus a sickly present (the theme as well of poem 5 [“J’aime le souvenir . . .”]). The “Muse malade” lacks the “odeur de la santé” [fragrance of health] and the “pensers forts” [strong thoughts] of ancient pagan times, as the “mauvais cénobite” [bad cenobite] the poet is lacks the strong faith his predecessor monks had. The irony of it is that the muse’s weakness comes from her being too Christian (being afflicted with “sang chrétien”) whereas the poet’s comes from not being Christian enough.

Thanks to a consistent play of opposites from one poem to the next, it happens that every other poem in the sequence running from “J’aime le souvenir . . .” to “Le Mauvais Moine” actually come close to saying the same thing. In “J’aime le souvenir . . .” (poem 5), “La Muse malade” (7), and “Le Mauvais Moine” (9) there is a regrettable disparity between the healthy vigor of the past and the sickliness of the present. In “Les Phares” (6) and “La Muse vénale” (8) there is no such problem, either because the claim is made that artistic production from age to age has all been saying the same thing (in 6) or because the past is simply not an issue (in 8).

10. “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
4 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,

8 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
 11 Le mystique aliment qui ferait leur vigueur?

— O douleur! ô douleur! Le Temps mange la vie,
 Et l'obscur Ennemi qui nous ronge le coeur
 14 Du sang que nous perdons croît et se fortifie!

The issue is given a new formulation in “L’Ennemi” [The Enemy], where vigor is to be found in the future, not the past. The poet asks if the new flowers of which he dreams “Will find in this earth washed like a beach /The mystic food that would give them vigor.” The “fleurs nouvelles” are, of course, the *Fleurs du mal*, the poems that he hopes will grow in his storm-ravaged garden, once he has gone to work with “la pelle et les râteaux / Pour rassembler à neuf les terres inondées, / Où l’eau creuse des trous grands comme des tombeaux” [shovel and rakes, / To gather together anew the inundated grounds, / Where water hollows out holes as big as tombs]. In “Le Mauvais Moine” he found that “Mon âme est un tombeau” [My soul is a tomb]. If he can fill in the tombs in the garden of his soul in “L’Ennemi” and if he can find the mystical food that will nourish his dreamed-of new flowers, he will in effect achieve what seemed but an dubious hope in “Le Mauvais Moine”: by the work of his hands (that is, it appears, with “pelle” and râteaux”) to create the equivalent of what used to take place in those when what Christ sowed flourished. These two poems trace the passage from the flowering of what Christ sowed to the flowers the poet dreams of writing.

11. “Le Guignon”

Pour soulever un poids si lourd,
 Sisyphe, il faudrait ton courage!
 Bien qu'on ait du coeur à l'ouvrage,
 4 L'Art est long et le Temps est court.

Loin des sépultures célèbres,
 Vers un cimetière isolé,
 Mon coeur, comme un tambour voilé,
 8 Va battant des marches funèbres.

— Maint joyau dort enseveli
 Dans les ténèbres et l'oubli,
 11 Bien loin des pioches et des sondes;

Mainte fleur épanche à regret
 Son parfum doux comme un secret
 14 Dans les solitudes profondes.

The “pelle” and “râteaux” [shovel and rakes] the poet must employ to make his garden grow, and those new flowers appear, are matched in “Le Guignon” [Rotten Luck] by the “pioches” and “sondes” [picks and sounding lines (or drills)] that would have to be used to unearth “Maint joyau” [Many a gem] that “dort enseveli / Dans les ténèbres et l’oubli” [sleeps buried / In

shadows and oblivion]. Appropriately those gems in the first tercet are paralleled in the second by “Mainte fleur” that “épanche à regret / Son parfum doux . . . / Dans les solitudes profondes” [spreads, to its regret, / Its sweet perfume . . . / In deep solitudes]. So the “fleurs nouvelles” the poet dreams of producing by working the earth with shovel and rake in “L’Ennemi” are paralleled by the flowers that bloom unused in the manner of jewels that can be brought to light by working with picks and sounding lines--or drills: “sondes” can mean either. In the word’s only other appearance, in “Le Balcon” [The Balcony], it clearly means the former: “d’un gouffre interdit à nos sondes” [from an abyss forbidden to our sounding lines]. To the extent that Baudelaire is reflecting his source, Thomas Gray’s “Elegy Written in a Country Church-yard,” the meaning is more likely to be the same as in “Le Balcon.” The relevant word in Gray’s poem is “unfathomed”: “Full many a gem of purest ray serene / The dark, unfathom’d caves of ocean bear.”

But that the gems may be buried underwater is not without relevance to the garden in “L’Ennemi,” for it is under water too, “les terres inondées . . . ce sol lavé comme une grève” [inundated terrain . . . earth washed like a beach]. The work he must perform to restore the garden is enormous--Sisyphian, as he says in “Le Guignon,” where Art is long and Time is short. Time is short in “L’Ennemi” too: “Le Temps mange la vie” [Time eats life], and Art and Time are thus at odds there as well, for if the “fleurs nouvelles” are to pass from dream to reality, there is work to be done. It is spade work in both poems, though in one garden dirt must be gathered together for the flowers to grow, while in the other the gems--that is, the flowers--must be dug up. The two poems offer two competing versions of the origin of the *Fleurs du mal*: flowers cultivated vs. flowers rescued from oblivion.

12. “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,
 4 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
 8 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 flots et des splendeurs
 11 Et des esclaves nus, tout imprégnés d’odeurs,

Qui me rafraîchissaient le front avec des palmes,
 Et dont l’unique soin était d’approfondir
 14 Le secret douloureux qui me faisait languir.

“La Vie antérieure” [The Former Life] offers a third. The flowers, which in “L’Ennemi” were something the poet could find a way to nourish in his rain-flooded garden, and which in “Le Guignon” were likened to gems awaiting discovery in an ocean cave, now become the poet himself, who inhabits what he likens to an ocean cave: “J’ai longtemps habité sous de vastes portiques / Que les soleils marins teignaient . . . / Et que leurs grands piliers . . . / Rendaient pareils, le soir, aux grottes basaltiques.” [I have long lived beneath vast porticoes / That marine suns tinted . . . / And made their tall pillars . . . / Resemble, in the evening, basaltic grottoes]. And

who is assisted by slaves “dont l’unique soin” [whose only task] is “d’approfondir” [to deepen] his “secret douloureux” [painful secret]. Baudelaire’s word linkages underscore this conclusion: “d’approfondir / Le secret” in the second tercet of “La Vie antérieure” parallels “Son parfum doux comme un secret / Dans les solitudes profondes” [Its sweet perfume like a secret / In deep solitudes] in the second tercet of “Le Guignon.” *Approfondir* means both to deepen and to get to the bottom of, to learn more about something by going deeper into it. In any case, the “secret” is deep, like the buried jewel, and like the flower’s perfume it is “secret.” The flowers and the gems in “Le Guignon” are things the poet might come into possession of by dint of hard work, and are far off, whereas their equivalent in “La Vie antérieure” is within the poet himself.

13. “Bohédiens 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
 4 Le trésor toujours prêt des mamelles pendantes.

Les hommes vont à pied sous leurs armes luisantes
 Le long des chariots ou les leurs sont blottis,
 Promenant sur le ciel des yeux appesantis
 8 Par le morne regret des chimères absentes.

Du fond de son réduit sablonneux, le grillon,
 Les regardant passer, redouble sa chanson;
 11 Cybèle, qui les aime, augmente ses verdurees,

Fait couler le rocher et fleurir le désert
 Devant ces voyageurs, pour lesquels est ouvert
 14 L’empire familial des ténèbres futures.

“Bohédiens en voyage” [Traveling Gypsies] offers yet another kind of flowering: “Cybèle . . . / Fait couler le rocher et fleurir le désert” [Cybele . . . / Makes water flow from the rock and the desert *to flower*] for the wandering tribe. The flowers in “Le Guignon” bloomed in a wilderness; likewise, flowers here spring up in a desert. The poet in “La Vie antérieure” had a past he recalled with sadness (“Le secret douloureux qui me faisait languir” [The painful secret that makes me languish]); so too the Gypsy men, “Promenant sur le ciel des yeux appesantis / Par le morne regret des chimères absentes” [Gazing at the sky with eyes weighed down / By the doleful regret for absent chimera]. The parallel between their “regret” and the poet’s “secret” is corroborated by the rhyming linkage those words display in “Le Guignon”: “Mainte fleur épanche à regret / Son parfum doux comme un secret” [Many a flower spreads, to its regret, / Its sweet perfume like a secret]. The first thing we learn about the gypsies--“La tribu prophétique aux prunelles ardentes” [The prophetic tribe with burning eyes]--is that they have fire in their eyes; so too did the poet in “La Vie antérieure,” where marine suns tinted the vast porticoes “de mille feux” [with a thousand fires] and those suns’ “couleurs” [colors] were reflected “par mes yeux” [by my eyes]. The Gypsies stare at the sky (“Promenant sur le ciel des yeux appesantis”), paralleling the poet’s visual contact with the “couleurs du couchant” [colors of the setting sun]. As his contemplation was given a musical accompaniment, “Les tout puissants accords” [The all-powerful harmonies] of the “riche musique” [rich music] of the ocean’s swell, so too was the

travelers' sky-gazing: "le grillon, / Les regardant passer, redouble sa chanson" [the cricket, / Seeing them pass, intensifies his song].

Nature smiles upon them, through the cricket and Cybele (who was similarly generous to the naked humanity of an earlier epoch in "J'aime le souvenir . . ."). Baudelaire cannot count on receiving the same treatment, so the "fleurs nouvelles" he dreams of will have to come from his own toil.

14. "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,
 4 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 coeur
 Se distrait quelquefois de sa propre rumeur
 8 Au bruit de cette plainte indomptable et sauvage.

Vous êtes tous les deux ténébreux et discrets:
 Homme, nul ne connaît le fond de tes abîmes;
 O mer, nul ne connaît tes richesses intimes,
 12 Tant vous êtes jaloux de garder vos secrets!

Et cependant voilà des siècles innombrables
 Que vous vous combattez sans pitié ni remord,
 Tellement vous aimez le carnage et la mort,
 16 O lutteurs éternels, ô frères implacables!

"L'Homme et la Mer" [The Man and the Sea] combines elements from the two poems that precede it. As the poet did in "La Vie antérieure," the protagonist here also stares at the sea; like the Gypsies, he is free, an "Homme libre" [free man] as the poem's first words declare (its original title was "L'Homme libre et la mer" [The Free Man and Sea]). Pichois calls freedom "a tie between" the two poems (*OC*, I: 867), and notes that Baudelaire "envies the freedom" that Gypsies enjoy (*OC*, I: 864). Like the poet in "La Vie antérieure," the protagonist here (as well as the sea, of whom each is the other's mirror reflection) has a secret: "Tant vous"--both the man and the sea--"êtes jaloux de garder vos secrets!" [So jealous are you both to guard your secrets]. Pichois is right to connect that line to the tercets of "Le Guignon" (*OC*, I: 867), where many a jewel lies buried (perhaps in a sea cave, as in Gray's original) and many a flower spreads its sweet scent "comme un secret" [like a secret] in an unfrequented wilderness. "Homme, nul ne connaît le fond de tes abîmes; / O mer, nul ne connaît tes richesses intimes" [Man, no one knows the depth of your abysses; / O sea, no one knows your intimate riches]: though the poet with the help of the naked slaves seeks to know the "fond" [depth] of his secret.

15. "Don Juan aux Enfers"

Quand Don Juan descendit vers l'onde souterraine,
 Et lorsqu'il eut donné son obole à Charon,

4 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,
8 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 le rivage
12 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
16 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
20 Regardait le sillage et ne daignait rien voir.

The theme of a musical accompaniment, appearing in “La Vie antérieure” as “Les tout puissants accords” of the ocean’s “riche musique” and in “Bohémiens en voyage” as the cricket’s “chanson,” is transformed in “L’Homme et la mer” into an accompanying noise of complaint, the “bruit de cette plainte indomptable et sauvage” [noise of that untamable wild complaint] produced, as in “La Vie antérieure,” by the ocean. In “Don Juan aux Enfers” [Don Juan in Hell] it returns as the “long mugissement” [long moaning] that the seducer’s victims “Derrière lui traînaient” [Behind him were moaning] when Don Juan “descendit vers l’onde souterraine” [descended towards the underground waters]. His descent to the river he will cross in Charon’s boat recombines the two elements of descent and water that were present in “L’Homme et la Mer.” The sea is a “gouffre” [abyss] into which, as the narrator says to his protagonist, “Tu te plais à plonger” [You love to plunge]. The man in that poem goes down *into* the water; Don Juan goes down *to* the water. The man stares at the water: “La mer est ton miroir; tu contemples ton âme / Dans le déroulement infini de sa lame” [The sea is your mirror; you contemplate your soul / In the infinite unfolding of its wave]. Don Juan stared at the water too, gazing down at the wake trailing the boat, paying no attention to anything else, to neither his victims displaying their breasts nor the dead wandering the shore, nor Sganarelle, nor Elvire: “le calme héros courbé sur sa rapière / Regardait le sillage et ne daignait rien voir” [the calm hero bent over his rapier / Gazed at the wake and deigned to see nothing].

16. “Chatiment 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,
5 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,
 10 S'écria, transporté d'un orgueil satanique:
 «Jésus, petit Jésus! je t'ai porté 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!»
- 15 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.
 20 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,
 25 Sale, inutile et laid comme une chose usée,
 Il faisait des enfants la joie et la risée.

Those last two words (“rien voir”) constitute a transition to “Chatiment de l'orgueil” [Punishment of Pride], in which the theologian who loses his reason after boasting that he could have as easily attacked Jesus as exalted him wanders about “sans rien voir” [seeing nothing], oblivious to his surroundings. His obliviousness parallels Don Juan's, yet is its opposite, for the latter is aware of his fate, and is intentionally oblivious: he *deigns* not to see. Both are punished, apparently by God's hand. Their punishments are strangely similar: are their transgressions likewise? James Lawler contends that both are guilty of the sin of pride (Lawler, 51). While this is obviously the case with the theologian, “transporté d'un orgueil satanique” [carried away by a Satanic pride], “Don Juan aux enfers” does not actually attribute pride to its protagonist. The only person so described is the “sombre mendiant, l'oeil fier” [somber beggar with a prideful eye] who rows the boat, an allusion to the mendicant in Molière's play, who Don Juan tries to bribe to make him blaspheme God. The only descriptors attached to Don Juan are “”fils audacieux” [brazen son], “époux perfide” [perfidious husband], and “calme héros” [calm hero]. Molière's Don Juan may be prideful, but we cannot say the same of Baudelaire's.

Yet a closer look at the poems suggests another connection. What was the theologian saying when disaster struck?

« Jesus, petit Jésus! je t'ai porté 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.

[“Jesus, little Jesus! I carried you very high!
 But if I had wanted to attack you through the chink
 In your armor, your shame would equal your glory,

And you would be nothing more than a pathetic fetus.”

Immediately his reason left him.]

The chink in the armor (in the manner of the one in the wall between Pyramus and Thisbe in *The Midsummer Night's Dream*) provides a opening into the neighboring poem, for there too was armor: “Tout droit dans son armure, un grand homme de pierre / Se tenait à la barre” [Erect in his armor, a tall man of stone / Stood at the helm]. This is the Commander, who invited Don Juan to dinner and dragged him into hell. Thus the protagonist in both poems is brought to his downfall by someone wearing armor, the Commander in one poem, Jesus in the other. But of course Jesus didn't really wear armor, only in the theologian's turn of phrase. But he didn't wear armor either in Baudelaire's probable source for this anecdote, the article by Saint-René Taillandier in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* of 15 October 1848 that Pichois quotes in its entirety (OCI, 870n). So it was Baudelaire who added it, evidently to make a connection to the immediately following “Don Juan aux enfers.” *Armure* can be found in no other poem in the *Fleurs du mal*.

That he forges that link invites us to consider a possible analogy between one armor-clad character and the other. In attacking Jesus, the theologian was attacking God the Father, given the identity Christian theology posits between the two; Don Juan sinned against his father as well, who “avec un doigt tremblant / Montrait . . . / Le fils audacieux qui railla son front blanc” [with a trembling finger / Pointed out . . . / The brazen son who had mocked his white brow]. The Commander is a father figure Don Juan does succeed in killing, though in the end he returns the favor.

As Michel Quesnel writes in *Baudelaire solaire et clandestin* (Paris: PUF, 1987), “the Commander presents the figure of the punishing father who holds the tiller of Don Juan's destiny” (Quesnel, 135). Quesnel also notes, as we do, the close connection between these two poems: “‘Châtiment de l'orgueil’ follows close upon, is the consequence of, ‘Don Juan aux enfers,’ of the posthumous accusation made by Don Louis, of the silent menace of the Commander. The calm hero falls into a stupor, enveloped with solar grief: ‘Immédiatement sa raison s'en alla. / L'éclat de ce soleil d'un crêpe se voila’ [Immediately his reason left him. / The lustre of this sun veiled itself in crepe]” (Quesnel, 175-76). The “silent hero” is Don Juan; the man whose reason leaves him is the theologian: Quesnel sees, as we do, that it is the same protagonist. Like us, he sees the sun in *Les Fleurs du mal* as the father.

17. “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
4 Éternel 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,
8 Et jamais je ne pleure et jamais je ne ris.

Les poètes devant mes grandes attitudes,
Qu'on dirait que j'emprunte aux plus fiers monuments,
11 Consumeront leurs jours en d'austères études;

Car j'ai pour fasciner ces dociles amants
 De purs miroirs qui font les étoiles plus belles:
 14 Mes yeux, mes larges yeux aux clartés éternelles!

“La Beauté” [Beauty] asserts that her breast inspires in the poet “un amour / Éternel et muet ainsi que la matière” [a love / As eternal and mute as matter]. As Mario Richter observes, this is in “contradiction with the normal nature of the ‘poet,’ which is that of expressing himself, of speaking” (*Baudelaire: Les Fleurs du mal: Lecture intégrale*, 168). If a poet is consigned to silence, does he cease to be a poet? While this apparent contradiction may remain a mystery as long as we confine our attention to this poem, by reading the *Fleurs du mal* as itself a poem, and thus enlarging our view to take in the immediately preceding “Chatiment de l’orgueil,” we can see that the poet’s fate, however strange, does parallel the theologian’s. For he too was consigned to silence: “Le silence et la nuit s’installèrent en lui” [Silence and night took up residence in him]. The poet’s muteness was like that of matter; so too the theologian’s. He became like a thing: “Sale, inutile et laid comme une chose usée” [dirty, useless, and ugly, like a used-up thing].

Enlarging our view a little more to take in the fate of Don Juan, that in its own way parallels the theologian’s, and recalling that the seducer’s downfall was the result of his confrontation with an “homme de pierre” [man of stone], we can see the relevance of Beauty’s self-description as “un rêve de pierre” [a dream of stone]. A woman of stone, and with breasts of stone, she is to the poet as the man of stone is to Don Juan--and as a punishing God is to the theologian. Yet while she does to the poet what God does to the theologian to the extent that she him into a mute thing, she is not exacting punishment but inspiring love. Baudelaire makes a fascinating change to the poem in the 1861 that has the effect of creating an opposing symmetry between what happens to the theologian and what happens to the poet. In line 13 “les étoiles” become “toutes choses,” thereby setting up a resonance between this penultimate line and the penultimate line in “Chatiment de l’orgueil”: “Sale, inutile et laid comme une chose usée” [dirty, useless, and ugly, like a used-up thing]. To counter this “laid[e] . . . chose” [ugly . . . thing] (and perhaps God’s making it so) Beauty’s response is to make “toutes choses plus belles” [all things more beautiful].

18. “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,
 4 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
 8 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,
 11 Rêve d’Eschyle éclos au climat des autans;

Ou bien toi, grande Nuit, fille de Michel-Ange,
 Qui tors paisiblement dans une pose étrange

14 Tes appas façonnés aux bouches des Titans!

Beauty is a topic in both “La Beauté” and “L’Idéal” [The Ideal], though it is approached in different ways. In the former, Beauty is depicted as a woman with certain characteristics: she is like a dream of stone; she combines “un coeur de neige à la blancheur des cygnes” [a heart of snow with the whiteness of swans]; she hates “le mouvement qui déplace les lignes” [movement that displaces lines]; her “grandes attitudes” [grand poses] are borrowed “aux plus fiers monuments” [from the proudest of monuments]. In “L’Idéal” the poet speaks of those “beautés” [beauties] that are not to his taste, and then of those who are. Certain “beautés de vignettes” [vignette beauties] would never satisfy a heart like his, nor would certain anemic “beautés d’hôpital” [hospital beauties], roses too “pâles” [pale] to approach his “rouge idéal” [red ideal]. But Lady Macbeth, “Rêve d’Eschyle éclos au climat des autans” [dream of Aeschylus born in a stormy clime] would, and so also “toi, grande Nuit, fille de Michel-Ange, / Qui tors paisiblement dans une pose étrange / Tes appas façonnés aux bouches des Titans!” [you, great Night, daughter of Michelangelo, / Who peacefully twist into a strange pose / Your charms shaped by Titans’ mouths].

On the one hand, these two visions of beauty seem to be at odds. Baudelaire detests the whiteness--the pallor--of the hospital beauties, yet the Beauty he admires in the other poem is doubly white, combining snow with the whiteness of swans. As Mario Richter writes, the Ideal in the second poem hardly “coincides with the image that Beauty has just given of herself” in the first (Richter, 175), his “red ideal” being “certainly quite different” from her “cold white beauty” (Richter, 179).

But on the other hand, Beauty’s stony breasts are matched by Night’s. For Night, being a statue in the Medici Chapel in Florence is really made of stone, and Baudelaire focuses on draws out attention to her breasts. He names them as “appas” [charms], but then says there were fashioned by (or for) the mouths of Titans. In Greek mythology, Night is the mother of the Titans. The latter, able to take their nourishment there, have better luck than those in the poem before, brusing themselves in vain against a stony breast. Michelangelo depicts Night asleep, giving new resonance to the “*rêve de pierre*” [*dream of stone*] in which Beauty is enveloped in the poem before, for if she is asleep this stone statue may indeed be dreaming. Yet the first two-thirds of the phrase “*rêve de pierre*” is evoked as well in the other feminine ideal, Lady Macbeth: “*Rêve d’Eschyle*” [*dream of Aeschylus*]. In no other poem of the *Fleurs du mal* does the phrase “*rêve*” (as a noun) + “*de*” appear. Thus do the two feminine ideals, Lady Macbeth and Night, seem to emerge from the “*rêve de pierre*” that Beauty proclaims herself to be.

Beauty’s assertion that she hates “le mouvement qui déplace les lignes” [movement that displaces lines] has proved puzzling to readers (e.g, does the “qui” introduce a restrictive or nonrestrictive clause?), but we may miss its full meaning if we neglect to consider how it resonates with Michelangelo’s statue. Twisted into a strange pose (“Qui tors paisiblement dans une pose étrange / Tes appas”), its lines are displaced from where they would have been in a more natural position. The body, despite its slumber, is under tension, movement frozen in stone.

19. “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.

At the end of “La Géante” [The Giantess] Baudelaire effects a precise reversal of the situation with which “L’Idéal” concludes. There, we were told of giants--the Titans--at the breasts of a non-giant; but now the narrator wants to sleep beneath the breasts of a giantess: “Dormir nonchalamment à l’ombre de ses seins, / Comme un hameau paisible au pied d’une montagne” [To sleep nonchalantly in the shadow of her breasts, / Like a peaceful hamlet at the foot of a mountain]. Despite the reversal, the sleepers are peaceful in both poems: Night sleeps in a strange, twisting pose, but “paisiblement” so; the poet wishes he were a “hameau paisible” beneath those breasts. These are the only appearances of either word in the *Fleurs*.

The other female figure in “La Géante,” Mother Nature, recalls the other feminine ideal, Lady Macbeth; both are “puissante” [powerful], a word that appears (in the feminine singular) only in these two poems: Lady Macbeth was “puissante en crime”; in an earlier era Nature “en sa verve puissante” [in her powerful vigor] gave birth to such monsters as the giantess. In a perhaps ironic reversal, while in both poems there are two women, one a mother (Night, Mother Nature), the other not, it is the distinctly unmotherly Lady Macbeth who is linked by her *puissance* to the mother in “La Géante.”

20. “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 Maures.

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 avec 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
A 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!

“Les Bijoux” [The Jewels] followed “La Géante” in the 1857 edition, though readers today find it in “Les Épaves,” among the poems Baudelaire was obliged to delete because of their alleged obscenity. The third stanza could be read as a retelling of the last tercet of “La Géante” (or vice versa). In both passages, the poet is looking from below at a woman (the giantess, his jewel-bedecked mistress) who is herself lying down. He imagines that the heat of the sun makes the giantess “s'étendre à travers la campagne” [stretch out across the countryside], and that he can take shelter beneath her breasts like a hamlet “au pied d'une montagne” [at the foot of a mountain]. In “Les Bijoux” the poet's mistress is “couchée . . . / 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” [lying down . . . / And from the top of the couch she smiled with pleasure / At my love, deep and gentle as the sea / That towards her ascended as if toward its cliff]. The giantess is a mountain; the mistress is a cliff. He is looking up at the giantess because her size makes her so much higher; in “Les Bijoux” he appears to be on the floor, gazing up at the woman stretched out on the couch.

Both the giantess and the woman on the couch are monstrous, in different ways. Because of her gigantism, the former is one of Nature's “enfants monstrueux” [monstrous children]. The latter seems the product of a “nouveau dessin” [new design], male from the waist up, female from the waist down: “Je croyais voir unis par un nouveau dessin / Les hanches de l'Antiope au buste d'un imberbe” [I believed I was seeing, by some new design, / The hips of an Antiope united with the chest of a beardless youth]. Her skin is of a “teint fauve et brun . . . couleur d'ambre” [tawny and brown tint . . . amber-colored], and consequently most scholars believe that the poem refers to Jeanne Duval, the poet's mulatto mistress. But from the drawings he made of her, as well as the testimony of others (including Nadar, who had been her lover before Baudelaire [Claude Pichois and Jean Ziegler, *Baudelaire*, Paris: Julliard, 1987, p. 181]), we know that she was not flat-chested. Antoine Adam at one point cites the “buste d'un imberbe” as a reason for concluding that the poem is not about her (p. 432--though, strangely, elsewhere says that it is [304]). Yet the poem is even in contradiction with itself this regard, for two stanzas earlier, she does have breasts: “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” [her belly and her breasts,

those grape-clusters of my vine, // Came forward, more tempting than the angels of evil, / To disturb the repose of my soul].

Although not therefore entirely in harmony with itself, “Les Bijoux” is by this very lack of harmony harmonizing with “La Géante.” For in both poems the woman who occupies the speaker’s attention is a monstrosity. In other words, “Les Bijoux” can really only be understood in the context of “La Géante.”

21. “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 marinières.

Jeanne Duval is generally thought to be the inspiration for “Parfum exotique” [Exotic Perfume], as well as for the next several poems. But the kinds of interrelationships we are discovering here between poems is independent of that supposed common referent.

In “Parfum exotique” the narrator breathes in the scent of his mistress’s breast, and in his imagination is transported to a tropical harbor. This poem and its predecessor are each the complement of the other in this sense: In “Parfum exotique” he imagines seeing what in “Les Bijoux” he actually does see. The inhabitants of his imagined island are “Des hommes dont le corps est mince et vigoureux, / Et des femmes dont l’oeil par sa franchise étonne” [Men whose bodies are thin and vigorous, / And women whose eyes astonish by their frankness]. That male slenderness had already been glimpsed in the “buste d’un imberbe,” and that frankness in a woman’s eyes when he saw her “yeux fixés sur moi” [eyes fixed on me] with their “candeur unie à la lubricité” [candor combined with lust]. “Parfum exotique” concludes with a blending of two sensory perceptions of which one was sound: “Pendant que le parfum des verts tamariniers . . . / *Se mêle* dans mon âme au chant des marinières” [While the perfume of green tamarind trees . . . / Blends in my soul with the song the sailors sing]; similarly, “Les Bijoux” begins with the blending of sound with another sense: “ses bijoux sonores” [her sonorous jewels] make a “bruit vif et moqueur . . . j’aime avec fureur / Les choses où le son *se mêle* à la lumière” [a lively and mocking noise . . . I passionately love / Things in which sound *blends* with light]. The expression “se mêle” is rare in the *Fleurs du mal*, linking two senses only in these two poems.

In “Parfum exotique” when he shuts his eyes and inhales her odor, he tells us, “Je vois se dérouler des rivages heureux” [I see happy shores glide past], with their fruited trees, slender men, and candid feminine eyes. In “Les Bijoux” images also passed before his eyes, but of the

woman herself: “son bras et sa jambe, et sa cuisse et ses reins . . . / Passaient devant mes yeux” [her arm and her leg, her thigh and her loins . . . / Passed before my eyes]. In both passages the images simply unfold, pass by his eyes. Yet the poems, through these two crucial passages, are exactly opposed in that in one his eyes are open and in the other closed.

22. “Je t’adore à l’égal de la voûte nocturne . . . “

Je t'adore à l'égal de la voûte nocturne,
O 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 choeur de vermisseaux,
Et je chéris, ô bête implacable et cruelle,
Jusqu'à cette froideur par où tu m'es plus belle!

In “Parfum exotique” the poet travels great distances, all the way from Paris to a tropical isle, transported by the scent of his mistress’s breasts: “Guidé par ton odeur vers de charmants climats” [Guided by your odor towards charming climates]. But in “Je t’adore à l’égal de la voûte nocturne . . . “ [I adore you as much as the nocturnal vault] just the opposite happens: he wants to travel great distances but cannot, and his mistress is far away. In “Parfum exotique” he is lying by her side, and accompanied by her scent in his imaginary voyage; but in “Je t’adore . . . “ she flees him, and increases the distance between herself from him: “tu me fuis, / Et . . . tu me parais, ornement de mes nuits, / . . . ironiquement accumuler les lieues / Qui séparent mes bras des immensités bleues” [you flee me, / And . . . you seem, O ornament of my nights, / . . . ironically to accumulate the leagues / That separate my arms from the blue immensities].

23. “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 ces desseins cachés,

De toi se sert, ô femme, ô reine des péchés,
— De toi, vil animal, — pour pétrir un génie?

O fangeuse grandeur! sublime ignominie!

In both “Je t’adore . . .” and “Tu mettrais l’univers entier dans ta ruelle . . .” [You would put the whole universe in your bedroom] the poet complains that his mistress puts vast distances between herself and him. In “Je t’adore . . .” she piles up leagues separating him on earth from the blue immensities of the nocturnal vault where she is found; in “Tu mettrais l’univers . . .” she puts the entire universe between the two of them. By “l’univers entier” he means the whole earthly world of men, rivals for the poet’s place in her bed. But the term “universe” clearly also evokes the astronomical context of the preceding poem, with its nocturnal vault and blue immensities.

Claude Pichois argues that the “ornement de mes nuits” [ornament of my nights] in “Je t’adore . . .” is the moon (*O.C. I*, 882). Since the moon borrows its light from the sun, this would seem to be echoed in the criticism the poet levels at his mistress in “Tu mettrais l’univers . . .” that “Tes yeux illuminés . . . / Usent insolemment d’un pouvoir emprunté” [Your luminous eyes . . . / Insolently use a borrowed power].

The two poems are ironically opposed. In “Je t’adore . . .” the narrator loves her because she is cruel: “je chéris, ô bête implacable et *cruelle* , / Jusqu’à cette froideur par où tu m’es plus belle!” [I cherish, O implacable and *cruel* beast, / Even this coldness by which are you more beautiful]. In the other poem, her cruelty is what he does *not* like about her: “Femme impure! L’ennui rend ton âme *cruelle* . . . / Machine aveugle et sourde en *cruautés* féconde!” [Impure woman! *Ennui* makes your soul *cruel* . . . / Blind and deaf machine abounding in *cruelties*]. The poems are precisely opposed in another way, too: in “Je t’adore . . .” the poet devours her--“je grimpe aux assauts, / Comme après un cadavre un choeur de vermisseaux” [I climb to the attack, / Like a choir of worms on a corpse]--but in “Tu mettrais l’univers . . .” she devours him: “Pour exercer tes dents à ce jeu singulier, / Il te faut chaque jour un coeur au ratelier” [To exercise your teeth at this singular game, / You need each day a heart on the rack].

24. “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,
O 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!

The woman addressed in “Sed non satiata” (But Not Sated) is insatiable, but so is the woman who would welcome the universe to her bed and needs a new heart to consume daily. An obvious topical continuity like that is of less interest, however, than that provided by a fire-in-the-eyes motif. The passage “Tes yeux illuminés ainsi que des boutiques / Et des ifs flamboyants dans les fêtes publiques” in “Tu mettrais l’univers . . .” caught our attention because the poet goes on to remark that those eyes shine with a borrowed power, which constitutes a parallel to the moon (as the “ornement de mes nuits”) to which the woman in “Je t’adore . . .” is likened. But this passage is itself echoed in “Sed non satiata”: “Par ces deux grands yeux noirs, soupiraux de mon âme, / Ô démon sans pitié, verse-moi moins de flamme” [Through those two big black eyes, cellar windows of my soul, / O pitiless demon, pour me out less flame]. Note in particular how “flamboyant” returns as “flamme.” Note as well that “Tes yeux” in “Tu mettrais l’univers . . .” is also matched in “Sed non satiata,” but at a moment when Baudelaire is saying just the opposite, not that her eyes are fire but that they are water: “Tes yeux sont la citerne où boivent mes ennuis” [Your eyes are the well where my ennuis drink]. It is in very next line that he asks for less flame from those eyes. To the contradiction between her eyes as water and as fire must be added the contradiction between the fact that in “Tu mettrais l’univers . . .” their fire is borrowed but in “Sed non satiata” is native to her identity as a creature of hell. She is a “démon,” the poet alludes to “l’enfer de ton lit” [the hell of your bed], and complains that he cannot be expected to play the River Styx to her hell: “Je ne suis pas le Styx pour t’embrasser neuf fois” [I am not the Styx who will embrace you nine times]. Fire is thus second nature to her, which was hardly the case with the woman in whose eyes burn with a power not her own. From the way the poems are at odds with each other, we should conclude that they refer to no reality beyond themselves, despite whatever role Jeanne Duval may have played in their inspiration. Nevertheless it is apparent that they do refer not just to themselves but to each other as well, “Tes yeux . . . flamboyants” to “Tes yeux . . . de flamme.” The reality beyond themselves has less to do with Jeanne Duval than with the intertext of the whole volume. As Pichois remarks in a note to “Tu mettrais l’univers . . .”, “to want at any cost that a poem situated between two inspired by Jeanne should of necessity have been inspired by her is to forget that she is but a pretext and that the poet has the absolute right to organize his poems according to a thematic order or according to the needs of linkage [les besoins de l’enchaînement]--whether consecutiveness [consécution] (as here) or contrast” (*O.C. I*, 883-84).

25. “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.

The same conclusion (that the poems are more about intertext than pretext) can be drawn from what Baudelaire does to the River Styx image when it returns, transformed, in “Avec ses vêtements ondoyants et nacrés . . .” [With her undulating, pearly garments . . .]. In “Avec ses vêtements . . .” the river repeatedly encircles hell, like the serpents looping around a pole in “Avec ses vêtements . . .”: “ces longs serpents que les jongleurs sacrés / Au bout de leurs bâtons agitent en cadence” [those long serpents that sacred jugglers / Shake in rhythm at the end of their poles]. But who is doing the encircling is just the opposite in one poem from who it is in the other. Even though he refuses to behave like the Styx--“Je ne suis pas le Styx pour t’embrasser neuf fois” [I am not the Styx and therefore cannot embrace you nine times]--to do so is at this juncture the masculine role, as Pichois explains; the line alludes to a passage in Ovid’s *Amores* about satisfying a woman nine times in one night, and possibly also to Victor Hugo’s accomplishing the same feat as related to Sainte-Beuve, who Pichois believes told it to Baudelaire (*O.C. I*, 886). But the serpents around a pole play the female role, for they are what the *woman* in the other poem is compared to: “Même quand elle marche, on croirait qu’elle danse, / Comme ces longs serpents . . .” [Even when she walks, you would think she was dancing, / Like those long serpents . . .]. This is consistent with what Baudelaire writes in the prose poem “Le Thyrses” [The Thyrsus] in *Le Spleen de Paris*, where the flowers entwined around the staff in the thyrsus are “l’élément féminin exécutant autour du mâle ses prestigieuses pirouettes” [the feminine element performing around the male its prestigious pirouettes] (*O.C. I*, 336).

There is another role, likewise connected to hell, that the speaker in “Sed non satiata” refuses to play: “Alas! Nor can I, libertine Megera, / To break your spirit and bring you to bay, / In the hell of your bed become Proserpine!” (lines 12-14). Antoine Adam writes of the Proserpine allusion, “one can hardly make any sense of this line unless it means that this woman was no less avid for women’s embraces than men’s” (309)--only by making love to her as a woman could the poet satisfy this Megera. That interpretation finds support in the last line of “Avec ses vêtements . . .”, where the woman displays “La froide majesté de la femme stérile” [The cold majesty of the sterile woman]. For sterility in *Les Fleurs du mal* is associated with feminine homosexuality, in both “Lesbos” [Lesbos], where Lesbian lust is a “stérile volupté” [sterile pleasure], and “Femmes damnées: À la pâle clarté . . .” [Damned Women: In the pale brightness . . .] an “âpre stérilité” [bitter sterility].

26. “Le Serpent qui danse”

Que j'aime voir, chère indolente,
De ton corps si beau,
Comme une étoffe vacillante,
4 Miroiter la peau!

Sur ta chevelure profonde
Aux âcres parfums,
Mer odorante et vagabonde
8 Aux flots bleus et bruns,

Comme un navire qui s'éveille
Au vent du matin,
Mon âme rêveuse appareille

12 Pour un ciel lointain.

 Tes yeux, où rien ne se révèle
 De doux ni d'amer,
 Sont deux bijoux froids où se mêle

16 L'or avec le fer.

 A te voir marcher en cadence,
 Belle d'abandon,
 On dirait un serpent qui danse

20 Au bout d'un bâton.

 Sous le fardeau de ta paresse
 Ta tête d'enfant
 Se balance avec la mollesse

24 D'un jeune éléphant,

 Et ton corps se penche et s'allonge
 Comme un fin vaisseau
 Qui roule bord sur bord, et plonge

28 Ses vergues dans l'eau.

 Comme un flot grossi par la fonte
 Des glaciers grondants,
 Quand ta salive exquise monte

32 Au bord de tes dents,

 Je crois boire un vin de Bohême,
 Amer et vainqueur,
 Un ciel liquide qui parsème

36 D'étoiles mon coeur!

The connections between “Avec ses vêtements ondoyants et nacrés . . .” and “Le Serpent qui danse” [The Dancing Serpent] are startlingly obvious, so much so that Antoine Adam concludes that in the second Baudelaire “is treating the same subject as the first, seeking to redo, in a different rhythm, what had first appeared in sonnet form” (310). Claude Pichois agrees, except to note that the second concludes on a more positive note than the first (*O.C. I*, 888). Numerous elements of lines 2-4 of the first--“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” [Even when she walks, you would think she was dancing, / Like those long serpents that sacred jugglers / Shake in rhythm at the end of their poles in rhythm]--reappear in the fifth (and central) stanza of the second: “À te voir marcher en cadence . . . / On dirait un serpent qui danse / Au bout d’un bâton” [To see you walk in rhythm, . . . / One would say [you were] a serpent dancing / At the end of a pole]. Specifically: (1) “quand elle marche” becomes “À te voir marcher”; (2) “on croirait” becomes “On dirait”; (3) “qu’elle danse” becomes “qui danse”; (4) “ces longs serpents” become “un serpent”, (5) “Au bout de leurs bâtons” becomes “Au bout d’un bâton” (the only combinations of “Au bout de” + “bâton[s]” in the volume; (6) “en cadence” repeats as “en cadence” (the only appearances of “cadence”). In addition, as Mario Richter remarks, the skin of the woman in “Le Serpent qui danse,” like a serpent’s, is “Comme une étoffe vacillante” [Like a swaying cloth] that is seen to “Miroiter” [Shimmer], a theme “already present in the ‘vêtements

ondoyants et nacrés' of the poem before" (Richter, 264). The "etoffe" recalls "vêtements," "vacillante" parallels "ondoyants," and "Miroiter" evokes the glisten of "nacrés."

Yet the two poems take this nearly identical image and go in different directions. The woman in "Avec ses vêtements . . ." is spoken of in the third person; the other is addressed as "tu." The former is unapproachable, "Insensible . . . / Elle se développe avec indifférence" [Insensible . . . She unfolds with indifference]; she is an "ange inviolé" [unviolated angel] combined with "un sphinx antique" [an ancient sphinx], displaying "La froide majesté de la femme stérile" [The cold majesty of the sterile woman]. The poet seems never to have been able to make love to her. But the other woman is kissable: at her lips "Je crois boire un vin de Bohème" [I think I'm drinking Bohemian wine]. Instead of indifferent, she is merely "indolente" [indolent], showing "mollesse" [lethargy] and "paresse" [laziness]. She is neither ancient nor majestic, neither a sphinx nor sterile, but childlike, with a "tête d'enfant" [head of a child].

Her eyes, however, are "deux bijoux froids où se mêle / L'or avec le fer" [two cold jewels where blends / Gold with iron]. This certainly recalls the eyes of the woman before, whose "yeux polis sont faits de minéraux" [polished eyes are made of minerals]. And the line "Où tout n'est qu'or, acier, lumière et diamants" [Where all is but gold, steel, light, and diamonds], especially its "or" and "acier," certainly anticipates the combination in the childlike woman's eyes of "or" with "fer." Yet that line refers not to the eyes of the first, but to her whole being: "cette nature étrange et symbolique / Où l'ange inviolé mêle au sphinx antique, // Où tout n'est qu'or, acier . . ." [this strange and symbolic nature / Where the unviolated angel blends with the ancient sphinx, // Where all is but gold, steel . . .]. Only the eyes of the woman in "Le Serpent qui danse" are cold, while the woman in "Avec ses vêtements . . ." is completely so, in her "froide majesté."

27. "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
4 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
8 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
12 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
16 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
20 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,
 24 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
 28 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
 32 Seulement par le souvenir.

Derrière les rochers une chienne inquiète
 Nous regardait d'un oeil fâché,
 Épiant le moment de reprendre au squelette
 36 Le morceau qu'elle avait lâché.

— Et pourtant vous serez semblable à cette ordure,
 A cette horrible infection,
 Étoile de mes yeux, soleil de ma nature,
 40 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
 44 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
 48 De mes amours décomposés!

Through her eyes as well as in her capacity to resemble a serpent on a pole the woman in “Le Serpent qui danse” resembles the woman in “Avec ses vêtements . . .”, but in every other respect she differs from her predecessor in the sequence, for she is not ancient but childlike, not indifferent but indolent, not unattainable but embraced. To understand this apparent contradiction we need to take in the larger picture the sequence provides by looking at the next poem, “Une Charogne” [A Carcass], for answers. There, the poet asks his mistress if she remembers the summer morning they were walking down a path and encountered a rotting carcass covered with flies and worms. “The flies hummed on that putrid belly, / From which emerged black battalions / Of larvae flowing like a thick liquid / The length of those living tatters. // All that was falling, rising like a wave, / Or shooting forth as it sparkled” (lines 17-21). Now consider the description of another rising liquid, in the last two stanzas of “Le Serpent qui danse”: “Like a stream swollen by the melting / Of rumbling glaciers, / When your exquisite saliva rises / To the edge of your teeth, // I think I’m drinking Bohemian wine, / Bitter and conquering, / A liquid sky that sprinkles / My heart with stars!” The “épais liquide” [thick liquid] on the carcass

was preceded by the “ciel liquide” [liquid sky] in his lover’s mouth, in the only two appearances of “liquide” in the 1857 *Fleurs du mal*. The liquid in “Le Serpent qui danse” “monte” [rises] “Comme un flot” [Like a stream]; the liquid in “Une Charogne” “montait comme une vague” [was rising like a wave]. The saliva is likened to a stream “grossi” [swollen] by glaciers melting--from the heat, presumably of the sun; the sun causes the carcass to swell: “Le soleil rayonnait sur cette pourriture” [The sun shone on this putrefaction], with the result that the body expanded, “enflé d’un souffle vague” [swollen with a vague breath]. Her saliva is like wine that scatters stars, recalling Dom Pérignon’s exclamation in the 17th century when he accidentally invented champagne, “Je bois des étoiles!” [I’m drinking stars!]; the “liquide” on the carcass was effervescent too: “s’élançait en pétillant” [was shooting forth as it sparkled].

“Une Charogne” becomes a *carpe diem* poem when the speaker tells his mistress “vous serez semblable à cette ordure” [you will be like this rottenness] when she lies under the grass. Yet the carcass already was like a sexual woman the first moment we saw it: “une charogne . . . / Les jambes en l’air, comme une femme lubrique” [a carcass . . . / Its legs in the air, like a lewd woman]. This overturned woman parallels the nearly overturned vessel to which he compares the woman in lines 25-28 of “Le Serpent qui danse”: “And your body leans and stretches out / Like a fine ship / Pitching from side to side, and plunging / Its spars into the sea.

As we move from “Avec ses vêtements. . .,” to “Le Serpent qui danse,” and then to “Une Charogne” we pass from an unattainable woman to an attainable one to a one who goes beyond being attainable to being invitingly lubricious, and the passage is gradual in that each woman (and more than that, each poem), despite their differences, has numerous elements in common with the one before. And we discover new significance in passages that seemed strange in themselves, such as the praise of saliva in one poem and the effervescence of putrefaction in another, when we realize that each is the hidden half of the other, in the larger poem that Baudelaire always insisted that the *Fleurs du mal* were. Finally, we realize that the “carpe diem” motif (as in “vous serez semblable à cette ordure” [you will be like this rottenness]) applies to the woman in “Le Serpent qui danse” as much as it does to the poet’s companion in “Une Charogne.” In fact, “vous serez semblable à . . .” [you will be like. . .] takes on another meaning in the context of the sequence, for the woman in “Le Serpent qui danse” is not yet but *will be* like the carcass once we read “La Charogne” and see the resemblances. As each poem *will be like* the next, once we read the next.

28. “De profundis clamavi”

J'implore ta pitié, Toi, l'unique que j'aime,
Du fond du gouffre obscur où mon coeur 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!

The encounter in “Une Charogne” takes place on a hot summer day, “Ce beau matin d’été si doux” [That beautiful summer morning so sweet] when “Le soleil rayonnait sur cette pourriture, / Comme afin de la cuire à point” [The sun shone down upon that rotteness, / As if to cook it to a turn]. In absolute contrast, “De profundis clamavi” [Out of the depths have I cried] is set in a frigid landscape where for six months there is no sun, and for the other six it is “Un soleil sans chaleur” [A sun without heat], a “soleil de glace” [sun of ice] that instead of heating the earth looks down upon it with “froide cruauté” [cold cruelty]. Yet each poem has its own particular horror, the “horrible infection” that is the rotting carcass, and “l’horreur” of the six-month night (line 4) and the chilly sun (line 9).

The poet in “Une Charogne” warns his female companion that one day, when she is dead and buried, her fate will be that of the animal they found by the side of the road--a lot that, though inevitable, is repugnant. What the poet cries out for in the last tercet of “De profundis clamavi” [Out of the depths have I cried], however, to become like an animal, to acquire its ability to cast off the cares of life, to plunge into a state resembling death: “I envy the lot of the vilest of animals / Who can fall into a stupid sleep, / So slowly does the skein of time unwind!” The eighth stanza of “Une Charogne” is the site of some interesting connections to that tercet: “The forms disappeared and were no more than a dream, / A sketch slow in coming, / On the forgotten canvas, and that the artiste completes / Only by memory.” The vile animal who is envied because of its ability to sleep was preceded by the “charogne infâme” [vile carcass] of an animal that in its decomposition comes to resemble a dream, in fact nothing *but* a dream. In both passages something is slow in coming: time’s unwinding and the sketch. In both, something disappears: time that undoes itself (“se dévide”) and the forms that “s’effaçaient” until they were nothing but a dream, nothing but what had not yet come. In a self-referential way, it is “Seulement par le souvenir” [Only by memory] that something else comes into existence here: only by reading “De profundis clamavi” and then remembering these lines from “Une Charogne” are we able to see images like that sketch take shape, the images that emerge from the secret architecture of the *Fleurs du mal*. And this can happen only by allowing a certain decomposition to occur, the breaking-apart of the elements of each poem, and their subsequent rearrangement in new forms. That is how these flowers bloom, as we saw “la carcasse superbe / Comme une fleur s’épanouir” [the superb carcass / Like a flower open out]. Baudelaire concludes “Une Charogne” by telling the woman not that his poems will preserve her youth and beauty but rather decomposition itself: “Then, O my beauty, tell the vermin / That will devour you with kisses / That I have preserved the form and divine essence / Of my decomposed loves!”

29. “Le Vampire”

Toi qui, comme un coup de couteau,
Dans mon coeur plaintif es entrée,
Toi qui, comme un hideux troupeau
4 De démons, vins, folle et parée,

De mon esprit humilié
Faire ton lit et ton domaine;
— Infâme à qui je suis lié
8 Comme un forçat à la chaîne,

Comme au jeu le joueur têtue,
 Comme à la bouteille l'ivrogne,
 Comme aux vermines la charogne,
 12 — Maudite, maudite sois-tu!

J'ai prié le glaive rapide
 De conquérir ma liberté,
 Et j'ai dit au poison perfide
 16 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
 20 A ton esclavage maudit,

Imbécile! — de son empire
 Si nos efforts te délivraient,
 Tes baisers ressusciteraient
 24 Le cadavre de ton vampire!»

“De profundis clamavi” is a parody of Psalm 130 (“Out of the depths I cry to Thee, O Lord”) in which the role of God is played by the poet’s mistress: “J’implore ta pitié, *Toi*, l’unique que j’aime, / Du fond du gouffre obscur où *mon coeur* est tombé” [I implore your pity, *Thou*, the only one I love, / From the depth of the dark abyss where *my heart* has fallen] (lines 1-2). She is above; he is below. She is obviously not in the abyss with him. Just the opposite takes place in “Le Vampire” [The Vampire], even though it begins similarly with an address to the mistress as “*Toi*”: “*Toi* qui, comme un coup de couteau, / Dans *mon coeur* plaintif es entrée” [*Thou* who, like the stab of a dagger, / Have entered *my* plaintive *heart*] (lines 1-2). For instead of his being alone and her far away, now she is too near and he would rather be alone. With some consistency it is once again “*mon coeur*” that is the focus of his concern. In “De profundis clamavi” his heart fell into the abyss; in “Le Vampire” his heart has been invaded by “*Toi*.” He is unhappily tied to her like the convict to the chain, the gambler to his game, the drunkard to his bottle, the carcass to its vermin (in a reminiscence of “Une Charogne”). He prays again in “Le Vampire” as he had in “De profundis clamavi,” but not to his mistress, and in order to bring about just the opposite outcome that he prays: “*J’ai prié* le glaive rapide / De conquérir ma liberté” [*I prayed* the swift sword / To conquer my liberty” (lines 13-14). He wants them to help him kill her so that he can be alone.

30. “Le Léthé”

Viens sur mon coeur, âme cruelle et sourde,
 Tigre adoré, monstre aux airs indolents;
 Je veux longtemps plonger mes doigts tremblants
 4 Dans l’épaisseur de ta crinière lourde;

Dans tes jupons remplis de ton parfum
 Ensevelir ma tête endolorie,
 Et respirer, comme une fleur flétrie,
 8 Le doux relent de mon amour défunt.

Je veux dormir! dormir plutôt que vivre!
 Dans un sommeil, douteux comme la mort,
 J'étalerai mes baisers sans remord
 12 Sur ton beau corps poli comme le cuivre.

Pour engloutir mes sanglots apaisés
 Rien ne me vaut l'abîme de ta couche;
 L'oubli puissant habite sur ta bouche,
 16 Et le Léthé coule dans tes baisers.

A mon destin, désormais mon délice,
 J'obéirai comme un prédestiné,
 Martyr docile, innocent condamné,
 20 Dont la ferveur attise le supplice,

Je sucerais, pour noyer ma rancoeur,
 Le népenthès et la bonne cigüe
 Aux bouts charmants de cette gorge aigüe
 24 Qui n'a jamais emprisonné de coeur.

In "Le Vampire" he prayed to the sword and poison to help him murder his mistress, from whom he wished to be free, but they told him that would be pointless, for "Tes baisers ressusciteraient / Le cadavre de ton vampire" [Your kisses would bring back to life / Your vampire's corpse] (lines 23-24). That is, he was so tied to his vampire that he would continue kissing her, even when she was dead. And such was his passion that those kisses would bring her back to life. In "Le Léthé" [Lethe] he seeks death, as he had in "Le Vampire," but this time his own--in the form of sleep (which he had desired in "De Profundis Clamavi"): "Je veux dormir! dormir plutôt que vivre! / Dans un sommeil, douteux comme la mort" [I want to sleep! To sleep rather than live! / In a slumber, doubtful like death] (lines 9-10). In "Le Vampire," he wanted to kill her; now he wants her to kill him. The poison he had called upon for that purpose is replaced by the poison *she* can supply for *his* death: "Je sucerais, pour noyer ma rancoeur, / Le népenthès et la bonne cigüe / Aux bouts charmants de cette gorge aigüe / Qui n'a jamais emprisonné de coeur" [I will suck, to drown my rancor, / Nepenthes and fine hemlock / From the charming tips of those pointed breasts / That have never imprisoned a heart] (lines 21-24). Ironically, in "Le Vampire" the expression "Tes baisers" [Your kisses], meaning the poet's (since it was the sword and poison speaking), would bring her back to life ("Tes baisers ressusciteraient / Le cadavre de ton vampire") [Your kisses would bring back to life / Your vampire's corpse] (lines 23-24), but the same expression--which appears in only these poems in the 1857 volume--has the opposite meaning here, for "le Léthé coule dans *tes baisers*" [Lethe (oblivion) flows from *your kisses*] (the poet says to his mistress). Now they are *her* kisses, not his.

31. "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
 A 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.

“Le Léthé” is about forgetting; “Une nuit que j’étais près d’une affreuse juive. . .” [One night when I was with a frightful Jewess. . .] is about remembering. The poet seeks “L’oubli puissant” [powerful oblivion] in the arms of his mistress in the first poem; in the second, he tries to forget her by sleeping with another woman. But the attempt is unsuccessful, for “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” [I began to dream, next to this purchased body, / Of the sad beauty of which my desire was depriving itself. // I pictured to myself her innate majesty]. He thinks of her hair, and its perfume, “dont le souvenir pour l’amour me ravive” [the memory of which brings me back to life for love]. This resurrection in the second quatrain looks back to the description he gave of himself in the first: “au long d’un cadavre un cadavre étendu” [a corpse stretched out beside another corpse]. Thinking of the woman he loves but cannot have permits him to rise from the dead and make love to the prostitute beside him. The prosecutor who condemned “Le Léthé”--because of the nudity in “Je sucrai . . . / Aux bouts charmants de cette gorge aigüe” [I will suck . . . / From the charming tips of those pointed breasts] (as Pichois explains, *O.C. I*, 1130)--evidently did not pick up on the eroticism of “me ravive.” Nor on that of the second quatrain of “Le Léthé”: “In your skirts, filled with your perfume, / Bury my painful head, / And breathe in, as if from a withered flower, / The sweet stench of my deceased love.” What he is smelling is the odor of his semen. The same sense for “mon amour” arises from “Les Bijoux”: “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” [And from the top of the couch she smiled with pleasure / At my love, deep and gentle as the sea / That towards her ascended as if toward its cliff]. His sperm is splashing like sea foam against the shore, reminding us of Aprodite’s birth from *aphros*, which means both sea foam and sperm (see William Hansen, “Foam-Born Aphrodite and the Mythology of Transformation,” *The American Journal of Philology*, 121.1 [Spring, 2001]: 1-19). The same meaning lies in the “amour” in line 8 of “Une nuit . . .”: it is that “amour” that is brought back to life when “le souvenir pour l’amour me ravive” [the memory brings me back to life for love].

Looked at another way, “Une nuit . . .” performs an ironic reversal on “Le Léthé.” He sought death there (in seeking to “dormir plutôt que vivre” [to sleep rather than live], in hoping for a “sommeil, douteux comme la mort” [a slumber as doubtful as death] by going to his mistress; he finds death (the death involved in being a corpse beside another corpse) in “Une nuit . . .” by abandoning her for another woman. The irony is enriched when we recall that his mistress, in the last line of “Le Vampire,” was herself a corpse (“Tes baisers ressusciteraient, / Le cadavre de ton vampire” [Your kisses would bring back to life / Your vampire’s corpse]).

Just after his “amour” comes back to life in “Une nuit . . .” he tells his mistress (whom he had spoken of until now in the third person) what he would have liked to do: “j’eusse avec ferveur baisé ton noble corps” [I would have fervently kissed your noble body] (line 9), creating a parallel to what he said he plans to do in “Le Léthé”: “J’étaierai mes baisers sans remord / Sur ton beau

corps” [I will spread out my *kisses* without remorse / On *your* beautiful *body*] (lines 11-12). The combination of *baiser* (noun or verb) and *ton . . . corps* (or even *corps* alone) is unique to these neighboring poems.

32. “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 nonchalour,
 Empêchera ton coeur 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 ver rongera ta peau comme un remords.

In “Une nuit . . .” the poet would have covered his mistress with kisses on the condition that with a tear obtained without effort she could darken the splendor of her cold eyes. This appears to be an impossible condition. But then in “Remords posthume” [Posthumous Remorse] he sets up a situation in which he believes she will be bound to do so. He imagines her a corpse in her grave, and “Durant ces grandes nuits d'où le somme est banni” [During those long nights from which sleep is banned] (echoing the “quelque soir” [some evening] that he wishes the tear would come in the poem before) her tomb “Te dira: « Que vous sert, courtisane imparfaite, / De n'avoir pas connu ce que pleurent les morts? »” [Will say to you, “What good does it do you, imperfect courtisan, / Not to have known that for which the dead weep?”]. What the dead weep for is the sex that she, being an “incomplete” courtisan, will not give him. Or that he would fervently give her in “Une nuit . . .” if only she would shed a tear.

But instead of being caressed by him “depuis *tes pieds* frais jusqu'à *tes noires tresses*” [from *your* chilly *feet* to your black tresses] the length of her body is oppressed by the tomb: “la pierre, opprimant ta poitrine peureuse / Et tes flancs . . . , / Empêchera ton coeur de battre et de vouloir, / Et *tes pieds* de courir leur course aventureuse” [the stone, pressing down on your fearful breast / And your sides . . . , / Will forbid your heart to beat and to desire, / And *your feet* to run their reckless course].

Imagining her body as a corpse becomes a substitute for having her body in life, as lying next to another woman's corpse-like body was in its own way a substitute for the same thing.

33. “Le Chat”

Viens, mon beau chat, sur mon coeur amoureux;
 Retiens les griffes de ta patte,

4 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
8 De palper ton corps électrique,

Je vois ma femme en esprit; son regard,
Comme le tien, aimable bête,
11 Profond et froid, coupe et fend comme un dard,

Et des pieds jusques à la tête,
Un air subtil, un dangereux parfum
14 Nagent autour de son corps brun.

As the tomb holds tight her restless body, in “Le Chat” [The Cat] the poet holds in his grasp his restless cat, who itself is yet another substitute for the woman he desires but, it seems, cannot have. The poet’s cat will show that restlessness in “Spleen: Pluviôse, irrité . . .” [Spleen: Pluvius, irritated . . .]: “Mon chat sur le carreau cherchant une litière / Agite sans repos son corps” [My cat, looking for a place to lie down on the tile, / Stirs his body restlessly]. In contemplating and caressing the animal, the poet says, “Je vois ma femme en esprit” [I see my woman in spirit]. But by addressing him in the first line as “*mon beau chat*” [*my beautiful cat*] he identifies the cat not just with the woman he loves, but more specifically with the woman in the tomb in the poem before, for in that poem’s first line he had addressed her in similar terms: “*ma belle ténébreuse*” [*my beautiful shadowy one*]. In no other poem in the 1857 volume will Baudelaire write either “mon beau” or “ma belle.” Even when he does write “ma belle visiteuse” in “Un Fantôme” [A Phantom], added to the collection in 1861, it is not in the vocative, as here. In “Remords posthume” the stone of the tomb presses down on “tes flancs qu’assouplit un charmant nonchaloir” [your flanks, made supple by a charming nonchalance]; in “Le Chat” that suppleness is expressed as elasticity: “mes doigts caressent à loisir / . . . ton dos élastique” [my fingers caress at leisure / . . . your elastic back]. That the oppressing tomb and the caressing poet have something in common is suggested in “Remords posthume”: “le tombeau toujours comprendra le poète” [the tomb will always understand the poet], and will thus be able to speak for him in asking the woman in its grasp what good it does her not to have enjoyed in her life what it is the dead weep for.

34. “Le Balcon”

Mère des souvenirs, maîtresse des maîtresses,
— O 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,
5 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 coeur m'était bon!
Nous avons dit souvent d'impérissables choses

- 10 Les soirs illuminés par l'ardeur du charbon.
- Que les soleils sont beaux dans les chaudes soirées!
 Que l'espace est profond! que le coeur est puissant!
 En me penchant vers toi, reine des adorées,
 Je croyais respirer le parfum de ton sang.
- 15 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;
- 20 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 coeur si doux?
- 25 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?
- 30 — O serments! ô parfums! ô baisers infinis!

In “Le Balcon” [The Balcon] the poet embraces the woman he loves for real—not through a substitute woman (as in “Une nuit . . .”), not as a tomb imprisoning her (as in “Remords posthume”), not through a cat that evokes her presence (as in “Le Chat”). Especially not as he had with the cat. There, “laisse-moi plonger dans *tes* beaux *yeux*” [let me plunge into *your* beautiful *eyes*]; here, “mes yeux dans le noir devinaient *tes prunelles*” [my eyes in the dark sought out *your pupils*]. There, “mes doigts *caressent*” [my fingers *caress*]; here, “Tu te rappelleras la beauté des *caresses*” [You will recall the beauty of the *caresses*]. There, “*ma main* s’enivre du plaisir / De palper ton corps” [*my hand* is intoxicated with the pleasure / Of touching your body]; here, “tes pieds s’endormaient dans *mes mains*” [your feet fall asleep in *my hands*]. There, in caressing the cat, he was put in mind of the woman’s “dangereux *parfum*” [dangerous *perfume*]; here, “Je croyais respirer le *parfum* de ton sang” [I felt I could breath the *perfume* of your blood]. As he asks, “à quoi bon chercher tes beautés langoureuses / Ailleurs qu’en ton cher corps et qu’en ton coeur si doux?” [why seek your langorous beauties / Elsewhere than in your dear body and than in your heart so sweet?]. The question has particular relevance to the three preceding poems, where he was consistently doing that.

35. “Je te donne ces vers . . .”

- Je te donne ces vers afin que, si mon nom
 Aborde heureusement aux époques lointaines,
 Et, navire poussé par un grand aiglon,
 4 Fait travailler un soir les cervelles humaines,

Ta mémoire, pareille aux fables incertaines,
 Fatigue le lecteur ainsi qu'un tympanon,
 Et par un fraternel et mystique chaînon
 8 Reste comme pendue à mes rimes hautaines ;

Etre maudit à qui de l'abîme profond,
 Jusqu'au plus haut du ciel rien, hors moi, ne répond;
 11 — O 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,
 14 Statue aux yeux de jais, grand ange au front d'airain !

In “Je te donne ces vers . . .” [I give you these lines . . .] the question asked in “Le Balcon” (“why seek your languorous beauties / Elsewhere than in your dear body?”) is still relevant, for here the poet imagines future generations (her body having long disappeared) discovering her in his poems. Her memory will nag the reader with the insistence of a hammered dulcimer, and hang suspended from his lofty rhymes like a fraternal and mystic link of chain (lines 6-8). It is appropriate that it should be her memory (“ta mémoire”) that persists, since “Le Balcon” begins by calling her the mother of memories (“Mère des souvenirs”). In fact, all of that poem comes out of what the narrator says to his mistress in line 3 about remembering: “Tu te rappelleras” [You will remember] all those pleasant evenings we spent on the balcony. “Le Balcon” is completely about memory, including the final stanza, when he asks if all those memories could be reborn after passing into the abyss. Will those recollected promises, perfumes, and kisses be reborn “d’un gouffre interdit à nos sondes, / Comme montent *au ciel* les soleils rajeunis / Après s’être lavés au fond des mers *profondes*” [from an abyss forbidden to our soundings, / As rejuvenated suns ascend to heaven / After being washed in the depths of deep seas]? The passage itself, if not the promises, perfumes, and kisses, is itself reborn--and remembered--in lines 9 and 10 of “Je te donne ces vers . . .”, particularly the distance stretching from the depths of the abyss to the heights of heaven: “de l’abîme profond / Jusqu’au plus haut du ciel” [from the deep abyss / To the highest heaven].

Likewise remembered in “Je te donne ces vers . . .” is the fraternal quality of the poet’s hands when they hold her feet in line 19 of “Le Balcon,” reappearing as a fraternal link in line 7. In no other 1857 poem does the adjective appear. Although it is the memory of the woman to whom the poem is addressed that he calls a “fraternel et mystique chaînon” attached to his poems, the fraternal link is itself a link therein attached, particularly to these two, in the manner of the “choses . . . concaténées” [concatenated things] that in Baudelaire’s opinion “constituent une poésie bien faite” [constitute well made poetry] (*O.C.*, II, 803). Those feet return too, in lines 12-13, when they trample those who called her bitter. The connection between her feet and fraternity first established in “Le Balcon,” was originally recalled here even more closely, for the second hemistich of line 13 in the page proofs had read “qui t’appellent leur frère” [who call you their brother] (Pichois, *O.C.*, I, 905): her foot was trampling the stupid mortals who claimed a fraternal connection. Might they have included the poet, who seems to have made such a claim in “Le Balcon”? Here we can see Baudelaire at work forging an even stronger link between “Le Balcon” and “Je te donne ces vers . . .”, and then rejecting it, perhaps because mortals calling her their brother would be inconsistent with her being “maudit” [cursed], presumably by those same mortals. Better for them to call her “amère” [better].

36. "Tout entière"

Le Démon, dans ma chambre haute,
 Ce matin est venu me voir,
 Et, tâchant de me prendre en faute,
 4 M'a dit: «Je voudrais bien savoir,

 Parmi toutes les belles choses
 Dont est fait son enchantement,
 Parmi les objets noirs ou roses
 8 Qui composent son corps charmant,

 Quel est le plus doux. » — O mon âme,
 Tu répondis à l'Abhorré :
 Puisqu'en Elle tout est dictame,
 12 Rien ne peut être préféré.

 Lorsque tout me ravit, j'ignore
 Si quelque chose me séduit.
 Elle éblouit comme l'Aurore
 16 Et console comme la Nuit ;

 Et l'harmonie est trop exquise,
 Qui gouverne tout son beau corps,
 Pour que l'impuissante analyse
 20 En note les nombreux accords.

 O métamorphose mystique
 De tous mes sens fondus en un !
 Son haleine fait la musique,
 24 Comme sa voix fait le parfum.

If the poet's mistress gives rise in "Je te donne ces vers . . ." to a fatiguing, unpleasant music in line 5, where her memory is as nagging to the reader of his poems as the sound of a hammered dulcimer, the opposite is the case in lines 17-20 of "Tout entière" [Completely Entire]: "too exquisite is the harmony / That governs her beautiful body / For analysis, impotent, / To transcribe its many chords." The difficult labor this music poses for the task of analysis reminds us of the work the poet hopes his poems will make human brains undertake in line 4 of "Je te donne ces vers . . ." We will later see for the 1861 edition he would replace "travailler" by "rêver" at the same time that he broke up the connections between these two poems by inserting "Semper Eadem" between them. But for the moment, "travailler" *works*, connecting the mental labor his poems will impose in "Je te donne ces vers . . ." to the mental labor of musical analysis in "Tout entière."

It would seem that the woman addressed in one poem is not the same as the one addressed in the other, for scholars agree that the first is the last in the Jeanne Duval cycle, and the second is the first to be devoted to Madame Sabatier. Baudelaire himself declared in a letter to Sabatier that "Tout entière" was written for her (*O.C. I*, 906). One muse would give rise to fatiguing music, the other to music so complex it defies analysis. But both give rise to music.

In addition, lines 9-10 of "Je te donne ces vers . . ." -- "Etre maudit à qui de *l'abîme* profond, / Jusqu'au plus *haut* du ciel rien, hors moi, ne *répond*" [Cursèd being to whom from the

deep *abyss* / Up to the *highest* part of heaven nothing, except me, *responds*]--bear an interesting relation to the framing situation in "Tout entière": "Le *Démon*, dans ma chambre *haute*" [The *Demon*, in my *high* room] came to see me, asked me what part of my beloved do I find most sweet, and "mon âme, / Tu *répondis*" [my soul, / You *responded*]. We had already seen how this passage in "Je te donne ces vers . . ." paralleled lines 27-29 of "Le Balcon" ("d'un *gouffre* . . . au *ciel* . . . mers *profondes*"). Now the same passage is echoed in "Tout entière." The abyss is represented by the "Démon" who comes from there, the "haut du ciel" is replaced by the poet's "chambre haute," and a new connection appears between the reponse the poet alone makes between the abyss and the height and the response the poet in his high room makes to the demon from the abyss. In both passages the response concerns the woman the poet loves (even though biographers will remind us it is not the same woman).

The response to the Demon is in a way a non-response, since he refuses to single out any particular feature of the woman for praise. But at the same time it is quite a substantial response, in three parts: (1) Because everything in her is ravishing and seductive, there is no one thing better (or worse) than another. (2) The harmony of those parts is too exquisite for all its numerous "accords" to be analyzed. (3) By a kind of mystical metamorphosis all my senses are melted into one, so that her breath makes music, as her voice makes perfume. In other words, things get mixed up, senses (in both senses: both sensory perceptions and meanings) are confused, subjects and predicates get rearranged, the impossible happens. For breath cannot really make music, nor voice perfume (except through metonymy: breath and voice being parts of the same whole).

What Baudelaire is describing is not just this idealized woman, but the *Fleurs du mal* itself. The same kind of reorganization of elements is what we find to persist as elements of each poem (such as abyss, height, and response) reappear in a different arrangement in the next. The harmony of the collection is so rich, the accords connecting poem to poem so numerous, that analysis is difficult (I refuse to say "impuissante" unless it refuses the task). Baudelaire indeed "Fait travailler . . . les cervelles humaines." What he strives for in the *Fleurs* is a work of art where "tant toutes choses y sont bien unies, conjointes, réciproquement adaptées, et . . . concaténées" [all things are so well united, conjoined, reciprocally adapted, and . . . concatenated] (*O.C.*, II, 803), it is so "tout entière," that there is no one thing that seduces; rather, it is the "tout" [whole] that "ravit" [ravishes].

37. "Que diras-tu ce soir . . ."

4 Que diras-tu ce soir, pauvre âme solitaire,
Que diras-tu, mon coeur, coeur autrefois flétri,
A la très-belle, à la très-bonne, à la très-chère,
Dont le regard divin t'a soudain refléuri?

8 — 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.

11 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

14 Que pour l'amour de moi vous n'aimiez que le Beau.
Je suis l'Ange Gardien, la Muse et la Madone. »

In “Que diras-tu ce soir . . . “ [What will you say tonight . . . “] the poet does precisely what in “Tout entière” he said he could not do, single out any particular quality of the woman he loves for praise. He actually begins by answering the very question the Demon had posed, among all her fine qualities “Quel est le plus *doux*” [Which is the *sweetest*]: “Rien ne vaut *la douceur* de son autorité” [Nothing surpasses *the sweetness* of her authority]; then moves on to enumerate other aspects--her flesh, her eye. The “Rien ne” with which this enumeration begins echoes the earlier refusal: “*Rien ne* peut être préféré” [Nothing can be singled out]. It was his “âme” [soul] that had given the non-response to the Demon in “Tout entière”; it is his “âme” (along with his heart) that gives the answer here.

Symmetrically, the Demon with which “Tout entière” began finds its complement in the Guardian Angel with which this poem concludes.

38. “Le Flambeau vivant”

 Ils marchent devant moi, ces yeux pleins de lumières,
 Qu'un Ange très-savant a sans doute aimantés;
4 Ils marchent, ces divins frères qui sont mes frères,
 Suspendant mon regard à leurs feux diamantés.

 Me sauvant de tout piège et de tout péché grave,
 Ils conduisent mes pas dans la route du Beau;
8 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
11 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,
14 Astres dont le Soleil ne peut flétrir la flamme!

“Le Flambeau vivant” [The Living Flame] is so continuous with, so similar to “Que diras-tu . . .” that one poem is almost to the other as the sun is to the candle in the tercets of “Le Flambeau vivant,” rivals with the same goal, each trying to outdo the other in praising the woman in parallel ways, with the same words. The “flambeau” [torch] in line 11 of “Que diras-tu . . . “ becomes the “Flambeau” of the title and the eighth line of the other poem,; both are the woman the poems praise. Her eyes are associated with “clarté” [brightness] in line 8 of the former and in line 9 of the latter. She orders (“j’ordonne”) him to love only “le Beau” [Beauty] in one poem (lines 12-13); in the other, she guides his steps on the path of the “Beau” (line 6), and he “obéit” [obeys] (line 8) her. His heart had been “flétri” [withered] but is now “refleuri” [blooming again] thanks to her (lines 2, 4); the sun cannot “flétrir” [wither] her flame, and she sings “le réveil de mon âme” [the reawakening of my soul] (lines 13-14).

39. “À celle qui est trop gaie”

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

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

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

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

Quelquefois dans un beau jardin,
Où je traînais mon atonie,
J'ai senti comme une ironie
20 Le soleil déchirer mon sein;

Et le printemps et la verdure
Ont tant humilié mon cœur
Que j'ai puni sur une fleur
24 L'insolence de la nature.

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

Pour châtier ta chair joyeuse,
Pour meurtrir ton sein pardonné,
Et faire à ton flanc étonné
32 Une blessure large et creuse,

Et, vertigineuse douceur!
A travers ces lèvres nouvelles,
Plus éclatantes et plus belles,
36 T'infuser mon venin, ma soeur!

The sun returns as a rival in “À celle qui est trop gaie” [To Her Who Is Too Gay] (1857: 39), but a rival to the poet, not to the woman he loves. The sun could not extinguish the flame of the candles of the mystical “*clarté*” [brightness] (line 9) of her eyes, reappearing here as the “*clarté* / De tes bras et tes épaules” [brightness / Of your arms and shoulders] (lines 7-8). But it

can hurt the poet, tearing at his chest in line 20, making him smart with the irony of the contradiction between its strength and his weakness, between its joy and his melancholy. In the second stanza it becomes apparent that the woman has the same effect on him that the sun does. Any passing “chagrin” that she encounters is “ébloui” [blinded] by her “clarté” [brightness]. The effect she has on his own chagrin is the same, hence his violent reaction. As Antoine Adam observes, “This happy, beautiful woman makes him think of spring. But Baudelaire cannot bear springtime. He sees irony in his surroundings. They seem to mock his sadness, his state of depression, his lifeless atony. So much so that, exasperated, he stupidly destroys a flower. . . . In the same way, he would like to avenge himself on such health and gaiety, to inject her with his illness, melancholy” (434-35). In the earlier version of the poem Baudelaire sent Madame Sabatier in 1852, instead of “ébloui” in line 6 he had written “éclairé” [illuminated, enlightened]. The difference is telling. By substituting “ébloui” for “éclairé,” by replacing a positive effect (illumination) with a destructive one (blinding, bedazzlement), Baudelaire adapted the poem to allow it to enter into a richer dialogue with “Le Flambeau vivant.” There is both reversal and consistency between the two poems. The woman triumphs in both--triumphs over the sun by refusing to be extinguished in the face of its greater brightness, triumphs over the poet by blinding him with hers. Yet the poems are opposed as well, for in “Le Flambeau vivant” she has a beneficent effect on the poet, but here she makes him suffer.

40. “Réversibilité”

5 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?

10 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?

15 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?

20 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 les yeux où longtemps burent nos yeux avides?
 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,

25 Ange plein de bonheur, de joie et de lumières!

From the first words of “Réversibilité” [Reversibility] (1857: 40)--“Ange plein de *gaiété*” [Angel full of *gaiety*]-we know the poet is addressing the same woman as he did in “À celle qui est trop *gaie*” and that he thinks she has the same problem, an excess of gaiety. In both that poem and this he wants to counteract that gaiety, but he goes about it in different ways--there, by injecting her with his venom; here, by confronting her with compelling evocations of anguish, hatred, illness, and aging. In the stanza devoted to illness, the sun that in “À celle qui est trop *gaie*” was portrayed as an enemy, attacking the suffering poet--“dans un beau jardin, / Où je *traînais* mon atonie, / J’ai senti comme une ironie / Le *soleil* déchirer mon sein” [in a beautiful garden, / Where I was *dragging* my atony, / I felt like an irony / The *sun* tear my breast] (lines 17-20)--is transformed into its opposite, something beneficent and eagerly sought: the ill in a hospice “s’en vont d’un pied *traînard*, / Cherchant le *soleil* rare” [go along with *dragging* step, / Seeking the rare *sun*] (lines 13-14). The way “*traînard*” echoes “*traînais*” points up the irony (already announced in “J’ai senti comme une *ironie*”). The poet was dragging his step in the garden as the patients are dragging theirs in the hospice. Ironically, the sun cheers the latter but devastates the former. There is one “*ironie*” within “À celle qui est trop *gaie*,” and another within the intertext that poem forms with “Réversibilité.” You could say that was ironical.

41. “Confession”

Une fois, une seule, aimable et douce femme,
 A mon bras votre bras poli
 S'appuya; — sur le fond ténébreux de mon âme
 4 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,
 8 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,
 12 Nous accompagnaient lentement.

Tout-à-coup, au milieu de l'intimité libre
 Éclore à la pâle clarté,
 De vous, — riche et sonore instrument où ne vibre
 16 Que la radieuse *gaiété*,

De vous, claire et joyeuse ainsi qu'une fanfare
 Dans le matin étincelant,
 — Une note plaintive, une note bizarre
 20 S'échappa, — tout en chancelant

Comme une enfant chétive, horrible, sombre, immonde,
 Dont sa famille rougirait,
 Et qu'elle aurait long-temps, pour la cacher au monde,

24 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,
 28 Se trahit l'égoïsme humain;

Que c'est un dur métier que d'être belle femme,
 — Qu'il ressemble au travail banal
 De la danseuse folle et froide qui se pâme
 32 Dans un 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
 36 Pour les rendre à l'Éternité! »

J'ai souvent évoqué cette lune enchantée,
 Ce silence et cette langueur,
 Et cette confidence horrible chuchotée
 40 Au confessionnal du coeur.

As if in answer to the questions the poet asked her in “Réversibilité,” in “Confession” the woman, despite her “gaîté” (line 16), surprises him by revealing that yes, she has indeed experienced anguish and doubt. Among other things, she has suffered from the fear of getting old about which he had asked her in stanza 4 of “Réversibilité”: “everything cracks, both love and beauty, / Right up until the time Oblivion throws them in to his basket / To hand them over to Eternity!” (lines 34-36).

Mario Richter points out that the titles of both poems refer to Catholic dogma. Reversibility is the interchangeability of merits within the community of saints. That the confession she makes has a religious overtone, he remarks, “is confirmed by the word “confessional” in the last line” (417).

42. “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
 4 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.
 8 Ainsi, chère Déesse, Être lucide et pur,

Sur les débris fumeux des stupides orgies,
 Ton souvenir plus clair, plus rose, plus charmant,
 11 A mes yeux agrandis voltige incessamment.

Le soleil a noirci les flammes des bougies;
 — Ainsi, toujours vainqueur, ton fantôme est pareil,
 14 Ame resplendissante, à l'immortel soleil!

A striking, even bizarre, feature of “Confession” was the way the confession itself was represented as a child hidden away until now, both “horrible, sombre, immonde” [horrible, dark, disgusting] (line 21) yet at the same time a “pauvre *ange*” [poor angel] (line 25). Something similar, yet opposite, happens in “L’Aube spirituel” [The Spiritual Dawn]: “Dans la brute assoupie un *ange* se réveille” [In the sleepy brute an *angel* awakens] (line 4). The two events are equally surprising. The “poor angel,” though dark and horrible, emerged from a woman who until then had displayed a “radieuse gaîté” [radiant gaiety] (line 16) and had been “claire et joyeuse” [luminous and joyful] (line 17). The other angel emerged from a “débauché,” but distinguished itself from him by yearning after “l’Idéal,” for the inaccessible azure of spiritual skies. Each angel, in other words, is the surprising opposite of the person from whom it emerges; each angel is the other’s opposite as well: one complains; the other aspires.

It is the light of dawn that awakens the angel, as the first stanza makes clear (the dawn working together with the Ideal). It was the light of the moon that made it possible for the other angel to emerge. It was a full moon (line 6), and the freedom of intimacy that enabled her to make her confession bloomed in its pale light (lines 13-14).

43. “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,
 4 — Valse mélancolique et langoureux vertige! —

Chaque fleur s'évapore ainsi qu'un encensoir;
 Le violon frémit comme un coeur qu'on afflige;
 — Valse mélancolique et langoureux vertige! —
 8 Le ciel est triste et beau comme un grand reposoir.

Le violon frémit comme un coeur qu'on afflige,
 Un coeur tendre, qui hait le néant vaste et noir!
 — Le ciel est triste et beau comme un grand reposoir;
 12 Le soleil s'est noyé dans son sang qui se fige.

Un coeur 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;
 16 Ton souvenir en moi luit comme un ostensor!

Although it takes place at evening instead of dawn, part of “Harmonie du soir” [Evening Harmony] seems to grow out of lines 10-11 of “L’Aube spirituelle”: “*Ton souvenir* plus clair, plus rose, plus charmant, / *A mes yeux* agrandis *voltige* incessamment” [*Your memory*--brighter, more rosy, more charming-- / Incessantly *turns* (or flutters) before my widened eyes]. I am thinking of lines 3 and 16 in “Harmonie du soir”: “Les sons et les parfums *tournent* dans l’air du soir” [Sounds and perfumes *turn* in the evening air] and “*Ton souvenir en moi luit* comme un ostensor” [*Your memory* shines *in me* like a monstrance]. The phrase “ton souvenir” appears

nowhere else in the *Fleurs du mal*. The verb *voltiger* could mean to flutter or to rotate; however, the latter is the original sense, according to *Le Petit Robert*. It comes from the Italian *volteggiare*, which means to make a *volta* (*volte* in French), a complete turn executed on horseback. The sense of “to flutter” or “to fly about” was later given to *voltiger* by the influence of the verb *voleter*. In the 1857 *Fleurs du mal* the verb makes its only other appearance in “Le Flacon,” the poem just after “Harmonie du soir,” where, as in “L’Aube spirituelle,” its subject is “souvenir”: “Voilà le souvenir enivrant qui voltige / Dans l’air troublé; — les yeux se ferment; le vertige / Saisit l’âme. . .” [Behold the intoxicating memory that turns / In the troubled air; — the eyes close; vertigo / Seizes the soul] (lines 13-15). Clearly these three poems “turn” around the words *souvenir*, *voltige*, and *vertige* (which appears in lines 4 and 7 of “Harmonie du soir”):

“L’Aube spirituelle”: “Ton souvenir . . . À mes yeux . . . voltige”

“Harmonie du soir”: “Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l’air. . . Ton souvenir en moi luit”

“Le Flacon”: “le souvenir . . . voltige / Dans l’air”

The fact that the sounds and perfumes “tournent *dans l’air*” in “Harmonie du soir” and that memory “voltige / *Dans l’air*” in “Le Flacon” suggests that *voltiger* may mean *tourner* in both “L’Aube spirituelle” and “Le Flacon.” In addition, in lines 10-11 of “L’Aube spirituelle” and 3 and 16 of “Harmonie du soir”

a. “Ton souvenir” corresponds to “Ton souvenir”

b. “plus clair” [brighter] to “luit” [shines]

c. and “À mes yeux” [In my eyes] to “en moi” [in me].

Having established this common ground, we can better appreciate how the two poems are each other’s opposite in other ways. In “L’Aube spirituelle” the sun is immortal. More surprisingly, in the struggle between candles and the sun the woman who in “Le Flambeau vivant” had been symbolized by the former has now changed sides: “Le soleil a noirci les flammes des bougies; / — Ainsi, toujours vainqueur, ton fantôme est pareil, / Ame resplendissante, à l’immortel soleil!” [The sun has darkened the candles’ flames; / — Thus, always conquering, your phantom is like, / Resplendent soul, the immortal sun!] (lines 12-14). But the sun’s immortality is brief, for in “Harmonie du soir” it seems to die: “Le soleil s’est noyé dans son sang qui se fige” [The sun has drowned in its coagulated blood] (lines 12 and 15). And the woman is no longer the sun, glowing in the poet like an “ostensoir” [monstrance] in line 16 after the sun dies in the line before.

The sky of dawn and the sky of evening, as could be expected, are each other’s opposites, one azure and the other black. But both represent nothingness. In “L’Aube spirituelle” the inaccessible azure “S’ouvre et s’enfonce avec l’attraction du gouffre” [Opens and deepens with the attraction of the abyss] (line 7). In “Harmonie du soir” the tender heart, gazing at the night sky, “hait le néant vaste et noir!” [hates the vast black nothingness!] (lines 10 and 13). The sky’s abyss, attractive in one poem, is detested in the other.

44. “Le Flacon”

Il est de forts parfums pour qui toute matière
Est poreuse; — on dirait qu’ils pénètrent le verre.
Quelquefois en ouvrant un coffret d’Orient
4 Dont la serrure grince et rechigne en criant,

Ou dans une maison déserte quelque armoire,
Sentant l’odeur d’un siècle, arachnéenne et noire
On trouve un vieux flacon jauni qui se souvient,

- 8 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,
12 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
16 Vers un gouffre où l'air est plein de parfums humains.
- Il la terrasse au bord d'un gouffre séculaire,
Où, — Lazare odorant déchirant son suaire, —
Se meut dans son réveil le cadavre spectral
20 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,
24 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
28 Qui me ronge, ô la vie et la mort de mon coeur!

“There are strong perfumes for which all matter / Is porous,” we are told in the first lines of “Le Flacon” [The Perfume Flask]; “one would say that they penetrate the glass.” The perfumes of one poem penetrate the barrier separating them from the next, and almost literally so here, as the perfumes that turn in the evening air in “Harmonie du soir” become the intoxicating memory that “voltige / Dans l’air” [turns / In the air] (lines 13-14) and the evaporation named in lines 2 and 5 of “Harmonie du soir” becomes the whole premise of “Le Flacon,” where perfumes become resurrected memories. The vertigo that dances in “Valse mélancolique et langoureux vertige” (lines 4 and 7) reappears as “le vertige” that “Saisit l’âme vaincue et la pousse à deux mains / Vers un gouffre où l’air est plein de parfums humains” [Seizes the conquered soul and pushes it with both hands / Towards an abyss where the air is full of human perfumes] in lines 14-16 of “Le Flacon.”

45. “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,
15 Comme un soleil couchant dans un ciel nébuleux.
- L'opium agrandit ce qui n'a pas de bornes,
Projetée l'illimité,

Approfondit le temps, creuse la volupté,
 Et de plaisirs noirs et mornes
 20 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
 25 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 remord,
 Et, charriant le vertige,
 30 La roule défaillante aux rives de la mort!

Commentators agree that “Le Poison” [Poison] begins a new cycle of poems, devoted to Marie Daubrun. The poems in the 1857 edition from 20. “Les Bijoux” to 35. “Je te donne ces vers . . .” were inspired by Jeanne Duval, and those from 21. “Tout entière” to 44. “Le Flacon” by Madame Sabatier. Daubrun had green eyes, as indicated in line 22 of “Le Poison.”

We saw in the analysis of “Tout entière” that the change of mistress has no effect on the continuities linking one poem to the next. Neither does it here. The poison itself of “Le Poison” grows out of the poison of lines 27-28 of “Le Flacon”: “Dear poison prepared by angels! liquor / That eats at me, O life and death of my heart!” As Antoine Adam comments, “If we want to know why he calls [his love for Madame Sabatier] a poison” at the end of “Le Flacon,” “we only have to read the poem that immediately follows this one. For the connection between the two is evident, and the second comments on the last lines of the first.” (333). The connection, paradoxically, begins at the very moment he indicates that he has started to write about another woman, one with green eyes, in lines 21 and 22: “the poison that flows / From your eyes, from your green eyes.” In other words, in both instances he is writing about a poison that comes from a woman-- but from two different women. This is strong testimony in support of the proposition that the connections linking the poems are stronger than the poems’ external referentiality, and even rivals the strength of their internal self-sufficiency.

In lines 14-16 of “Le Flacon,” *vertige* [vertigo] pushes the vainquished soul towards a *gouffre* [abyss]. We find *gouffres* in line 25 of “Le Poison,” when her green eyes become “ces gouffres amers” [those bitter abysses], and we find *vertige* once more in line 29. *Vertige* appears only to link the three consecutive poems “Harmonie du soir,” “Le Flacon,” and “Le Poison” in the 1857 *Fleurs du mal*.

46. “Ciel brouillé”

On dirait ton regard d'une vapeur couvert;
 Ton oeil mystérieux, — est-il bleu, gris ou vert? —
 Alternativement tendre, doux et cruel,
 4 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,

8 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
 12 Qu'enflamment les rayons tombant d'un ciel brouillé!

O femme dangereuse! ô séduisants climats!
 Adorerai-je aussi ta neige et vos frimas,
 Et saurai-je tirer de l'implacable hiver
 16 Des plaisirs plus aigus que la glace et le fer?

In the third stanza of “Ciel brouillé” [Cloudy Sky] Baudelaire compares his mistress to a misty horizon lit up by the sun: “Sometimes you resemble those beautiful horizons / Lit up by the sun in seasons of mist. / How resplendent you are, a rain-swept landscape / Enflamed by sunbeams falling from a cloudy sky!” This combination of sun and “ciel brouillé” [cloudy sky] evokes the combination of sun and “ciel nébuleux” [cloudy sky] in the first stanza of “Le Poison”: “Wine . . . makes more than one fabulous portico emerge / In the gold of its red vapor, / Like a sun setting in a cloudy sky.” Wine’s “vapeur” in line 4 is answered by the “vapeur” covering her gaze in the first line of “Ciel brouillé.” These are the only two passages in which the word in the singular appears in 1857.

Wine is one of the poisons (the other is opium) that he finds less deadly than the kind that flows from her eyes, described as green in both poems, though with more uncertainty in the second than the first: “the poison that flows / From your eyes, from your green eyes” (“Le Poison,” lines 11-12); “Your mysterious eye—is it blue, gray, or green?” (“Ciel brouillé,” line 2). In likening one of the poisons in one poem to the kind of sunlit cloudy sky to which he will compare his mistress in the next, as well as an echoing “vapeur,” Baudelaire has found ways to make the two poems echo each other in a subtle, and not immediately obvious, way. It is more interesting and esthetically pleasing than the fact that both are about the same woman.

47. “Le Chat”

Dans ma cervelle se promène,
 Ainsi qu'en son appartement,
 Un beau chat, fort, doux et charmant;
 4 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 suave et profonde.
 8 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
 12 Et me pénètre comme un philtre.

Elle endort les plus cruels maux
 Et contient toutes les extases;
 Pour dire les plus longues phrases,

- 16 Elle n'a plus besoin de mots.
- Non, il n'est pas d'archet qui morde
 Sur mon coeur, parfait instrument,
 Et fasse plus royalement
 20 Chanter sa plus vibrante corde
- Que ta voix, chat mystérieux,
 Chat séraphique, chat étrange,
 En qui tout est, comme en un ange,
 24 Aussi subtil qu'harmonieux.
- De sa fourrure blonde et brune
 Sort un parfum si doux, qu'un soir
 J'en fus embaumé, pour l'avoir
 28 Caressée une fois, rien qu'une.
- C'est l'esprit familier du lieu;
 Il juge, il préside, il inspire
 Toutes choses dans son empire;
 32 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,
 36 Et que je regarde en moi-même,
- Je vois avec étonnement
 Le feu de ses prunelles pâles,
 Clairs fanaux, vivantes opales,
 40 Qui me contemplent fixement.

Baudelaire begins “Ciel brouillé” by focusing on his mistress’s eyes: “One would say your gaze was covered with a vapor; / Your mysterious eye--is it blue, gray, or green?-- / Alternatively tender, sweet, and cruel, / Reflects the indolence and paleness of the sky.” We will encounter that ocular paleness again in the “prunelles pâles” [pale pupils] (line 38) of “Le Chat” [The Cat]. Two of the three adjectives (“*tendre, doux et cruel*” [*tender, sweet and cruel*]) that he applies to her eyes in line 3 he likewise attributes to the feline: “A beautiful cat, strong, *sweet and [doux et]* charming; / When he meows, one can barely hear it, // Its timbre is so *tender [tendre]* and discreet” (lines 4-6).

Not only do her eyes in “Ciel brouillé” resemble both the misty sky of the poem before (“Le Poison”) and the pale eyes of the one that follows (“Le Chat”), but they serve as a midpoint between those poems in another way. In line 23 of “Le Poison” her eyes are “Lakes in which my soul trembles and sees its mirror image”; at the conclusion of “Le Chat” the poet says that after finding his eyes drawn to the cat as if by a magnet, “I look into myself” and “see with astonishment / The fire of those pale pupils, / Bright beacons, living opals, / Contemplating me with a fixed stare” (lines 36-40). In “Le Poison” sees himself in her eyes; in “Le Chat” he sees the cat’s eyes within himself. Appropriately, one situation is the mirror image of the other.

48. "Le Beau Navire"

Je veux te raconter, ô molle enchanteresse,
 Les diverses beautés qui parent ta jeunesse;
 Je veux te peindre ta beauté,
 4 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
 8 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
 12 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,
 16 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
 20 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
 24 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 toiles, et va roulant
 28 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
 32 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,
 36 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

40 Tu passes ton chemin, majestueuse enfant.

Although “Le Chat” is in the midst of a series of poems apparently devoted to Marie Daubrun, it actually makes no mention of her at all. Claude Pichois writes, “In this poem, the primary reader to whom it is destined--the contemporary reader [of the *Fleurs du mal* in 1857]--knows nothing of the relations Baudelaire had with any woman, and certainly not with Marie Daubrun. The reader therefore takes literally the enumeration and description of this cat’s qualities (voice, fur, perfume, eyes)” (*O. C., I*, 925) Pichois goes on to say that the poet’s friends may have known that she loved the cat (or, I might add, that it was her cat), but he wasn’t writing for them. “Le Chat” echoes “Ciel brouillé” whether we read the cat as representing the woman or not. Likewise, “Le Beau Navire” [The Beautiful Ship] shows subtle connections to “Le Chat” that we don’t need to see any connection between Daubrun and the cat to appreciate.

I will start with a continuity running through all three poems: (a) “Ton oeil . . . tendre, *doux et cruel*” [Your eye . . . tender, *gentle and cruel*] (“Ciel brouillé,” lines 2, 3), (b) “Un beau chat, fort, *doux et charmant*” [“A beautiful cat, strong, *gentle and charming*] Le Chat,” line 3] (c) “un rythme *doux, et paresseux, et lent*” [a rhythm *gentle, and lazy, and slow*] (“Le Beau Navire,” line 8). On the page proofs for this line from “Le Chat” in 1857 he changed it to its present form from “Un beau chat, doux, fier et charmant” [A beautiful cat, gentle, proud, and charming]. The change has the effect of maintaining the “doux et” in the middle of three adjectives through three consecutive poems. The combination “doux et” or “doux, et” appears only here in the *Fleurs du mal*. (In 1861, the line in “Ciel brouillé” would lose its “doux et” when it became “tendre, rêveur, cruel” [tender, dreamy, cruel], but the echo between “Le Chat” and “Le Beau Navire” would remain.)

The first thing we learn about the cat is that he is walking in the poet’s brain (“cervelle”). In “Le Beau Navire” the poet’s mistress works on his brain too, her breast described as “A cabinet with *sweet secrets [doux secrets]*, full of good things, / Of wines, *perfumes [parfums]*, liqueurs / That would make men’s brains [“cerveaux”] and hearts delirious” (lines 22-24). The cat, too, has “son *secret*” [his *secret*] (line 8) and exudes his own “*parfum si doux*” [*perfume so sweet*] (line 26). He walks [“se promène”] in the poet’s brain--by contrast to the motionless cat in the earlier poem with the same title (33. “Le Chat”), whom the poet held captive on his chest, the better to parallel his mistress held captive in her tomb in the immediately preceding “Remords posthume.” This cat’s forward movement has a similar role to play with regard to “Le Beau Navire,” paralleling the advance of the ship, whose beauty lies in the way its moves. We see that in the second stanza, when the sweep of her skirt puts him in mind of a departing ship under full sail, rolling through the waves at a pace “doux, et paresseux, et lent.” We see it again when “Ta tête se pavane” [Your head struts] and “Tu passes ton chemin, majestueuse enfant” [You go your way, majestic child] in the third.

Finally, his mistress walking gives rise to the extraordinary image of two witches stirring “*un philtre noir dans un vase profond*” [a black *potion* in a deep vase] in stanza eight, a word that appears to emerge from the voice of the cat walking in his brain, that “me pénètre comme *un philtre*” [penetrates me like a *potion*].

49. “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
 10 Si mystérieux
 De tes traîtres yeux,
 Brillant à travers leurs larmes.

Là, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté,
 Luxe, calme et volupté.

15 Des meubles luisants,
 Polis par les ans,
 Décoreraient notre chambre;
 Les plus rares fleurs
 Mêlant leurs odeurs
 20 Aux vagues senteurs de l'ambre,
 Les riches plafonds,
 Les miroirs profonds,
 La splendeur orientale,
 Tout y parlerait
 25 A l'âme en secret
 Sa douce langue natale.

Là, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté,
 Luxe, calme et volupté.

30 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.
 35 — Les soleils couchants
 Revêtent les champs,
 Les canaux, la ville entière,
 D'hyacinthe et d'or;
 — Le monde s'endort
 40 Dans une chaude lumière.

Là, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté,
 Luxe, calme et volupté.

Baudelaire begins “L’Invitation au voyage” [Invitation to a Voyage] (“Mon *enfant*, ma soeur” [My *child*, my sister] as he ended “Le Beau Navire” (“Tu passes ton chemin, majestueuse *enfant*” [You go your way, majestic *child*]) by addressing his mistress as a child. In the first stanza of “Le Beau Navire” he had already broached this theme, asserting that the essence of her beauty is that she is that though mature, she is nevertheless childlike: “Je veux te peindre ta beauté, / Où l'enfance s'allie à la maturité” [I want to depict your beauty, / Where childhood (or the quality of being like a child) allies itself with maturity] (lines 3-4). That union of opposites

would be complemented by another union of opposites in “L’Invitation au voyage,” one fundamental to the earthly paradise where he invites her to join him: order and beauty, in the repeated refrain “Là, tout n’est qu’ordre et beauté, / Luxe, calme et volupté” [There, all is but order and beauty, / Luxury, calm, and delight] (lines 13-14, 27-28, 41-42). The three adjectives of the refrain’s second line are anticipated by the trio of adjectives (each of which are variations on the middle term in the other group of three, “calme”) describing how she advances like a beautiful ship: “doux, et paresseux, et lent” [gentle, and lazy, and slow]. In fact, that line, together with the other two I have just cited for their parallels with the second poem, are each part of a refrain of sorts in their own poem. For the first stanza (where “l’enfance s’allie à la maturité”) repeats as the fourth, the second stanza (where her rhythm is “doux, et paresseux, et lent”) as the seventh, and the third stanza (“ . . . majestueuse enfant”) as the tenth.

The second poem takes the two most important elements of the first, the woman and the “beau navire” she resembles, and combines them in a different way. Having been a means of travel, “un beau *vaisseau*” [a beautiful vessel] (lines 6 and 26), the woman becomes a traveling companion; and once at their destination, she and the poet can gaze at vessels related to her in a different way: “See on the canals / Those *vessels* [*vaisseaux*] sleeping . . . / It is to satisfy / Your least desire / That they come from the ends of the earth” (lines 29-30, 32-34).

The other thing to which he compares her in “Le Beau Navire” is a piece of furniture, an “Cabinet with *sweet secrets* [*doux secrets*], full of good things,” including “fragrances” [parfums] (lines 22, 23). Furniture, sweet fragrances, and secrecy will reappear in the voyage’s destination: “Shining furniture [Des *meubles* luisants], / Polished by the years / Would decorate our bedroom; / The rarest flowers / Blending their *odors* [*odeurs*] / With the vague *smells* [*senteurs*] of amber . . . / Everything there would speak / To the soul in *secret* / Its sweet [*secret*] native language] (lines 15-20, 24-26). Even the shininess of the furniture (of the “*meubles luisants*”) contains an echo of the woman in “Le Beau Navire”: “Your arms . . . / Are the solid equals of *shiny* [*luisants*] boa constrictors” (lines 33, 34). There are no other “luisants” (i.e., masculine plural) in the 1857 *Fleurs du mal*.

50. “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?
 5 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?
 10 Dans quel philtre? — dans quel vin? — dans quelle tisane?
- Dis-le, belle sorcière, oh! dis, si tu le sais,
 A cet esprit comblé d’angoisse
 Et pareil au mourant qu’écrasent les blessés,
 Que le sabot du cheval froisse,
 15 — Dis-le, belle sorcière, oh! dis, si tu le sais.
- A cet agonisant que déjà le loup flaire

Et que surveille le corbeau,
 — A ce soldat brisé, — s'il faut qu'il désespère
 D'avoir sa croix et son tombeau;
 20 Ce pauvre agonisant que déjà le loup flairer!

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?
 25 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!
 30 — 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,
 A qui notre coeur sert de cible?
 35 Adorable sorcière, aimes-tu les damnés?

L'Irréparable ronge avec sa dent maudite
 Notre âme, — honteux monument, —
 Et souvent il attaque, ainsi que le termite,
 Par la base le bâtiment.
 40 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;
 45 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
 50 Toujours, — toujours en vain, — l'Être aux ailes de gaze!

Having originally borne the title “À la Belle aux cheveux d’or” when it appeared in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* in 1855, “L’Irréparable” [The Irreparable] shows every indication of having been inspired by a play entitled “La Belle aux cheveux d’or” in which Marie Daubrun was an actress. It is possible to illuminate such details as the “Auberge” [Inn] whose lights are extinguished, the dying man menaced by wild beasts, and the sorceress by consulting the play (as Antoine Adam does at length, 343-45). Indeed, in the last two stanzas Baudelaire seems to allude to it. But, just as we could not presume that his first reading public could have known that the cat was Marie Daubrun’s, neither can we presume that they were familiar with the play. As James Lawler writes, “the language, if personal, is not private. We do not need to identify ‘l’Être aux

ailles de gaze' with Marie alone" (89). In fact, as both Adam points out, while Marie did play a character wearing gauze, the poem appears to give her another role as well. Adam writes: "Marie did not play the role of the fairy, as Baudelaire seems to believe, but that of the Princess Rosalinde. It must be admitted that enough time had passed" since Baudelaire saw the play in 1847," for his memories to become jumbled" (344). Or maybe we should abandon the notion of making the poem fit the play. Maybe instead we should look into how it fits into the *Fleurs du mal*.

The play's relation to the poem actually bears some similarity to the relation of poem to following poem in the *Fleurs*' sequence. For one way that a poem relates to the next poems is as a source of raw material, of elements that the next poem can rearrange in its own constellation, for its own ends. By conflating the fairy and the princess, Baudelaire was taking from each from he needed to construct a counterpart to the woman the poem addresses (who had played but one of the roles as an actress). It was the princess who was clothed in gold and gauze (line 46), but it was the fairy who vanquished Satan (line 47). It was the princess who commanded that there be light, in the scene to which lines 21-25 allude, reassuring the prince with comforting words (Adam, 345n5), as if answering the question Baudelaire poses in those lines. The poet appears to identify himself with the prince, but the dying man in lines 11-20 who despairs of having a tomb for whose sake the poet asks his questions with such urgency that we may presume he is speaking for himself is not the prince in the play, but the villain, a demonic magician persecuting the princess.

But it happens that the poet in "L'Invitation au voyage" was seeking a final resting place too, a country to love and then die in: "To love and to die / In the land that resembles you" (lines 5-6). As travelers, they would be looking for a place to lodge, and in the poet's imagination they find one, the luxuriously furnished bedroom described in lines 15-26. Travelers in "L'Irréparable" search for a place to stay too, but in vain: "Hope shining in the windows of the Inn / Is snuffed out, forever dead! / With neither moon nor rays of light to find where one lodges / The martyrs of a bad road! / The Devil has snuffed out all in the windows of the Inn" (lines 26-30). But it was different in the play: "The princess . . . flees [the evil magician]. She notices a habitation with light in the windows. She goes there. Now this is the demons' manor [but she doesn't know that]. She lies down to sleep. They put out the candles; thunder is heard. She awakens and cries out: 'How dark it is! Who put out the lights?'" (Adam, 343n6). In the play there is only one traveler, the princess; in the poem the travelers are plural (the "martyrs"). In the play, the building is a habitation; in the poem, an inn. In the play, the lights are put out after the traveler has entered and gone to bed; in the poem, the light in the windows is extinguished before the travelers can find their way there; with no light to guide them, the inn itself ("où l'on heberge" [where one lodges]) cannot be found.

Each of these departures from the source brings "L'Irréparable" closer to "L'Invitation au voyage." The travelers in both poems are, unlike the princess in the play, plural. As "martyrs of a bad road" the travelers in "L'Irréparable" suffer the fatigue of an arduous journey (made all the more so by the absence of any light to guide them), whereas the princess was on the run from a vile pursuer. While there is no indication that the travelers in "L'Invitation au voyage" endure so arduous a journey as those in the other poem, at least both groups are essentially traveling, not fleeing. Making the habitation into an "Auberge" [Inn] places those seeking it in the category of travelers, not damsels in distress. The change made with regard to when the lights are extinguished has the same effect: their extinction in the play makes the princess realize she is not alone ("Who put out the lights?"); their extinction in "L'Irréparable" just adds to difficulty of an finding an inn.

The first line of the last stanza of "L'Irréparable"--"Un être, qui n'était que lumière, or et gaze" [A being who was but light, gold and gauze] (line 46)--should sound familiar. It should put us in mind of the refrain "Là, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté, / Luxe, calme, et volupté" [There, all is

but order and beauty, / Luxury, calm, and delight] (lines 13-14, 27-28, 41-42). In both, something--in "L'Irréparable" the "being" who is the conflation of fairy and princess as well as the woman to whom the poem is addressed, in "L'Invitation au voyage" the land that resembles the woman to whom the poem is addressed--is said to be entirely composed of the elements that follow the *que*. Each of the three elements "lumière, or et gaze" have their equivalent in the other poem (this even apart from the way "or" echoes the *or* of "ordre," and the *lu* of "lumière" echoes the *lu* of "luxe" and "volupté). In "L'Invitation au voyage" (a) the setting suns clothe everything in a golden light ("D'hyacinthe et d'or" [With hyacinthe and *gold*] (line 38); (b) at the same time all is bathed in "une chaude lumière" [a warm *light*] (line 40); (c) gauze finds its counterpart in the blurring veil of haze of that comes from "Les soleils mouillés / De ces ciels brouillés" [The watery suns / Of those cloudy skies] (lines 7-8).

51. "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
 4 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. —
 8 Ne cherchez plus mon coeur; des monstres 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
 11 — Un parfum nage autour de votre gorge nue! —

O Beauté, dur fléau des âmes! tu le veux!
 Avec tes yeux de feu, brillants comme des fêtes,
 14 Calcine ces lambeaux qu'ont épargné les bêtes!

The speaker switches from "tu" to "vous" in a disconcerting way in "Causerie" [Chat]. It is odd, too, that this "causerie" should be so one-sided--unless we take the title in the other sense (as in Sainte-Beuve's *Causeries du lundi*) of a brief topical discourse by one person. But that is surely ruled out by the fact that he is not speaking to a public but to a woman who has her hand on his chest. We only hear one voice, presumably the poet's, but is speaking to different women? The dashes are no help, for elsewhere in the collection they do not consistently indicate a change of speaker. Pichois resolves the difficulty by suggesting that the speaker slips from distance to familiarity and then, when the woman disapproves of the "tu," back to distance again, and that the "tu" of the final tercet is addressed to Beauty itself, not to the woman (*OC*, I: 933).

In any event, there are obvious carryovers from "L'Irréparable." The "dent" [tooth] that attacked his heart in line 7 recycles the "dent maudite" [cursed tooth] that eats away at his soul in lines 36-37 of the other poem. The "monstres" [monsters], revised in 1861 to "bêtes" [beasts] (but already "bêtes" in 1857 in line 14), that ate his heart in line 8 can be traced back to the wild beasts that prepare to devour the wounded soldier in lines 16-20. "Mon coeur est un palais flétri par la cohue" [My heart is a palace ravaged by the mob] (line 9) closely parallels "mon coeur . . . / Est un théâtre" [my heart . . . / Is a theater] (lines 48-49) (as Richter notes, p. 526). The words "mon coeur est [. . .] un . . ." appear in no other poem.

But as in other poems, although these elements reappear in “Causerie” they leave the associations they had in “L’Irréparable” and take up new ones. There, it was the tooth of remorse that ate at the poet; here, that of the women in his life.

52. “L’Héautontimorouménos”

- Je te frapperai sans colère
Et sans haine, — comme un boucher!
Comme Moïse le rocher,
4 — Et je ferai de ta paupière,
- Pour abreuver mon Saharah,
Jaillir les eaux de la souffrance.
Mon désir gonflé d’espérance
8 Sur tes pleurs salés nagera
- Comme un vaisseau qui prend le large,
Et dans mon coeur qu’ils souleront
Tes chers sanglots retentiront
12 Comme un tambour qui bat la charge!
- Ne suis-je pas un faux accord
Dans la divine symphonie,
Grâce à la vorace Ironie
16 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
20 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,
24 Et la victime et le bourreau!
- Je suis de mon coeur le vampire,
— Un de ces grands abandonnés
Au rire éternel condamnés.
28 Et qui ne peuvent plus sourire!

The first tercet of “Causerie” is particularly rich in material Baudelaire would recycle in “L’Héautontimorouménos” [The Self-Tormentor] (or vice-versa, depending on which poem he wrote first). There is drunkenness is “my heart” in both “*Mon coeur est un palais flétri par la cohue; / On s’y soule*” [*My heart is a palace ravaged by the mob; / They get drunk there*] (“Causerie,” lines 10-11) and “*dans mon coeur qu’ils souleront / Tes chers sanglots retentiront*” [*in my heart, which they will inebriate, / Your dear sobs will resound*] (“L’Héautontimorouménos,” lines 10-11), but in one poem his heart suffers from the inbriation of others, while in the other his heart is the one getting drunk, and enjoying it. “Un parfum *nage*

autour de votre gorge nue” [A perfume swims around your naked breast” (line 11) is reworked (or again, vice-versa) as “Mon désir gonflé d'espérance / Sur tes pleurs salés *nagera*” [My desire, swelled up by hope, / Will swim on your salty tears] (lines 7-8). There is not just swimming in both but air as well, the air the perfumes swims in and the air that swells his desire. His desire will “swim” “Comme un vaisseau qui prend le large” [Like a ship putting out to sea] (line 9), so we realize that there it is indeed air swelling his desire, wind in its sails. It sails her tears that amass to make a sea, as in the other poem “la tristesse en moi rises up comme la mer” [sadness in me mounts like the sea] (line 2). His sadness in one poem becomes hers in the next, both a rising sea. Not only does the second poem recycle elements of the first in this instance, but it reverses it as well. That of course is the whole point of “L'Héautontimorouménos,” to invert the roles, to inflict on her the suffering she (and all the others) had inflicted on him.

“Je suis le sinistre miroir / Où la mégère se regarde” [I am the sinister mirror / Where the Megera sees herself] (lines 19-20) he declares, but the poem too is a mirror, reversing the imagery of the poem before.

53. “Franciscae meae laudes”

Vers composés pour une modiste érudite et dévote

Ne semble-t-il pas au lecteur, comme à moi, que la langue de la dernière décadence latine, — suprême soupir d'une personne robuste déjà transformée et préparée par la vie spirituelle, — est singulièrement propre à exprimer la passion telle que l'a comprise et sentie le monde poétique moderne? La mysticité est l'autre pôle de cet aimant dont Catulle et sa bande, poètes brutaux et purement épidermiques, n'ont connu que le pôle sensualité. Dans cette merveilleuse langue, le solécisme et le barbarisme me paraissent rendre les négligences forcées d'une passion qui s'oublie et se moque de règles. Les mots, pris dans une acception nouvelle, révèlent la maladresse charmante du barbare du nord agenouillé devant la beauté romaine. Le calembour lui-même, quand il traverse ces pédantesques bégaiements, ne joue-t-il pas la grâce sauvage et baroque de l'enfance?

Novis te cantabo chordis,
O novelletum quod ludis
3 In solitudine cordis.

Esto sertis implicata,
O femina delicata,
6 Per quam solvuntus peccata !

Sicut beneficum Lethe,
Hauriam oscula de te,
9 Quae imbuta es magnete.

Quum vitiorum tempestas
Turbabat omnes semitas,
12 Apparuiisti, Deitas,

Velut stella salutaris
In naufragiis amaris.
15 — Suspendam cor tuis aris!

18 Piscina plena virtutis,
Fons aeternae juventutis,
Labris vocem redde mutis !

21 Quod erat spurcum, cremasti ;
Quod rudius, exaequasti ;
Quod debile, confirmasti.

24 In fame mea taberna,
In nocte mea lucerna,
Recte me semper gubernata.

27 Adde nunc vires viribus,
Dulce balneum suavibus
Unguentatum odoribus!

30 Meos circa lumbos mica,
O castitatis lorica,
Aqua tincta seraphica ;

33 Patera gemmis corusca,
Panis salsus, mollis esca,
Divinum vinum, Francisca!

[Verses composed for an erudite and devout milliner

Does it not seem to the reader, as it does to me, that Latin in its final decadence--the ultimate sigh of a robust person already transformed and made ready for the spiritual life--is singularly appropriate to express passion as the modern poetic world has understood and felt it? Mysticism is the other pole of that magnet of which Catullus and his band, brutal and purely epidermic poets, knew only the sensual pole. In this marvelous language, grammatical and vocabulary errors seem to me to convey the inevitable blunders of a passion that forgets itself and thumbs its nose at rules. The words, taken in new senses, reveal the charming clumsiness of the Northern barbarian kneeling before Roman beauty. Does not the pun itself, when it passes through these pedantic stammerings, display the wild and baroque grace of childhood?]

“Lauds for My Françoise”

I will sing of you on new chords,
O new planting who play
In the solitude of the heart.

Be always covered with garlands,
O delicious woman,
Thanks to whom sins are absolved!

As from a beneficent Lethe,
I will draw up kisses from within you,
You from whom radiates a magnetic charm.

When the tempest of vices
Was sweeping through all roads,
You appeared, Deity,

Like a saving star
In ocean shipwrecks.
I will suspend my heart from your altars!

Pool full of virtue,
Spring of eternal youth,
Grant speech to mute lips!

What had been rotten, you burned;
What had been rough-hewn, you made smooth;
What had been feeble, you made strong.

In my hunger you are the inn,
In my night you are light,
Guide me always on the correct path.

Add now your strength to mine,
Sweet bath scented
With pleasant perfumes!

Glitter around my loins,
O armor of chastity,
Tinted with seraphic water;

Cup brilliant with gems,
Salted bread, delicate food,
Divine wine, O Françoise!]

“I will sing of you on new *chords*,” the poet begins in “Franciscae meae laudes,” but the chord may not be all that new. In “L’Héautontimorouménos” (whose Greek title fits well with the Latin one that follows it) he declared himself to be “a false chord [un faux accord] / In the divine symphony” (lines 13-14). Yet the two situations are exactly opposed: in one poem, he makes bad music, striking a false chord; in the other, presumably, his performance is excellent. Although there are other *accords* in the *Fleurs du mal* these are the only two occasions in which poet is making music with them.

The women in both poems display salty associations. The victim of his assault in “L’Héautontimorouménos” will shed “pleurs salés” [salty tears] (line 8); Françoise is “Panis salsus” [Salted bread] (line 32). There is no other saltiness in the 1857 *Fleurs du mal*.

Both are sources of water. His victim’s tears will spring forth like water from the rock Moses struck, irrigating his Sahara and becoming a sea on whose surface his ship will sail (stanzas 1-3). Françoise, on the other hand, is a “Piscina” [pool], a “Fons aeternae juventutis” [A fountain of eternal youth] (lines 16-17).

54. “À une dame créole”

4 Au pays parfumé que le soleil caresse,
 J'ai connu sous un dais d'arbres verts et dorés
 Et de palmiers, d'où pleut sur les yeux la paresse,
 Une dame créole aux charmes ignorés.

8 Son teint est pâle et chaud; la brune enchanteresse
 A dans le cou des airs noblement maniérés;
 Grande et svelte en marchant comme une chasserresse
 Son sourire est tranquille et ses yeux assurés.

11 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,

14 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.

In “Franciscae meae laudes” Baudelaire clothes a girl of his own century in the language of a more ancient time, the ecclesiastical Latin of the Middle Ages; in “À une dame créole” [To a Creole Lady] he does the same thing, for if the Creole lady were to come to the “antiques manoirs” [ancient châteaux] of the Loire, she would be celebrated by sonneteers like Ronsard, whose style Pichois (943), Adam (353), and Richter (584) agree that he imitates, particularly in the first tercet. As Françoise would make lips speak (line 18), this woman would poets write sonnets (lines 13).

55. “Moesta et errabunda”

5 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?

10 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!

15 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!
 20 Comme vous êtes loin, paradis parfumé!

Mais le vert paradis des amours enfantines,
 Les courses, les chansons, les baisers, les bouquets,
 Les violons mourant derrière les collines,
 Avec les brocs de vin, le soir, dans les bosquets,
 25 — 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,
 30 L'innocent paradis plein de plaisirs furtifs?

In “À une dame créole” the poet invites a woman who lives in the tropics to come to France; in “Moesta et errabunda” [Sad and Wandering] he encourages a woman who lives in France to daydream about going to the tropics. In other words, one poem is the inverse of the other. The Creole woman lives in a “pays *parfumé*” [perfumed land] (line 1); he entices Agathe, dwelling in an “immonde cité” [filthy city] that is probably Paris, to think of going to a “paradis *parfumé*” [perfumed paradise] (lines 16, 20). Nowhere else in the *Fleurs du mal* will a geographical place be *parfumé*. Here, in France, “la boue est faite de nos pleurs” [the mud is made from our tears] (“Moesta et errabunda,” line 12); but there the luxury of idle ease “pleut sur les yeux” [rains down on the eyes]. The eyes, in these poems, are intimately associated with both the sorrow of “here” and the delights of “there.”

He invites the Creole lady not only to come to France but also to go into the past, in the sixteenth century of the Châteaux of the Loire and of Ronsard; in the last two stanzas of “Moesta et errabunda” he invites Agathe to think of going back into another past, her own childhood, “le vert paradis des amours enfantines” [the green paradise of childhood loves] (lines 21, 25).

56. “Les Chats”

Les amoureux fervents et les savants austères
 Aiment également, dans leur mûre saison
 Les chats puissants et doux, orgueil de la maison
 4 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'Èrèbe les eût pris pour ses coursiers funèbres,
 8 S'ils pouvaient au servage incliner leur fierté.

Ils prennent en songeant les nobles attitudes
 Des grands sphinx allongés au fond des solitudes,
 11 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,

14 Étoilent vaguement leurs prunelles mystiques.

In “Les Chats” [Cats] Baudelaire pursues the theme of the difference between “here” and a southern and warmer “elsewhere” that appeared most recently in “À une dame créole” and continued in “Moesta et errabunda.” Fervent lovers, austere savants, and cats are all “frileux” [sensitive to cold] and “sédentaires” [sedentary], but cats by a mystical transformation offer the imagination a means of transport away to a warmer clime, the tropical desert. In the eyes of the lovers and savants who contemplate them, cats become “[de] grands sphinx allongés au fond des solitudes” [great sphinxes stretched out in the depths of the wilderness] (line 10). Cats play in this poem the role the ocean plays in “Moesta et errabunda,” carrying the “Amis . . . de *la volupté*” [Devotees . . . of *sensual pleasure*] to where they can find it, “sous un clair azur. . . / Où dans *la volupté* pure le coeur se noie” [under a bright azure sky . . . / Where the heart drowns itself in pure *sensual pleasure*] (“Moesta et errabunda,” lines 17, 19). An additional parallel confirms this, one so striking and unexpected it leads me to believe Baudelaire wrote “Moesta et errabunda” (first published in 1855) with “Les Chats” (already published in 1847) in mind. Compare the second stanza of “Moesta et errabunda”:

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!

[The sea, the vast sea consoles us for our labors!
 What demon gave the sea, hoarse singer
 Accompanied by the immense organ of groaning winds,
 This sublime function of rocker of cradles?
 The sea, the vast sea consoles us for our labors!] (lines 6-10)

with lines 5-6 of “Les Chats: “Amis de la science et de la volupté, / Ils cherchent le silence et l'horreur des ténèbres” [Erebus would have chosen them for his funeral horses, / If to servitude they could have bent their pride]. The sea, with its howling winds, seems an inappropriate choice for the job of offering comfort, as cats seem an inappropriate choice for the job of pulling a chariot. But Erebus would have engaged them for that purpose if they would have accepted it, and the sea does succeed in consoling us for our pains. The sea does that by taking us away: “enlève-moi, frégate! / Loin! — loin!” [take me away, frigate! / Far! far!] (lines 11-12). And cats take the warmth-seeking “frileux,” in their imagination, to the torrid desert, turning into Egyptian sphinxes whose eyes evoke “un sable fin” [fine sand] (line 12). The parallel roles assigned Erebus, father of the Styx and thus associated with the underworld, and the demon are a nice touch.

57. “Les Hiboux”

Sous les ifs noirs qui les abritent,
 Les hiboux se tiennent rangés,
 Ainsi que des dieux étrangers,
 4 Dardant leur oeil rouge. Ils méditent.

Sans remuer ils se tiendront
 Jusqu'à l'heure mélancolique

- 8 OÙ, poussant le soleil oblique
Les ténèbres s'établiront.
- Leur attitude au sage enseigne
Qu'il faut en ce monde qu'il craigne
11 Le tumulte et le mouvement:
- L'homme ivre d'une ombre qui passe
Porte toujours le châtiment
14 D'avoir voulu changer de place.

Cats have an attitude--“When they dream they assume the noble *attitudes* / Of the great sphinxes” (lines 9-10)--and so do “Les Hiboux” [The Owls]: “Their *attitude* teaches the wise” (line 9). But what the Owls’ attitude teaches is at first glance the opposite of what the Cats’ attitude leads to. The Owls’ “attitude teaches the wise / That in this world he must fear / Tumult and movement: // The man intoxicated with a passing shadow / Is always punished / For having wanted a change of place” (lines 10-14). Fervent lovers and austere savants are allowed a change of place by taking a mental voyage south. Yet since they travel only in their imagination to the hot sands where sphinxes lie, are they really guilty of wanting a change of place? Being “frileux” [sensitive to cold] (line 4), they are attracted to the south (like the poet and Agathe in “Moesta et errabunda”), but being at the same time “sédentaires” [sedentary] (line 4), they want to remain physically right where they are.

Both cats and owls remain motionless for a long time, the cats turning into statues of sphinxes, the owls not moving until the melancholy hour when shadows fall (lines 5-8). The owls look like “foreign gods” (line 3); the cats look like foreign sphinxes. In their motionlessness, only the eyes are alive: the owls “dart out their red eye” (line 4), the cats’ “mystic pupils” shine like golden stars (lines 13-14).

The cats are asleep and dreaming (“songeant”); but the owls are awake: “ils méditent” [they meditate] (line 4). The relation of the two to shadows is complicated--in one way the opposite, in the other the same. This is because shadows appear twice in “Les Hiboux,” as “ténèbres” in line 8 and as the “ombre qui passe” in line 12. In teaching the wise not to be like the man intoxicated with a passing shadow, owls are the opposite of cats, who, like fervent lovers and austere savants, “seek out... the horror of shadows” (line 6). But at dusk when shadows fall, the owls will move. They might have made good coursers for Erebus.

58. “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
4 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,
8 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,

- 11 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,
 14 Et qui meurt, sans bouger, dans d'immenses efforts.

In a precise reversal, those who want to move suffer the consequences of that desire in “Les Hiboux,” but in “La Cloche fêlée” [The Cracked Bell] someone suffers from his *inability* to move, despite “d’immenses efforts” [immense efforts] (line 14). Had he been able to get out from under the pile of corpses, he might have survived. In this connection, “Sans remuer” [Without moving] (“Les Hiboux,” line 5) parallels “sans bouger” [without budging] (“La Cloche fêlée,” line 14). The other soldier resembles the owls, keeping watch under the tent as they keep watch under the trees: “*Sous les ifs noirs qui les abritent . . . / Ainsi que des dieux étrangers, / . . . Ils méditent*” [Under the black yew-trees that shelter them . . . / Like foreign gods, / . . . They meditate] (lines 1-4). “*Ainsi qu’un vieux soldat qui veille sous la tente*” [Like an old soldier who keeps watch under the tent] (line 8). Baudelaire fine-tuned the resemblance after the poem’s initial publication, changing the third line from “*Comme des idoles de jais*” to “*Ainsi que . . .*” (O.C. I, 962).

59. “Spleen”

- Pluviôse irrité contre la ville entière
 De son urne à grands flots verse un froid ténébreux
 Aux pâles habitants du voisin cimetière
 4 Et la mortalité sur les faubourgs brumeux.

- Mon chat sur le carreau cherchant une litière
 Agite sans repos son corps maigre et galeux;
 L'ombre d'un vieux poète erre dans la gouttière
 8 Avec la triste voix d'un fantôme frileux.

- Le bourdon se lamente, et la bûche enfumée
 Accompagne en fausset la pendule enrhumée,
 11 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
 14 Causent sinistrement de leurs amours défunts.

In “Spleen” it is winter (“Pluviôse” being the month straddling January and February in the revolutionary calendar); the poet sits by his smoky fire, a “bûche *enfumée*” [smoky log] (line 9); the weather outside is foggy (“*brumeux*,” line 4), cold and dark, “un *froid ténébreux*” [a gloomy cold] (line 2); he hears a church bell ring: “Le bourdon se lamente” [The bass bell laments] (line 9). In “La Cloche fêlée,” it is winter: “pendant les nuits d’hiver” [on winter nights] (line 1); the poet sits by his smoky fire, “près du feu qui palpète et qui *fume*” [near the fire that crackles and smokes] (line 2); the weather outside is foggy. “dans la *brume*” [in the fog] (line 4), dark and cold: “l’air *froid des nuits*” [the cold air of the nights] (line 10); and he hears church bells ring, “des carillons qui chantent” [carillons singing] (line 4). But the bells connote opposite

emotions: those in the first poem “sing” and are fortunate (“Bienheureuse”) to be in good health, with a “vigorous throat” (line 5), while the one in “Spleen” “laments.”

The voice of a poet is heard in both poems. In “Spleen,” it is “la triste voix” [the sad voice] of the ghost of a poet; in “La Cloche fêlée,” it is the “voix affaiblie” [enfeebled voice] of the poet-narrator. That “vieux poète” [old poet] with his pitiful voice contrasts with the “vieux soldat” [old soldier] whose voice is as vigorous as the bell’s.

The theme of moving vs. not moving continues into “Spleen,” as the cat “Restlessly agitates his body” in his search for a place to rest. This is a symmetrical opposite to the wounded soldier who is trying to move but cannot, seeking a way out of his enforced immobility. The weight of the dead piled above is imposing this final resting place on its unwilling tenant. The dead are collected in “Spleen” too, the “pale inhabitants of the neighboring cemetery” (line 3) on which the rain falls. The pack of cards constitute another collection of the dead, a pile like the “grand tas de morts” [great pile of dead] (line 13) from which a voice is heard, the “râle” [death rattle] of the wounded soldier that resembles the poet’s “voix affaiblie.” Faint voices (faint, one presumes) emerge from the pile of cards too, the jack of hearts and queen of spades discussing “leurs amours défunts” [their dead love]--the love affair they, now dead, had carried on when alive.

60. “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,
5 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
10 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
Hument le vieux parfum d'un flacon débouché.

15 Rien n'égale en longueur les boiteuses journées,
Quand sous les lourds flocons des neigeuses années
L'ennui, fruit de la morose incuriosité,
Prend les proportions de l'immortalité.
— Désormais tu n'es plus, ô matière vivante,
20 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.

Baudelaire takes the theme a pile of the dead, begun in “La Cloche fêlée” with the stack of dead soldiers and continued in “Spleen: “Pluviôse. . .” with the pack of playing cards of which two

speak from beyond the grave, and builds a whole poem around it here. There is old perfume in both (lines 11 and 14). Like the playing cards, the items in the chest of drawers compose a tomb, resembling the poet's brain, "Containing more dead than the paupers' cemetery" (line 7). Like the deck of cards, and like the pile of dead soldiers, a sound emerges from this tomb too, the sphinx (actually, the statue of Memnon) that sings when struck by the rays of the sun (lines 22-24).

In the poem before, from his urn Pluviôse pours down "la mortalité" [mortality] (line 4) in the form of cold rain. Here, time hangs heavy in the form of "heavy snowflakes," giving rise to ennui that "Prend les proportions de l'immortalité" [Takes on the proportions of *immortality*] (lines 16-18). In other words, both *la mortalité* and *l'immortalité* precipitate from time (the month called Pluviôse, the "snowy years"), in the only appearance of either word in the 1857 or 1861 collection.

61. "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.
 5 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,
 10 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,
 15 Et dans ces bains de sang qui des Romains nous viennent,
 Et dont sur leurs vieux jours les puissants se souviennent,
 Il n'a pas réchauffé ce cadavre hébété
 Où coule au lieu de sang l'eau verte du Léthé.

In 60. "Spleen," *ennui* took on the proportions of immortality (lines 16-17); here it leads instead to mortality, to the imminent death of the king who "*S'ennuie avec ses chiens*" [*Is bored with his dogs*] (line 4) as with everything else, and who the poet says he resembles. The poet in the poem before was old, having "more memories than if I had lived a thousand years" (line 1); as the king, here he is "young and yet very old" (line 2). But though the poet sees himself as old in both poems, and is afflicted by *ennui*, the two versions of himself are each other's opposite in a number of ways. In the first poem, he is full to overflowing. More stocked with memories than if he had lived a thousand years, his brain hiding more secrets than a "gros meuble à tiroirs," he is an "immense caveau" [immense tomb] holding more dead than a potter's field. In the second, is a mere skeleton (line 12) containing nothing. The latter's bed becomes a tomb (line 9), but the former is himself a tomb--a pyramid, a granite monument, a sphinx--and is thus, like his ennui, immortal. The poet as king cannot be "réchauffé" [reheated] (line 17). But the poet as a sphinx who "chante . . . aux rayons de soleil" [sings . . . at the rays of the sun] is reheated by those rays, for according to the Memnon myth alluded to here it is the warmth of the sun that makes the statue sing. Finally, the poet in the first poem is above all one who remembers, but the poet in the second has Lethe in his veins, the river in Hades that makes one forget all.

62. “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
 4 Il nous fait 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,
 8 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'horribles araignées
 12 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
 16 Qui se mettent à geindre opiniâtement.

— Et d'anciens corbillards, sans tambours ni musique,
 Défilent lentement dans mon âme; et, l'Espoir
 Pleurant comme un vaincu, l'Angoisse despotique
 20 Sur mon crâne incliné plante son drapeau noir.

The poet in “Spleen: Je suis comme le roi . . .” is like the king of a “rainy country” (line 1), and rain continues to fall in this “Spleen” as well (lines 9-10); in addition, the poet as king “*S'ennuie*” [Is bored] (line 4) with everything, and the poet here likewise complains of “longs *ennuis*” [long fits of *boredom*]. But in other regards the situation here is the opposite of what it is there. Those surrounding the king do their best to draw him out, but he refuses to emerge from his self-inflicted imprisonment, with the result that “Son lit . . . *se transforme en tombeau*” [His bed . . . *is transformed into* a tomb] (line 9). In the present poem, the narrator, no longer a king but now speaking for the whole human race, is imprisoned too, but unwillingly so, through a parallel transformation: “la terre *est changée en un cachot humide*” [the earth *is changed into* a damp dungeon cell] (line 10). In the other poem, ladies-in-waiting give up trying to dress provocatively “Pour tirer un *souris* de” [To get a smile out of] (line 12) the king; in this one, Hope, “comme une chauve-*souris*” [like a bat] (line 6) tries in vain to escape its prison, beating its wings against the walls and its head against the ceiling. One *souris* cannot be drawn out; the other -*souris* wants to get out but cannot.

Intead of a dying “*peuple*” [*people*] (line 6) in front of his balcony--having come, I think we can presume, to press their demands for bread--who in earlier times might, like his falcon and prey, have been able to provide the king some amusement, another sort of *peuple* (line 11), mute this time (as opposed to the populace shouting their demands below the king’s balcony), breaks in, not only to the speaker’s prison cell but to the depths of his brain. The bells that suddenly burst forth in the next stanza, when we read them in the context of the “people” in the streets, as I think Baudelaire encourages us to do so, evoke the *tocsins* that called a furious people to

revolution (on August 10, 1792, for example, at the taking of the Tuileries). The explosion of bells is accompanied by stubborn groaning (line 16), which further suggests a populace in the mood for revolution.

The poem closes with a double allusion to the poem before. The king had reduced himself to a skeleton (line 12); the speaker here seems nearly to have as well, for it is his “crâne” [skull] that bears the sign of his defeat. That the skull is *bowed* (“*incliné*”) recalls the first instance given of the king’s refusal to come out of his fatal *ennui*: “de ses précepteurs méprisant les *courbettes*” [disdaining his tutors’ *bows*] (line 3). Symmetrically, the second poem ends with a nod to the way the first began, the poet being obliged to accept here what he disdained there.

63. “Brumes et pluies”

O fins d'automne, hivers, printemps trempés de boue,
Endormeuses saisons! je vous aime et vous loue
D'envelopper ainsi mon coeur et mon cerveau
4 D'un linceul vapoureux et brumeux 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
8 Ouvrira largement ses ailes de corbeau.

Rien n'est plus doux au coeur plein de choses funèbres,
Et sur qui dès long-temps descendent les frimas,
11 O 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,
14 D'endormir la douleur sur un lit hasardeux.

In “Brumes et pluies” (Mists and Rains) the same weather conditions obtain as in the preceding poem, but the narrator’s attitude is precisely the opposite. It is raining and the sky is overcast, but instead of desperately trying to escape such weather as he did in “Spleen: Quand le ciel bas . . .”, now he revels in it. He loves and praises the seasons that give rise to mist and rain (line 3); there is nothing sweeter (line 9). What he perceived as imprisoning is now liberating. He is enveloped (line 3), as before he had been encircled (line 3) and imprisoned (line 5)--enveloped in fact by a shroud and a tomb (line 4), as before he had been oppressed by thoughts of death (lines 17-18), but he enjoys it. The image of the bat beating its prison walls “de son *aile* timide” [with its timid *wing*] (line 7) is replaced by that of his soul spreading “largement ses *ailes* de corbeau” [wide its crow’s *wings*] (line 8). The horror that “nos cerveaux” [our brains] (line 12) had endured when invaded by spiders weaving their webs are replaced by the delight the poet’s “cerveau” (line 3) and heart derive from their vaporous shroud and misty tomb.

64. “L’Irremédiable”

Une Idée, une Forme, un Être
Parti de l'azur et tombé
Dans un Styx bourbeux et plombé

4 OÙ nul oeil du Ciel ne pénètre;

Un Ange, imprudent voyageur
 Qu'a tenté l'amour du difforme,
 Au fond d'un cauchemar énorme

8 Se débattant comme un nageur,

Et luttant, angoisses funèbres!
 Contre un gigantesque remous
 Qui va chantant comme les fous

12 Et pirouettant dans les ténèbres;

Un malheureux ensorcelé
 Dans ses tâtonnements futiles,
 Pour fuir d'un lieu plein de reptiles,

16 Cherchant la lumière et la clé;

Un damné descendant sans lampe,
 Au bord d'un gouffre dont l'odeur
 Trahit l'humide profondeur,

20 D'éternels escaliers sans rampe,

Où veillent des monstres visqueux
 Dont les larges yeux de phosphore
 Font une nuit plus noire encore

24 Et ne rendent visibles qu'eux;

Un navire pris dans le pôle,
 Comme en un piège de cristal,
 Cherchant par quel détroit fatal

28 Il est tombé dans cette geôle;

— Emblèmes nets, tableau parfait
 D'une fortune irremédiable,
 Qui donne à penser que le Diable

32 Fait toujours bien tout ce qu'il fait!

Tête-à-tête sombre et limpide
 Qu'un coeur devenu son miroir!
 Puits de Vérité, clair et noir,

36 Où tremble une étoile livide,

Un phare ironique, infernal,
 Flambeau des grâces sataniques,
 Soulagement et gloire uniques,

40 — La conscience dans le Mal!

In “Brumes et pluies” water falls from the sky; in “L'Irremédiable” [The Irremediable], something else falls from the sky and lands in water, though the waters of hell, not of earth (and thus not of celestial origin, as were those “Brumes et pluies”). There is mud in both instances:

seasons “trempés de *boue* [drenched with *mud*] (“Brumes et pluies,” line 1); “un Styx *bourbeux* [a muddy River Styx] (“L’Irremédiable,” line 3). The angel who fell is just as trapped in his “piège” [trap] (line 26) and “geôle” [jail] (line 28) as the poet complained of being in his “cachot” [dungeon cell] and “prison” in “Spleen: Quand le ciel bas . . .” (lines 5 and 10) and rejoiced in being in his shroud and tomb in “Brumes et pluies” (line 4).

The poet took delight in “l’aspect permanent” [permanent aspect] (line 12) of those misty and rainy seasons; by contrast, the poet as fallen angel despairs at the eternal descending stairs (lien 20) and his irremediable fate (line 30).

65. “À une mendiante rousse”

Ma blanchette aux cheveux roux,
Dont la robe par ses trous
Laisse voir la pauvreté
4 Et la beauté,

Pour moi, poète chétif,
Ton jeune corps maladif
Plein de taches de rousseur,
8 A sa douceur;

Tu portes plus galamment
Qu’une pipeuse d’amant
Ses brodequins de velours
12 Tes sabots lourds.

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

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

Que des noeuds mal attachés
Dévoilent pour nos péchés
Ton sein plus blanc que du lait
24 Tout nouvelet;

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

— Perles de la plus belle eau,
Sonnets de maître Belleau
Par tes galants mis aux fers

32 Sans cesse offerts,
 Valetaille de rimeurs
 Te dédiant leurs primeurs
 Et reluquant ton soulier
 36 Sous l'escalier,
 Maint page ami du hasard,
 Maint seigneur et maint Ronsard
 Épieraient pour le déduit
 40 Ton frais réduit!
 Tu compterais dans tes lits
 Plus de baisers que de lis,
 Et rangerais sous tes lois
 44 Plus d'un Valois!
 — Cependant tu vas gueusant
 Quelque vieux débris gisant
 Au seuil de quelque Véfour
 48 De carrefour;
 Tu vas lorgnant en dessous
 Des bijoux de vingt-neuf sous
 Dont je ne puis, oh! pardon!
 52 Te faire don;
 Va donc, sans autre ornement,
 Parfum, perles, diamant,
 Que ta maigre nudité,
 56 O ma beauté!

“L’Irremédiable” concludes with the poet peeking through hole--a well--at something pale, the “étoile livide” [pale star] “livid star” (line 36), reflected from the sky above. “À une mendiante rousse” [To a Red-Haired Beggar Girl] begins with the poet peeking through holes at pale beauty, the ones in the dress of the “blanchette” [white-skinned girl] he saw on the street. In “L’Irremédiable” the poet as he gazed in the well saw his mirror image (line 34); the “poète chétif” [sickly poet] gazing at the girl’s “corps maladif” [sickly body], given the equivalence of those adjectives, is, Mario Richter argues, staring at someone who resembles him. The poet, Richter writes, “is himself also reduced to poverty, to illness, to a decline in value” (907). Anne Berger concurs: “the poet is like the beggar girl, with whom he clearly identifies himself in the second stanza: the self-portrait of the speaker as a ‘poète chétif’ is in fact connected by the rhyme to the evocation of her ‘corps maladif.’ The red-haired beggar girl is him, as his words ‘pour moi’ [for me] would already suggest” (p. 323 of “«À une mendiante rousse» : variations sur le don d’un poème,” in *Lectures des Fleurs du mal*, ed. Steve Murphy. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2002, pp. 315-30).

Indeed what we see the girl doing at the end of the poem is what we saw the poet doing in the final stanzas of “L’Irremédiable,” looking down--as he looked down into the well--“lorgnant *en dessous*” [peering down at] (line 49) some gimcrack jewels, a counterpart to the “pale star,” the “phare ironique” [ironic beacon] he saw in the well. If it was ironic then, it is even more so now.

In an earlier version of “À une mendicante rousse” it was “De vieux bonnets” [Some old bonnets] (*O.C., I, 1001*) that she had seen and desired. Changing them to jewels with the potential to shine, despite their cheapness, created a closer equivalent to the shining light (variously “étoile,” “phare,” and “flambeau” [torch]) glimpsed in the well.

66. “Le Jeu”

Dans des fauteuils fanés des courtisanes vieilles,
 — Fronts poudrés, sourcils peints sur des regards d’acier, —
 Qui s’en vont brimbalant à leurs maigres oreilles
 4 Un cruel et blessant tic-tac de balancier;

Autour des verts tapis des visages sans lèvre,
 Des lèvres sans couleur, des mâchoires sans dent,
 Et des doigts convulsés d’une infernale fièvre,
 8 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
 12 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’antre taciturne,
 16 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,
 20 L’un de son vieil honneur, l’autre de sa beauté!

Et mon coeur s’effraya d’envier le pauvre homme
 Qui court avec ferveur à l’abîme béant,
 Et soulé de son sang, préférerait en somme
 24 La douleur à la mort et l’enfer au néant!

“Le Jeu” [Gambling] is, we learn in line 13, a dream, “un rêve nocturne.” The poem presents a gambling den populated by two distinct groups, aged prostitutes and illustrious poets. The latter have come to “gaspiller leurs sanglantes sueurs” [squander their bleeding perspiration] (line 12). With drops of blood on their skin they have one trait in common the freckled beggar girl, whose body is “Plein de taches de rousseur” [Full of spots of red--i.e., of freckles] (line 7). Of course, the “vieilles courtisanes” and “putains” resemble her even more strongly, despite their age, since they all ply the same trade. But in addition Baudelaire plants a linguistic link between her “*maigre nudité*” [*thin* beauty] (line 55) and their “*maigres oreilles*” [*thin* ears] (line 3). Yet the red splotches linking the poets in “Le Jeu” with the freckled beggar girl replay the identification in the other poem between the poet and the girl evident in the rhyming “chétif” and “maladif.”

There are illustrious poets in both poems, those so termed in “Le Jeu” in line 11, and Ronsard and Belleau in “À une mendiante rousse.” The difference is that those illustrious two were not identified with the girl, while the poet-narrator of that poem was, but in “Le Jeu” the opposite obtains. The “poètes illustres” (in addition to being linked by their blood-beaded sweat to the freckled girl) are lumped together with the prostitutes, trafficking in their honor as the courtisans are in their beauty, whereas the poet-narrator is not. He is off in a corner taking it all in, though wishing in a way he were like the gamblers, envying the poets’ tenacious passion and the whores’ deathly gaiety (lines 17-18).

67. “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.

5 O 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,
 10 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.
 A travers les lueurs que tourmente le vent
 15 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
 20 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,
 25 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,
 30 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 leur gouffre commun;
 L'hôpital se remplit de leurs soupirs. — Plus d'un
 35 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!

There is a gambling scene in “Le Crépuscule du soir” [Evening Twilight], as there was in “Le Jeu,” again populated by two groups of players of whom prostitutes are one. But the other group is composed, not of illustrious poets as in the scene the poet dreams of in “Le Jeu,” but of their accomplices, cardsharps: “Les tables d’hôte, dont le jeu fait les délices, / S’emplissent de catins et d’escrocs, leurs complices” [the tables d’hôte, where gambling delights, / Fill up with whores and cheats, their accomplices] (lines 23-24). Yet the “*fronts* ténébreux de poètes illustres” [gloomy *brows* of illustrious poets] (“Le Jeu,” line 11) are recalled in line 9: “Le savant obstiné dont le *front* s’alourdit” [the obstinate scholar whose *brow* becomes heavy], his obstinacy reflecting the obstinacy of the “passion tenace” [tenacious passion] (line 17) attributed to the gloomy-browed poets.

Both poems conclude with the image of mortals going to an abyss. In “Le Jeu” the poet was frightened by how much he envied the poets, the prostitutes, and the poor man “Who fervently hastens to the gaping abyss [abîme]” (line 22); in “Le Crépuscule du soir” the poet tells his soul to close its ear to the sounds of the dying, who are on their way “towards the common abyss” [gouffre] (line 33). The envy he felt in “Le Jeu” is here replaced by pity.

68. “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;
5 OÙ, comme un œil sanglant qui palpète et qui bouge,
La lampe sur le jour fut une tache rouge;
Où l'âme, sous le poids du corps revêché et lourd,
Imite les combats de la lampe et du jour.
Comme un visage en pleurs que les brises essuient,
10 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;
15 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'aggravent les douleurs des femmes en gésine;
Comme un sanglot coupé par un sang écumeux
20 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.

- 25 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!

As one might expect from its title, “Le Crépuscule du matin” [Morning Twilight] bears a number of resemblances to “Le Crépuscule du soir,” one twilight mirroring the other. The wind blows upon the street lamps in both: “les lueurs que tourmente le vent” [the glimmers tormented by the wind] (line 14); “le vent du matin soufflait sur les lanternes” [the wind of morning was blowing on the lanterns] (line 2). People are breathing their last in hospitals: “ils finissent / Leur destinée et vont vers le gouffre commun; / *L’hôpital* se remplit de leurs soupirs” [they finish / Their destiny and go toward the common pit; / *The hospital* is full of their sighs] (lines 32-34); “les agonisants dans le fond des *hospices* / Poussaient leur dernier râle” [the dying in the depth of the *hospices* / Were sounding their death rattle] (lines 22-23). Somewhat contradictorily, each poem claims that *its* twilight is the hour when pain increases: “*C’est l’heure où les douleurs des malades s’aigrissent*” [*It is the hour when the pains of the sick become worse*] (line (31); “*C’était l’heure où parmi le froid et la lésine / S’aggravent les douleurs des femmes en gésine*” [*It was the hour when, amid the cold and want, / The pains of women in childbirth become worse*] (lines 17-18). These are the only poems in the *Fleurs du mal* where “l’heure où” appears with “les douleurs.” They are also the only two where “leur travail” and “leurs travaux” can be found: thieves will soon begin “leur travail” [their work] (line 26); the debauched return, broken with fatigue, from “leurs travaux” (line 24).

69. “La servante au grand coeur...”

- La servante au grand coeur dont vous étiez jalouse,
— Dort-elle son sommeil sous une humble pelouse? —
Nous aurions déjà dû lui porter quelques fleurs.
Les morts, les pauvres morts ont de grandes douleurs,
5 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,
A dormir, comme ils font, chaudement dans leurs draps,
Tandis que, dévorés de noires songeries,
10 Sans compagnon de lit, sans bonnes causeries,
Vieux squelettes gelés travaillés par le ver,
Ils sentent s’égoutter les neiges de l’hiver,
Et l’éternité fuir sans qu’amis ni famille
Remplacent les lambeaux qui pendent à leur grille.
- 15 Lorsque la bûche siffle et chante, si le soir,
Calme, dans le fauteuil elle venait 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
20 Couvrir l’enfant grandi de son oeil maternel,
Que pourrais-je répondre à cette âme pieuse

Voyant tomber des pleurs de sa paupière creuse ?

Despite their similarities, there is one major difference between the two twilights. It is cold in “Le Crépuscule du matin”: poor women blow on their fingers (line 16), birthing mothers suffer “parmi le froid” [amid the cold] (line 17), dawn herself is “grelottante” [shivering] (line 25). But although the wind blows on the street lanterns in the evening just as it does in the morning, there is no mention of the weather in “Le Crépuscule du soir,” and not reason to believe that what weather there is is cold. The evening is “charmant” [charming] (line 1) and “aimable” [lovable] (line 5), and people are out and about, going to restaurants, theaters, and concerts.

The cold that reigns in “Le Crépuscule du matin,” however, connects that poem to “La servante au grand coeur . . .” [The big-hearted servant . . .], where those fortunate to be alive sleep “chaudement dans leurs draps” [warmly in their sheets (line 8) but the dead “sentent s’égoutter les neiges de l’hiver” [feel winter’s snows drip down] (line 12). It is on a cold December night that the narrator imagines the family servant returning from her grave to gaze upon him with a maternal eye. As morning twilight was the hour when for women giving birth “parmi le froid . . . / S’aggravent les douleurs” [amid the cold . . . / The pains become worse], here it is when the year turns cold that “Les morts, the pauvres morts, ont de grandes douleurs” [The dead, the poor dead, endure terrible pains] (line 4), particularly the servant who has come to “Couvrir l’enfant grandi de son oeil *maternel*” [Cover the child now grown with her *maternal* eye] (line 20). When he sees “tomber des pleurs de sa paupière creuse” [tears fall from her hollow eye] (line 22) we remember that in the poem before we saw “un visage en pleurs” [a face in tears] (line 9). It was “L’air . . . plein du frisson des choses qui s’enfuient” [The air . . . full of the shiver of things that *are fleeing*] (line 10). The dead servant with tears in her eyes was one of the “squelettes geles” [frozen skeletons] who “sentent . . . l’éternité *fuir*” [feel . . . eternity *fleeing*] (lines 11, 12, 13). We do not know what those “choses qui s’enfuient” are, but at least in the next poem that we know that eternity is one of them.

70. “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;
 5 — 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,
 Et versait largement ses beaux reflets de cierge
 10 Sur la nappe frugale et les rideaux de serge.

We know from a letter Baudelaire wrote his mother on January 11, 1858, that these two poems are linked: “Have you then not noticed that there were in the *Fleurs du mal* two poems about you, or at least alluding to some intimate details of our former life, from that period of widowhood that gave me memories both singular and sad—one, *Je n’ai pas oublié, voisine de la ville . . .* (Neuilly), and the other that follows it, *La servante au grand coeur dont vous étiez jalouse . . .* (Marianne)?” (*O. C., I*, p. 1036). But we don’t have to have recourse to his private correspondence to see that in both poems the narrator speaks of the past, specifically of his childhood past in line 20 of “La servante au grand coeur . . .” Mario Richter argues, bizarrely, from the fact that “Je n’ai pas oublié . . .” is preceded in the 1861 edition by “L’Amour du

mensonge” that the other person implied in the “Notre” [Our] in line 2 is the woman who figures in that preceding poem (Richter, 1149). He seems to have forgotten the 1857 edition, where “L’Amour du mensonge” does not appear, and where “Je n’ai pas oublié . . .” is preceded by “La servante au grand coeur . . .”, Baudelaire having kept them together in 1861 but reversed their order. In his analysis of “La servante au grand coeur . . .” Richter does identify the other person in the narrator’s first person plural as the latter’s mother, given that the narrator identifies himself in line 20 as a grown-up child (Richter, 1159). I agree, and would use Richter’s own argument (misapplied to the 1861 edition because he writes as if “La servante au grand coeur . . .” was always preceded by “L’Amour du mensonge”) to argue that since we know the other part of “Nous” in “La servante . . .” is the mother, the other part of “Nous” in the immediately following poem “Je n’ai pas oublié . . .” may well be her too. But although like Richter I find clues in contiguity, I do not believe we can blithely assume that a character in one poem is identical to a similar character in the next. Each poem in Baudelaire’s collection refers to its predecessor, but usually despite a change in the context local to each poem. Each poem rewrites its predecessor, yet tells its own story, even while seeming to retell the one we have just read.

Can we tell from “Je n’ai pas oublié . . .” that the other member of “Nous” is the speaker’s mother? Perhaps. Because in no other poem does he describe himself as living in a suburb, as he does in lines 1-2. Rather, we see him living in a city apartment, as in “Spleen: Pluviôse irrité . . .”. How could he have afforded to live with a mistress (the only other likely possibility for “Nous”) in a white house in a suburb with two statues on the lawn? By a process of deduction we might have arrived at the same conclusion--that the narrator is referring to a more distant past, his childhood, when he lived under his mother’s protection.

Brigitte Mahuzier (“Profaned Memory: A Proustian Reading of ‘Je n’ai pas oublié . . .’”, in *Understanding Les Fleurs du mal: Critical Readings*, ed. William J. Thompson. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1997, pp. 160-75) argues that both Pomona and Venus evoke the mother, but in a mocking way (Mahuzier, p. 166). The statue of Pomona is in plaster and thus not likely to last the perennial change of seasons of which she is the goddess, as well as of the bounty of nature, while Venus is old (line 3) and thus hardly an icon of beauty. If the narrator’s mother resembles this Pomona and this Venus, she is neither nourishing nor beautiful. As if they had realized their nakedness and were chased out of Paradise, Mahuzier writes, these two try to hide their nakedness behind a bush unequal to the task (line 4).

They fear the prying eye, but a prying eye is exactly what we get in lines 5-10, the “grand oeil ouvert” [great open eye] (line 7) of the sun in a curious sky, contemplating the mother and son’s long and silent dinners. The sun, in Baudelaire, is the father--a “père nourricier” [nourishing father] in “Le Soleil” (line 9), a liquid fire, “ruisselant” [streaming] (line 5) here and pouring out its light (“versait largement ses beaux reflets de cierge,” line 9) as in “Élévation” it was “une pure et divine liqueur, / Le feu clair” [a pure and divine liquor, / The bright fire] (lines 11-12). Knowing what we know (and what the public of 1857 could not) about Baudelaire’s family history, we (along with Jean Starobinski in “«Je n’ai pas oublié . . .»” (Baudelaire: poème XCIX des *Fleurs du mal*)” [*Au bonheur des mots: mélanges en l’honneur de Gérard Antoine*. Nancy: Presses Universitaires de Nancy, 1984: 419-29] can identify this sun with François Baudelaire, the father whose death when Baudelaire was six caused the widowhood that generated the sad memories to which he refers in the letter to his mother about these poems.

This contemplating paternal eye responds--in the way *Fleurs*’ contiguous poems answer each other--to the contemplating “oeil maternel” [maternal eye] of “La servante au grand coeur . . .” (line 20). That eye came both to “Couvrir l’enfant grandi” [Watch over the grown-up child] and to give a silent reproach to the mother for not having brought flowers to her grave (line 3). For the dead servant didn’t really return, but the poet asks his mother what could he reply if she did and tears flowed from her hollow eyes. Both the paternal eye and the maternal eye exude a liquid:

the father's is "ruisselant" [streaming] and "versait" [was pouring out] its light; the maternal one was weeping tears.

Ironically, and as if making up for this sin of omission, the sun brings flowers to the mother and son, "sa gerbe" [bouquet or spray of flowers] (line 6) that breaks against the window (line 6)--as in the expression "déposer une gerbe sur une tombe / to place a spray of flowers on a grave" (*Collins-Robert French-English English-French Dictionary*). (Although a "gerbe" is commonly a sheaf of wheat, it can also be a bouquet of flowers. Littré cites an instance of "gerbe" in that sense in Graffigny's *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* ("Elle vint me présenter une gerbe de fleurs ornée de rubans" [letter 32]), a text that dates from the 18th century.) The father does what the mother (and son) should have done, as if reproaching them for not having done it. The living having neglected to bring flowers to the dead, the dead bring flowers to the living. The mother, like the statues seeking to hid their nakedness, has reason to fear an all-seeing eye, her late husband's. Would he be reproaching her for more than the absent flowers? Perhaps for remarrying so quickly, and to the man who would prove so disastrous a stepfather to her son?

71. "Le Tonneau de la Haine"

La Haine est le tonneau des pâles Danaïdes;
 La Vengeance éperdue aux bras rouges et forts
 A beau précipiter dans ses ténèbres vides
 4 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,
 8 Quand même elle saurait allonger ses victimes,
 Et pour les resaigner galvaniser leurs corps.

La Haine est un ivrogne au fond d'une taverne,
 Qui sent toujours la soif naître de la liqueur
 11 Et se multiplier comme l'hydre de Lerne.

— Mais les buveurs heureux connaissent leur vainqueur,
 Et la Haine est vouée à ce sort lamentable
 14 De ne pouvoir jamais s'endormir sous la table.

"Le Tonneau de la Haine" [Hatred's Cask] is the Danaïdes' unfillable cask, which they were condemned to try to fill because they had murdered their husbands. That's a pretty telling myth to allude to in a poem that immediately follows one in which a husband comes back from the dead to stare with reproach at his wife (it is through *that* poem's parallel with the one before *it* that we can see that it is her dead husband, and the speaker's dead father). Is Baudelaire suggesting that his mother killed his father? Note that this is the third poem in a row to feature liquid coming out of a hole: the tears from the maternal "paupières vides" [empty eyelids] in "La servante au grand cœur . . .", the liquid light pouring out of the streaming hole in the sky that is the paternal sun in "Je n'ai pas oublié . . .", and now the blood, sweat, and tears leaking out of the secret holes the Demon makes.

The dining room in the poem before, with the liquid emanating from the father-sun falling "sur la nappe frugale" [on the frugal tablecloth] of its table, is transformed here into a tavern with a table under which Hatred can never drink itself to sleep.

72. “Le Revenant”

Comme les anges à l’oeil fauve,
 Je reviendrai dans ton alcôve
 Et vers toi glisserai sans bruit
 4 Avec les ombres de la nuit;

Et je te donnerai, ma brune,
 Des baisers froids comme la lune
 Et des caresses de serpent
 8 Autour d’une fosse rampant.

Quand viendra le matin livide,
 Tu trouveras ma place vide,
 11 Où jusqu’au soir il fera froid.

Comme d’autres par la tendresse,
 Sur ta vie et sur ta jeunesse,
 14 Moi, je veux régner par l’effroi.

The holes that made Hatred’s cask (line 1) and the abysses (line 5) impossible to fill in “Le Tonneau de la Haine” are transformed in “Le Revenant” [The Ghost] into the “place vide” [empty place] (line 10) the speaker will leave in the bed of the woman he will return from the grave to visit. His absence will make it impossible for her to satisfy her longing. Thus this empty place will fulfill the same function as the holes in the cask, to make desire (for vengeance in “Le Tonneau de la Haine,” for love in “Le Revenant”) insatiable. His mistress thus resembles the “pâles Danaïdes,” whose pallor is here evoked by the “matin livide” [pale morning] in which she will find the “place vide.”

As a body returning from the grave, he recalls the galvanized bodies in “Le Tonneau de la Haine” (line 4). Those bodies were bled anew in the effort to make up for the blood lost to the “trous secrets” [secret holes] (line 5), but, by a kind of reversal, it is the poet as “revenant,” the equivalent to those reanimated bodies, who is responsible for the holes’ equivalent, the empty space.

73. “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
 4 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
 8 A saigner tous les bouts de ma carcasse immonde.

— O vers! noirs compagnons sans oreille et sans yeux,
 Voyez venir à vous un mort libre et joyeux;

- 11 Philosophes viveurs, fils de la pourriture,
 A travers ma ruine allez donc sans remords,
 Et dites-moi s'il est encor quelque torture
 14 Pour ce vieux corps sans âme et mort parmi les morts!

In “Le Revenant” the poet imagined himself coming back from the dead; in “Le Mort joyeux” [The Joyful Corpse] he imagines himself going in the other direction, lying down in a grave he digs himself, going to sleep and becoming a corpse on which crows and worms will feed. He is a “mort-vivant,” both dead and alive, in both poems, but in opposite ways. In “Le Revenant” he passes from death to life; in “Le Mort joyeux,” from life to death.

The “fosse profonde” [deep pit] (line 2) that he digs corresponds to the “place vide” he created in “Le Revenant” (which itself corresponded to the “trous secrets” of the “Le Tonneau de la Haine”). But the situation is just the opposite as well, for he created the emptiness in “Le Revenant” by not being there, but creates it here so that he might fill it with his presence.

He does this in “Le Revenant” to inflict pain on his mistress; he does it here to bring “torture” (line 13) upon himself.

74. “Sépulture”

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

It is once more a woman who will be tortured after death in “Sépulture” [Burial], as a woman was two poems before, in “Le Revenant.” The editors of the posthumous 1868 edition changed the title to “Sépulture d'un poète maudit” [Burial of an Accursed Poet], but there is no indication Baudelaire intended such a change. That the person to be buried had a “corps vanté” [vaunted body] (line 4) makes it much more likely that it was a woman’s body than a man’s, and certainly not Baudelaire’s own. Jacques Crépet quotes a poem of Voltaire (the *Épître dédicatoire* to *Zaire*) lamenting the lack of funeral honors paid the actress Adrienne Lecouvreur, a poem it is likely Baudelaire was not only remembering but quoting: “M. de Laubinière / Porta la nuit par charité / Ce corps, autrefois si vanté, / Dans un vieux fiacre empaqueté / Vers le bord de notre rivière” [M. de Laubinière / Carried at night as an act of charity / This body, once so vaunted, / In an old carriage bundled / To the bank of our river] (Baudelaire, *Les Fleurs du mal*, ed. Jacques

Crépet and Georges Blin. Paris: José Corti, 1942, p. 417). Baudelaire echoes these lines in lines 1-4 of "Sépulture": "nuit" in line 1, "par charité" in line 2, "corps . . . vanté" in line 4. Among the mistresses to whom Baudelaire alludes in the *Fleurs du mal*, one of them--Marie Daubrun--was an actress.

In both poems suffering continues in the grave. The poet looks forward in "Le Mort joyeux" to receiving "encore quelque torture" [some new torture] (line 13) after the crows have bled his carcass and the worms have had their way; the actress will have to listen all year to the cries of wolves and witches, the lustful frolics of the old and the plotting of criminals. But while the poet, of his own volition, buries himself, the actress is buried by the kindness of another. And while the poet invites his suffering, the same can hardly be said of the woman.

75. "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,
4 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
8 Qui montent dans l'azur comme des floraisons.

Quand parfois sur ce globe, en sa langueur oisive,
Elle laisse filer une larme furtive,
11 Un poète pieux, ennemi du sommeil,

Dans le creux de sa main prend cette larme pâle,
Aux reflets irisés comme un fragment d'opale,
14 Et la met dans son coeur loin des yeux du soleil.

In "Tristesses de la lune" [Sorrows of the Moon] the moon is likened to a woman about to fall asleep: "Ainsi qu'une beauté . . . / Qui . . . caresse, / Avant de s'endormir, le contour de ses seins" [Like a beautiful woman . . . / Who . . . caresses, / Before falling asleep, the contour of her breasts] (lines 2, 3-4). The stars in "Sépulture," who "Ferment leurs yeux appesantis" [Close their heavy eyes] (line 6), were about to fall asleep too. The woman's "vaunted body" in "Sépulture" is transformed here into the "beauté" [beautiful woman] (line 2) to whom the moon is compared. The "poète pieux" [pious poet] (line 11) plays here role paralleling the "bon chrétien" [good Christian] (line 2). The latter, as a good Christian, took it upon himself to bury the woman; the poet in his piety takes the pale and furtive tear the woman lets fall and hides it in his heart, far from the eyes of the sun--in effect burying it.

76. "La Musique"

La musique parfois me prend comme une mer!
Vers ma pâle étoile,
Sous un plafond de brume ou dans un pur éther,

4 Je mets à la voile;
 La poitrine en avant et gonflant mes poumons
 De toile pesante,
 Je monte et je descends sur le dos des grands monts
 8 D'eau retentissante;
 Je sens vibrer en moi toutes les passions
 D'un vaisseau qui souffre;
 11 Le bon vent, la tempête et ses convulsions
 Sur le sombre gouffre
 Me bercent, et parfois le calme, — grand miroir
 14 De mon désespoir!

The “larme pâle” [pale tear] (line 12) that was the focus of the speaker’s attention in “Tristesses de la lune” is transformed into the “pâle étoile” [pale star] (line 2) toward which he steers in “La Musique” [Music]. The moon floated “*Sur le dos satiné des molles avalanches*” [*On the satiny back of the soft avalanches*] (line 5) of the clouds as here the poet mounts and descends “*sur le dos*” [on the back] of the waves. The phrase “sur le dos” in 1857 appeared only in these contiguous poems. When Baudelaire changed the order of the poems for the 1861 addition, and these two were no longer contiguous, the phrase disappeared from “La Musique” as well.

In “Tristesses de la lune” the clouds “*montent dans l'azur*” [*mount in the azure*] (line 8), as here the equivalent waves are themselves “monts” [mountains] on which the poet says “*je monte et je descends*” [I *mount* and I descend] (line 7).

To complete the transformation of the moon-woman into the poet, Baudelaire constructs a parallel between the attention the woman pays to her own breasts, caressing their contour in lines 3-4, and the attention he pays to his own breast: “*La poitrine en avant et gonflant mes poumons / De toile pesante*” [*My breast in front and swelling my lungs / Of heavy sail*] (lines 5-6).

77. “La Pipe”

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

Antoine Adam, noting that in the 1857 edition “La Musique” preceded “La Pipe,” remarks of the former that “we should put it back in its former position to fully see its meaning. In the same way that ‘La Pipe’ joyfully expresses tobacco’s power to charm and heal, ‘La Musique’ celebrates music’s liberating power” (Adam, 359). To this we could add that in both poems the poet fills his lungs—with sea air (that is, with music) in “La Musique” (lines 5-6), with tobacco smoke here; that there he “monte” [mounts] the waves (line 7), while here the smoke “*monte*” [mounts] (line 11); and that the waves “*bercent*” [cradle] the poet (line 13), while here the smoke “*berce*” [cradles] his soul (line 9).

FLEURS DU MAL

78. “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,
 4 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,
 8 Accoutume ma lèvre à des philtres infâmes.

Il me conduit ainsi, loin du regard de Dieu,
 Haletant et brisé de fatigue, au milieu
 11 Des plaines de l'Ennui, profondes et désertes,

Et jette dans mes yeux pleins de confusion
 Des vêtements souillés, des blessures ouvertes,
 14 Et l'appareil sanglant de la Destruction!

The Demon in “La Destruction” is presented as something very much like tobacco smoke. Because that the smoke is comforting and Demon is maleficent, the poems are precisely opposed. The smoke from the poet’s pipe “guérit / De ses *fatigues* son esprit” [heals / His spirit of its *fatigues*] (lines 13-14), but the demonic air takes the poet, already “brisé de *fatigue*” [broken by *fatigue*] (line 10), and makes his suffering worse. *Fatigue* as a noun appears in only these two poems.

The Demon “nage autour de moi comme un air impalpable; / Je l’avale et le sens qui brûle mon poumon” [swims around me like an impalpable air; / I swallow it and feel it burning my lungs] (lines 2-3). The smoke of the pipe swirls around him as does this demonic air: “J’enlace et je berce son âme / Dans le réseau mobile et bleu / Qui monte de ma bouche en feu” [I enlance and cradle his soul / In the mobile and blue web / That rises from my burning mouth] (lines 9-11). The poet “avale” [swallows] (line 3) the demonic air, as he swallows the smoke from his pipe. The demonic air “brûle” [burns] his lungs; the smoke from the pipe comes from its “bouche en feu” [burning mouth].

The first division in the 1857 *Fleurs du mal* occurs here, between “La Pipe,” the last poem in the section “Spleen et Idéal,” and “La Destruction,” the first poem in the section “Fleurs du mal.” But despite this apparent separation, the two poems are about as tightly linked as any in the collection. Like many, they not only display a common ground but are exactly opposed on that very ground.

79. “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,
 4 Qui traînent à plis paresseux,

 Dans une chambre tiède où, comme en une serre,
 L'air est dangereux et fatal,
 8 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
 12 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,
 16 La tête, avec l'amas de sa crinière sombre
 Et de ses bijoux précieux,

 Sur la table de nuit, comme un renoncule,
 Repose; et, vide de pensers,
 20 Un regard vague et blanc comme le crépuscule
 S'échappe des yeux révoltés.

 Sur le lit, le tronc nu sans scrupules étale
 Dans le plus complet abandon
 24 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;
 28 La jarretière, ainsi qu'un oeil vigilant, flambe
 Et darde un regard diamanté.

 Le singulier aspect de cette solitude
 Et d'un grand portrait langoureux,
 32 Aux yeux provocateurs comme son attitude,
 Révèle un amour ténébreux,

Une coupable joie et des fêtes étranges
 Pleines de baisers infernaux,
 Dont se réjouissent l'essaim des mauvais anges
 36 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
 40 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
 44 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
 48 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
 52 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,
 56 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,
 60 Et constant jusques à la mort.

At the conclusion of “La Destruction” the Demon “jette dans mes yeux . . . / Des vêtements souillés, des blessures ouvertes, / Et l'appareil sanglant de la Destruction” [casts before my eyes . . . / Soiled clothing, open wounds, / And the bloody apparatus of Destruction] (lines 12-14). “Une Martyre” [A Martyr] seems to be just the kind of thing the Demon was taking him to see: “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” [A headless corpse spreads, like a river, / On the thirsty pillow / Blood red and alive; the cloth soaks it up / With the eagerness of a meadow] (lines 9-12). To show him this scene, the Demon had led the poet “*loin du regard de Dieu, / . . . au milieu / Des plaines de l'Ennui*” [*far from the gaze of God, / . . . in the midst / Of the plains of Ennui*] (lines 9, 10-11). “Une Martyre” begins “*Au milieu des*” [*In the midst of*] (line 1) decanters, sequined fabrics, and voluptuous furniture, and its scene of horror is “*Loin du monde railleur, loin de la foule impure, / Loin des magistrats curieux*” [*Far from the mocking world, far from the impure crowd, / Far from curious magistrates*] (lines 53-54). To be far from the gaze of curious magistrates, in particular, is like being far from where God can see.

The Demon, the poet tells us, threw “dans mes yeux” [into my eyes] (line 12) a bloody scene of open wounds, and the scene in “Une Martyre” is equally eye-catching: “Semblable aux visions . . . qui nous enchaînent les yeux” [Like the visions . . . that enchain our eyes] (lines 13, 14).

In “La Destruction” the Demon “nage autour de moi comme un *air* impalpable” [*swims* around me like an impalpable *air*] (line 2), as in “Une Martyre,” where “L’*air* est dangereux et fatal” [The *air* is dangerous and fatal] (line 6), there is a swarm of bad angels “Nageant dans les plis des rideaux” [*Swimming* in the folds of the curtains] (line 37) (Pichois notes this connection between the poems [*O. C. I.*, 1060]). The Demon’s impalpable air fills the poet with “un *désir* éternel et *coupable*” [an eternal and *guilty desire*] (line 4), while the dead woman’s eyes and pose reveals “Une *coupable* joie” [A *guilty* joy] (line 33) even though she could not assuage, while alive, “L’immensité [du] *désir*” [The immensity of the *desire*] (line 48) of the lover who murdered her.

It was “au milieu / Des plaines de *l’ennui*” [in the midst / Of the plains of *Ennui*] (line 11) that the poet in “La Destruction” encountered the bloody scene that so strikingly anticipated the one “Une Martyre” recounts, in the course of which he wonders if it was *ennui* that led the woman to open herself to certain desires: “Son âme exaspérée / Et ses sens par *l’ennui* mordus / S’étaient-ils entr’ouverts à la meute altérée / Des désirs errants et perdus?” (lines 41-44) [Her exasperated soul / And her senses bitten by *ennui*, / Were they opened to the thirsty horde / Of errant and lost desires?].

80. “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,
5 — 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;
10 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,
A l’égal de Paphos les étoiles t’admirent,
Et Vénus à bon droit peut jalouser Sapho!
15 — 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,
20 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.

- 25 Laisse du vieux Platon se froncer l'oeil austère.
- Tu tires ton pardon de l'éternel martyr
Infligé sans relâche aux coeurs ambitieux,
Qu'attire loin de nous le radieux sourire
Entrevu vaguement au bord des autres cieux;
30 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?
35 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!
40 — 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 fleur,
Et je fus dès l'enfance admis au noir mystère
Des rires effrénés mêlés au sombre pleur;
45 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,
50 — 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
55 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
60 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;
65 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
 70 De Sapho 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 cieus ses rivages déserts.
 75 Et c'est depuis ce temps que Lesbos se lamente!

“Lesbos” did not, in the nineteenth century nor for Baudelaire in particular, immediately connote female homosexuality. Jacques Dupont, in his edition of the *Fleurs du mal* (Paris: GF Flammarion, 2006), quotes a passage in the article on Lesbos in Pierre Larousse’s *Grand dictionnaire universel du XIXe siècle* that says that the island was the site of a school for courtisans: “This education, conducted by the most literate and able of women, comprised not only all that concerned the body, but also all that had to do with the delights of the mind, and the name of Sappho, who was educated in one of those schools in Lesbos, can give an idea of what those singular institutions could be. Nevertheless, the concentration of so many such women in one place could not fail to give rise to shameful morals” (quoted in Dupont, 321). He comments that for Baudelaire the name of the island “invokes a sort of ‘counter-religion’ of love, and a propensity to excess in debauchery” (Dupont, 16). Claude Pichois, in the *Pléiade* edition, points out that 19th-century dictionaries such as Larousse and Littré did not give the modern, homosexual sense to “lesbien.” Yet in Baudelaire’s circle the word could have the modern meaning. He had originally thought of giving the title *Les lesbiennes* to what became the *Fleurs du mal*. Such a title, Pichois comments, “would not have evoked the word’s modern sense in the mind of contemporary readers. There is thus reason to think that this collection would have offered an ample image of Lesbos in which Sapphic love would have had its place . . . but not the entire place” (*O. C.*, I, 794). Pichois, however, does cite “Lesbos,” along with the two “Femmes damnées” and “perhaps ‘Sed non satiata’” as “Sapphic poems.” Dupont, on the other hand, notes (citing Pierre Brunel, “Lesbos,” in *Baudelaire. Les Fleurs du mal. L’Intériorité d’une forme*, p. 90) that in the poem “Lesbos” Baudelaire “follows the heterosexual version of the death of Sappho” as opposed to the homosexual one (Dupont, 322). That is, that she leaped to her death from Mount Leucate because the young ferryman Phaon, to whom Aphrodite had given the power to make himself loved by the most reticent of women, had disdained her advances: “Elle fit son beau corps la pâture suprême / D'un brutal dont l'orgueil punit l'impiété / De Sapho qui mourut le jour de son blasphème.” [She offered up her beautiful body as the supreme nourishment / Of a brute whose pride punished the impiety / Of Sappho who died the day of her blasphemy] (lines 68-70). Phaon’s prideful refusal, along with her resulting death by suicide, was her punishment for the blasphemy of insulting “le rite et le culte inventé” [the rite and the invented cult] (line 67) of female homosexuality by seeking his love.

Thus, a woman dies both in this poem and in “Une Martyre.” There, we had a “cadavre sans tête” [a corpse without a head] (line 9); here, we have a death without a corpse, the “cadavre adoré de Sapho” (line 54) having been lost to the waves. The “Martyre” of the title returns as well, though in a different sense: “l'éternel martyre” [the eternal martyrdom] (line 26) Lesbos inflicts on ambitious hearts. The man who killed the woman in “Une Martyre” and the man whose refusal brought about Sappho’s death are precise opposites, the former having an immense desire, the latter having none at all.

Baudelaire, it appears, engages in some subtle wordplay as he relates these two poems in a way that no one, as far as I can know, has noticed. The detached head of the martyr reposes on the night table, “comme un renoncule” [like a buttercup] (line 17). The flower’s name, *ranonculus* in Latin, means “little frog.” According to Louis-Nicolas Bescherelle’s *Dictionnaire universel de la langue française* (Paris: Garnier frères, 1856), “The name ‘renoncule’ given to this genus comes from the fact that many of the species that compose it are ordinarily found in wet and swampy meadows where one frequently encounters the frog, *rana*; and it is for that reason as well that several of these plants are commonly given the name *grenouillette* [little frog].” To this frog “Lesbos” counters with a toad: “Lesbos où les Phrynés l'une l'autre s'attirent, / Où jamais un soupir ne resta sans écho” [Lesbos, where the Phrynés attract each other, / Where a sigh is never without its echo] (lines 11-12). Bescherelle’s entry on Phryné informs us that she was “a celebrated Athenian courtesan” and that the name used figuratively denotes “a woman of dissolute morals.” According to Plutarch the original Phryné’s “name was Mnesarete, but she took on that of Phryne [toad] as a nickname because of her yellow skin” (“Why the Pythia Does Not Now Give Oracles in Verse,” xiv). So in Lesbos, one Phryné attracts another, and in the intertext these two poems form, a Phryné attracts a “renoncule,” a toad a frog.

81. “Femmes damnées”

A la pâle clarté des lampes languissantes,
 Sur de profonds coussins tout imprégnés d'odeur,
 Hippolyte rêvait aux caresses puissantes
 4 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
 8 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,
 12 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
 16 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
 20 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
 24 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
28 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
32 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,
36 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,
40 Et je t'endormirai dans un rêve sans fin!»

Mais Hippolyte alors, levant sa jeune tête:
— «Je ne suis point ingrante et ne me repens pas,
Ma Delphine, je souffre et je suis inquiète,
44 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
48 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!
52 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,
56 Et le commencement de ma perte!»

Delphine secouant sa crinière tragique,
Et comme trépidant sur le trépied de fer,
L'oeil fatal, répondit d'une voix despotique:
60 — «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,
64 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
 68 A 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,
 72 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
 76 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,
 80 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,
 84 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,
 88 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,
 92 Et votre châtement naîtra de vos plaisirs.
- Jamais un rayon frais n'éclaira vos cavernes;
 Par les fentes des murs des miasmes fiévreux
 Filent en s'enflammant ainsi que des lanternes
 96 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
 100 Fait claquer votre chair ainsi qu'un vieux drapeau.
- Loin des peuples vivants, errantes, condamnées,
 A travers les déserts courez comme les loups;
 Faites votre destin, âmes désordonnées,
 104 Et fuyez l'infini que vous portez en vous!

In “Lesbos” Sappho made the mistake of abandoning the cult of female homosexuality for the love of a man (who in the end turned her down). In “Femmes damnées” (“À la pâle clarté . . .”) [“Doomed Women” (“By the pale light . . .”) a woman (Hippolyte) in a homosexual relationship with another woman (Delphine) is berated by the latter for wanting to make love to a man. The man, says Delphine, would be too violent (lines 28, 31-34). Besides, one cannot serve two masters (line 73).

Both poems speak of sterile pleasures, but in different contexts. In “Lesbos” hollow-eyed girls, in love with their bodies, caress the ripe fruits of their nubility in front of mirrors, a “*stérile volupté*” [sterile pleasure] (line 17); in “Femmes damnées” the narrator describes Lesbian love (in the modern sense) as “L’âpre *stérilité* de votre jouissance” [The bitter *sterility* of your pleasure] (line 97). The mirrors in the “Lesbos” passage reflect, perhaps, the sterility in the other.

In another instance of a same concept (and close synonyms) appearing in differing contexts, the “*pâturation*” [nourishment] that Sappho made her body into for the man she loved (line 68) is reflected in the “terrible *repas*” [terrible *repast*] (line 44) that Hippolyte found her night of lovemaking with Delphine to have been.

In “Lesbos” Sappho was punished for wanting to make love to a man (“un brutal dont l’orgueil *punit* l’impiété / De Sappho” [a brute whose pride *punished* the impiety / Of Sappho] (lines 69-70); in “Femmes damnées” the narrator says of Lesbian lovers that “votre *châtiment* naîtra de vos plaisirs” [your *punishment* will be born of your pleasures] (line 92). In both cases, the punishment consists of not being sexually satisfied. Sappho’s desire is frustrated by his disdain, and of the Lesbian lovers the narrator says “Jamais vous ne pourrez assouvir votre rage” [Never will you be able to assuage your passion] (line 91), and it is in that way that their punishment will be born of their pleasures.

82. “Femmes damnées”

Comme un bétail pensif sur le sable couchées,
Elles tournent leurs yeux vers l’horizon des mers,
Et leurs pieds se cherchant et leurs mains rapprochées
4 Ont de douces langueurs et des frissons amers:

Les unes, coeurs épris des longues confidences,
Dans le fond des bosquets où jacent les ruisseaux,
Vont épelant l’amour des craintives enfances
8 Et creusent le bois vert des jeunes arbrisseaux;

D’autres, comme des soeurs, marchent lentes et graves
A travers les rochers pleins d’apparitions,
Où saint Antoine a vu surgir comme des laves
12 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,
16 O 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

- 20 L'écume du plaisir aux larmes des tourments.
 O vierges, ô démons, ô monstres, ô martyres,
 De la réalité grands esprits contempteurs,
 Chercheuses d'infini, dévotes et satyres,
 24 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,
 28 Et les urnes d'amour dont vos grands coeurs sont pleins!

Beyond the obvious connections linking two poems about Lesbianism bearing identical titles, to which we might add that in both desire remains unassuaged (“Jamais vous ne pourrez *assouvir* votre rage” [Never will you be able to *assuage* your passion (line 91 in the first “Femmes damnées)], “soifs *inassouvies*” [*unassuaged* thirsts] (line 27 in the second)], we note that in the present poem these women seek out the infinite--that they are “Chercheuses d'infini” [Seekers of the infinite] (line 23)--while in the preceding one they do just the opposite: they flee it. For the narrator encourages them to continue what they are doing: “fuyez l'infini que vous portez en vous” [flee the infinite that you carry in you] (line 104).

In both “Femmes damnées” poems there is “hollowing-out” (*creuser*) going on, but it is heterosexual men who do it in one and homosexual women in the other. Your lover’s kisses, Delphine warns Hippolyte “*creuseront* leurs ornières” [*will hollow out* their ruts] (line 31) on your body like chariots or plowshares. In the other poem, “Les unes . . . / Vont épelant l'amour des craintives enfances / Et *creusent* le bois vert des jeunes arbrisseaux [Some women . . . / Spell out the love of timid adolescences / And *hollow out* the green wood of young shrubs] (lines 5, 7-8). In other words, some of the “femmes damnées” are carving out letters on young trees to declare their love.

83. “Les Deux Bonnes Soeurs”

- La Débauche et la Mort sont deux aimables filles,
 Prodiges de baisers, robustes de santé,
 Dont le flanc toujours vierge et drapé de guenilles
 4 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
 8 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,
 11 De terribles plaisirs et d'affreuses douceurs.
 Quand veux-tu m'enterrer, Débauche aux bras immondes?
 O Mort, quand viendras-tu, sa rivale en attraits,
 14 Sur ses myrtes infects enter tes noirs cyprès?

Baudelaire provided 80. “Lesbos,” 81. “Femmes damnées,” and 82. “Femmes damnées” with a number of connections more subtle than the obvious common topic that they, unusually among neighboring poems in the *Fleurs*, share. With 83. “Les Deux Bonnes Soeurs” [The Two Good Sisters] we seem to have left that topic behind, yet the “Soeurs” [Sisters] of the title (and line 10) seem to emerge from the immediately preceding 82. “Femmes damnées,” where the word twice appears: “D'autres, comme des *soeurs*, marchent lentes et graves” [Others, like *sisters*, walk, slow and solemn] (line 9); “Pauvres *soeurs*, je vous aime autant que je vous plains” [Poor *sisters*, I love you as much as I pity you] (line 26). In 82. “Femmes damnées” the word “soeurs” had acquired a nuance of Lesbianism, and now suddenly in the next poem (“Les Deux Bonnes Soeurs”), which is *not* about Lesbos, the word immediately reappears--and in its plural form appears nowhere else in the 1857 edition.

Mario Richter notes this connection, along with the fact that both the two good sisters, Debauchery and Death, and the Lesbian lovers are virginal (Richter, 1342, 1344). The latter are so named in line 21 of “Femmes damnées”: “Ô vierges . . .” Debauchery and Death “sont deux aimables filles / Prodiges de baisers” [are two lovable girls / Prodigal with kisses] (lines 1-2)--and at that moment we are reminded of the prodigality of kisses in “Lesbos, où les baisers sont comme les cascades” [Lesbos, where the kisses are like cascades] (80. “Lesbos,” line 6)-- “. . . / Dont le flanc toujours *vierge* . . . / Sous l'éternel labeur n'a jamais enfanté” [Whose *virgin* loins . . . / Despite eternal labor have never given birth] (lines 3-4). This endless labor never eventuating in childbirth resembles the “soifs inassouviés” [unassuaged thirsts] (line 27) of Lesbian love as Baudelaire imagines it, a desire that never reaches fulfillment. It resembles Lesbianism as well with regard to the latter's “stérilité” (81. “Femmes damnées,” line 97), which never leads to childbirth either.

The “bonnes soeurs” in the first tercet who offer us, alternately, “De terribles *plaisirs* et d'affreuses douceurs” resemble in their tendency to combine pain and pleasure the sisters (in both the monastic and Lesbian sense) who “Mêlent / L'écume du *plaisir* aux larmes des tourments” [Blend / The Froth of *pleasure* with the tears of torments] (lines 19-20). But the blends are of opposite kinds, for while “terribles” contrasts with “plaisirs” and “affreuses” with “douceurs,” “écume” is as much in harmony with “plaisir” as “larmes” with “tourments.”

The grafting of Debauchery's myrtles onto Death's cypresses in the second tercet harkens back to the other instance of a blade being applied to a tree (actually a bush), the hollowing-out of the green wood of “jeunes *arbrisseaux*” (82. “Femmes damnées,” line 8)--especially when we realize that myrtle “est un *arbrisseau*” [is a bush] (article MYRTE in Bescherelle's *Dictionnaire universel de la langue française* [1856]). This might explain why the blade is applied in 83. “Femmes damnées” not to a tree, as one would expect, but a bush.

84. “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,
4 Mais je me tâte en vain pour trouver la blessure.

A travers la cité, comme dans un champ clos,
Il s'en va, transformant les pavés en îlots,
Désaltérant la soif de chaque créature,
8 Et partout colorant en rouge la nature.

J'ai demandé souvent à des vins captieux

11 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
14 Fait pour donner à boire à ces cruelles filles!

To what “cruelles filles” [cruel girls / daughters / whores] is the last line of 84. “La Fontaine de sang” [The Fountain of Blood] alluding? The demonstrative pronoun “ces” [these / those] implies that they have already been mentioned, but in this poem they haven’t. Antoine Adam comments, “These last two lines are, at first glance, difficult to interpret. They become clear when one observes, in the preceding poem, that Debauchery and Death are “deux aimables filles” [two lovable girls]. Baudelaire intended the *rapprochement*” (Adam, 414). Claude Pichois agrees: “Who are these . . . *cruelles filles*? . . . They are to be found not in this sonnet, but in the preceding one: Debauchery and Death” (*O.C., I: 1064*).

This is an extraordinary state of affairs. Here is a poem in the *Fleurs du mal* that cannot be understood on even the basic level without our having read another poem, the one that precedes it. Note that it is not just any poem elsewhere in the collection that must be read before this one can be understood, but the poem that immediately precedes it. Not even a poem that had preceded it at some distance (as the liquidity of the sun in “Le Soleil” enables us to appreciate its liquidity in “Je n’ai pas oublié . . .”), but the poem that immediately precedes it. If readers of Baudelaire had paid attention to what he kept claiming about the continuity and sequentiality of the *Fleurs du mal* this would come as no surprise. We should realize that *none* of the poems in the volume can be fully understood without an awareness of the one just before, that the poems were not written to be anthologized and read in isolation from each other. “La Fontaine de sang” is incomprehensible when read without “Les Deux Bonnes Filles.” No wonder Baudelaire was horrified to contemplate the mutilation of his book.

Debauchery and Death form a pair in poem 83, and reappear in 84, but 84 introduces another duo, wine and love. Neither provide the repose the poet seeks. He asks of wine to put to sleep the terror that undermines him, even if only for a day, but wine makes his senses perceive terror all the more acutely. He seeks in love a forgetful sleep, but love proves a bed of needles. Yet he told us in poem 83 that Death (as “Tombeaux” [Tombs]) and Debauchery (as “lupanars” [brothels]) offer “Un lit que le remords n’a jamais fréquenté” (A bed that remorse has never frequented) (lines 7, 8). That is, Death and Debauchery can do what wine and love cannot, offer remorse-free repose. In this way poems 83 and 84 are similar yet opposite. Each describes its own pair of potential escape routes. Those in one poem are efficacious; those in the other are not.

85. “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.
5 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;
10 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,
 15 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,
 20 Ainsi qu'un nouveau-né, — sans haine et sans remord.

The beautiful woman in 85. “Allégorie” [Allegory] “rit à *la mort* et nargue *la débauche*” [laughs at *death* and scoffs at *debauchery*] (line 5), an explicit reference to “ces cruelles filles” [those cruel girls] (84. “La Fontaine de sang”, line 14), “La Débauche et la Mort” (83. “Les Deux Bonnes Filles,” line 1). Claude Pichois comments: “It indeed seems that these three poems . . . are organized together in an ensemble. Doubtless it is in this consecutiveness [*consécution*] that one must look for the meaning of the last line of the ‘Fontaine de sang’ and the general meaning of ‘Allégorie’” (OC, I: 1062). Likewise Antoine Adam, for whom the three poems “form a series and shed light on each other mutually” (Adam, 414).

Neither she nor the “poète sinistre” [sinister poet] (“Les Deux Bonnes Soeurs,” line 5) find death and debauchery to be threatening. She laughs and scoffs; he finds them both “aimables” [lovable] and able to offer a bed untroubled by remorse (lines 7-8). With regard to death and remorse, she resembles him even more closely, for she too finds no remorse in death: “Elle regardera la face de la Mort . . . sans remord” [She will look at the face of Death . . . without remorse] (“Allégorie,” lines 19, 20).

And they are alike in yet another way. Although “inféconde” [infertile], she is “nécessaire à la marche du monde” [necessary to the progress of the world] (lines 13, 14), of universal benefit as is he when his overflowing blood “s’en va . . . / Désaltérant la soif de chaque créature” [goes out . . . / Slaking the thirst of every creature] (“La Fontaine de sang,” lines 6, 7), as if he were some new Lamb of God. She, perhaps (as Antoine Adam suggests) the allegory of prostitution, is the sinister poet’s uncanny double. Yet they are not entirely alike. He is the “Favori de l’enfer” [Hell’s favorite] (“Les Deux Bonnes Soeurs,” line 6), and evidently knows it, whereas she “ignore l’enfer” [is ignorant of hell] (line 17). He seeks repose in “Le vin” and “l’amour” and is disappointed (“La Fontaine de sang,” lines 9-14); she is familiar with yet indifferent to both: she “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” [lets her hair trail in her *wine*. / *Love’s* claws, the poisons of gambling dens / -- All slide off, blunted by the granite of her skin] (lines 2-4). “Allégorie” in this passage seems at odds with “La Fontaine de sang,” for the latter presented wine and love as distinct from, and having different qualities than, debauchery and death. In “Allégorie” love has “griffes” [claws], and love together with wine (and gambling’s poisons) can harm mortals not endowed with granite for skin. Wine and love are here be lumped together in the same list with death and debauchery, “monstres dont la main . . . toujours gratte et fauche” [monsters whose hand . . . always scratches and cuts] (line 6), as if they too, like love, had claws. The “cruelles filles” in the last line of “La Fontaine de sang” are clearly distinct from love, since love is the needle mattress “Fait pour donner à boire à ces cruelles filles” [Made for slaking the thirst of these cruel girls]. The poet, in “Les Deux Bonnes Filles” and “La Fontaine de sang,” responds positively to Debauchery and Death, negatively to love and wine; the “femme belle” of “Allégorie” is indifferent to all four.

86. “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'aiguais lentement sur mon coeur le poignard,
 5 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.
 A me considérer froidement ils se mirent,
 10 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,
 15 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,
 Parcequ'il sait jouer artistement son rôle,
 Vouloir intéresser au chant de ses douleurs
 20 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
 Recevrait sans bouger le choc de cent démons! —
 25 Détourner froidement 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 non pareil,
 Qui riait avec eux de ma sombre détresse
 30 Et leur versait parfois quelque sale caresse.

The poet in “La Béatrice” acquires two additional features that contribute to his resemblance to the “femme belle” of “Allégorie.” Her skin was made of granite, and thus the claws of love could not harm her. The poet’s heart is made of stone: “J'aiguais lentement sur mon coeur le poignard” [I was slowly sharpening the dagger on my heart] (line 4). As Claude Pichois points out (*OC*, I: 1067), Baudelaire is thinking of Shakespeare: “Thou hid’st a thousand daggers in thy thoughts, / Whom thou hast whetted on thy stony heart” (*Henry IV, Part 2*, IV. 5. 106-7). Sharp objects harm neither his heart nor her skin. Another Shakespeare allusion in “La Béatrice” has him imitating Hamlet’s posture, “Le regard indécis et les *cheveux* au vent” [With indecisive look and his *hair* in the wind] (line 15). But he is at the same time imitating the woman in “Allégorie,” whose long hair was carelessly trailing too: “une femme belle . . . / Qui laisse dans son vin traîner sa *chevelure*” [a beautiful woman . . . / Who lets her *hair* trail in her wine].

But clearly because the woman in “Allégorie” “ignore l’Enfer comme le Purgatoire” [knows neither Hell nor Purgatory] (line 17) she also resembles the Beatrice to whom the title alludes, Dante’s guide in Heaven but not in Hell or Purgatory (that task was left to Vergil). The woman in “La Béatrice” additionally shares with the woman in “Allégorie” the ability to laugh, and

this turns her against the poet. The other woman “*rit à la mort*” [*laughs at death*] (line 5); this one joins the mocking demons and “*riaait avec eux de ma sombre détresse*” [*was laughing with them at my dark distress*] (line 29).

87. “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 :
 5 — «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,
 10 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 veloutés.
 Ou lorsque j'abandonne aux morsures mon buste,
 Timide et libertine, et fragile et robuste,
 15 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
 20 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,
 A mes côtés, au lieu du mannequin puissant
 Qui semblait avoir fait provision de sang,
 25 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.

The laughter continues in “Les Métamorphoses du vampire” [The Metamorphoses of the Vampire], where the poet’s mistress declares: “Je . . . fais *rire* les vieux du *rire* des enfants” [I . . . make the old *laugh* the *laughter* of children] (lines 7, 8). What she means, of course, is that she is such an expert lover that she can make old men young again. The context has changed, but here again the poet’s mistress is in the company of a laughing group (though with but one at a time), as the poet’s mistress in “La Béatrice” was with the laughing demons. In light of the discovery that she can make others laugh, we can wonder if she not merely joined in the demons’ laughter, but incited them to laugh at the poet’s expense.

The plots are basically the same in the both poems: the narrator suddenly sees a shocking change in his mistress. In “La Béatrice” she turns against him; in “Les Métamorphoses du vampire” she turns into sack of pus, and then some skeletal bones. Put differently, and in a way that draws out the precision of their opposition, in one poem he is surprised to find her there, and in the other he is surprised to find her gone.

Her skeletal remains make the sound of a weathervane or a sign “Que balance *le vent*” [that *the wind* sways about] (line 28), which make them resemble the poet as the demons (and his mistress) see him, a Hamlet with “les cheveux au vent” [wind-tossed hair] (line 15). This motif undergoes metamorphosis as we pass from “Allégorie,” where it is the woman’s hair trailing in her wine, to “La Béatrice,” where it is the poet’s hair in the wind, and then to “Les Métamorphoses du vampire,” where it becomes the woman again, now blown about, like the poet, by the wind.

88. “Un Voyage à Cythère”

Mon coeur se balançait comme un ange joyeux,
Et planait librement à l'entour des cordages ;
Le navire roulait sous un ciel sans nuages,
4 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.
8 Regardez, après tout, c'est une pauvre terre.

— Ile des doux secrets et des fêtes du coeur!
De l'antique Vénus le superbe fantôme
Au-dessus de tes mers plane comme un arôme,
12 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
16 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.
20 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,
24 Entre-bâillant 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,
28 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
32 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
 36 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
 40 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
 44 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
 48 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
 52 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,
 56 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
 60 De contempler mon coeur et mon corps sans dégoût!

The verb in the last line of “Les Métamorphoses du vampire”--“Que *balance* le vent pendant les nuits d'hiver” [That the wind *sways about* during winter nights]--reappears in the first line of “Un Voyage à Cythère” [A Voyage to Cythera]: “Mon coeur *se balançait* comme un ange joyeux” [My heart *was swaying about*]. That reappearance eerily anticipates an important part of the argument of “Un Voyage à Cythère,” the poet’s realization that the hanged man on the tree is a symbolic image of himself (“un gibet symbolique où pendait mon image” [a symbolic gibbet where my image was hanging] [line 58]). We had just seen, in reading the last two poems, how the bones of his beloved’s skeleton creaking like a wind-blown sign is a metamorphosis of the image of himself in the poem before as a Hamlet with wind-blown hair. The wind is still present, and now he is swaying in it, as he approaches the island that will prove as much a shocking surprise as the woman who turned into the skeleton. That is, the verb “*se balançait*” in recalling the “*balance*” of the immediately preceding line also recalls how the poet (at least through an attentive reader’s eyes) might see himself in the wind-tossed sign that was her bones.

But this beautiful continuity between the end of one poem and the beginning of the next will prove a surprise for readers unfamiliar with the 1857 version, for the “Les Métamorphoses du

vampire” was excised from the *Fleurs du mal* by the public prosecutor, and Baudelaire was obliged to keep it out of the 1861 edition. Once it was gone, there was no further need for the speaker of the poem to *se balancer* [to sway] in the wind. In place of that line, for the 1861 version Baudelaire wrote “Mon coeur, comme un oiseau, voltigeait tout joyeux” [My heart, like a bird, was joyfully fluttering about]. In doing so, Baudelaire was restoring the line to something much closer to what it had been in 1851, when he sent it with eleven other poems to Théophile Gautier in hopes of seeing them published in the *Revue de Paris*: “Mon coeur comme un oiseau s’envolait tout joyeux” [My heart like a bird was joyfully flying away] (*OC*, I: 1072, 806-07). This would explain why he bothered to change the line again in 1861. He *preferred* a version of the line in which his heart would be a bird, not an angel, and the verb *not* be “se balancer.” He went against his judgment of what was best for the poem because of his judgment of what was best for the larger poem of the book. I cannot imagine a more telling piece of evidence for the proposition that the poem that really counted for Baudelaire was the volume as a whole.

Cythera had been vaunted as the Eldorado of all “*les vieux garçons*” [*the old boys*] (line 7), as the woman in the poet’s bed boasted of being able to make “rire *les vieux du rire des enfants*” [*the old to laugh the laughter of children*] (line 8)--that is, to make old men into boys again, as Cythera was to have been the paradise of men both old and boyish. Only in these two poems does the phrase “*les vieux*” appear with reference to men.

But the truth of the matter is that the island “*n’était plus qu’un terrain des plus maigres, / Un désert rocailleux troublé par des cris aigres*” [was *nothing more than* the barest of landscapes, / A rocky desert troubled by sharp *cries*] (lines 18-19). Similarly, when the poet turned to look again at the delight of old men “*je ne vis plus / Qu’*” [I saw *nothing more / Than*] a sack of pus and some skeletal debris “*Qui d’eux-mêmes rendaient le cri*” [That by themselves made the *cry*] (lines 19-20, 26) of some weathervane or sign swung about by the wind. The “*oultre aux flancs gluants, toute pleine de pus*” [wineskin with gluey sides, all full of pus] (line 20) that the woman turned into is reconfigured as the hanged man’s “*ventre effondré*” [burst stomach] from which “*Les intestins pesants . . . coulaient*” [The heavy intestines . . . flowed down], all the more so for the fact that “*oultre*” comes from the Latin “*uter*,” “*ventre*.”

In both poems, the poet, lured on by sex, is surprised by horror.

89. “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,
 4 Au rire effronté

Souffle gaiement des bulles rondes
 Qui montent dans l'air,
 Comme pour rejoindre les mondes
 8 Au fond de l'éther.

Le globe lumineux et frêle
 Prend un grand essor,
 Crève et crache son âme grêle
 12 Comme un songe d'or.

J'entends le crâne à chaque bulle
 Prier et gémir :
 – «Ce jeu féroce et ridicule,
 16 Quand doit-il finir?

Car ce que ta bouche cruelle
 Éparpille en l'air,
 Monstre assassin, c'est ma cervelle,
 20 Mon sang et ma chair!»

Love and death, combined in “Voyage à Cythère” when the island of love becomes a scene of death, are combined in a different way in “L’Amour et le Crâne” [Love and the Skull]. Love (perhaps in the form of a cupid, which “amour” can mean in French--especially if Baudelaire is thinking of Goltzius’s engraving *Quis evadet?*, reproduced in the Garnier edition) is seated on the skull of Humanity, blowing bubbles in the air. The skull, apparently conscious and suffering, asks, “Ce jeu *féroce et ridicule*, / Quand doit-il finir?” [This *ferocious and ridiculous* game, / When will it end?] (lines 15-16). The cupid perched on the skull playing his ferocious game recalls the “*féroces* oiseaux perchés sur leur pâture” [*ferocious* birds perched on their food] (line 29), and that the narrator calls the game ridiculous in addition to ferocious recalls what how narrator in the other poem described the man on whom the birds were perched: “*Ridicule pendu*” [*Ridiculous* hanged man] (line 45). In the first edition the word “ridicule” appears only in these two poems.

So too (and not just in the 1857 edition) the phrase “ma chair,” which we find in line 52 of “Un Voyage à Cythère,” at the height of the narrator’s self-identification with the ridiculous victim of the ferocious birds. The narrator too has felt the beaks and jaws of piercing crows “Qui jadis aimaient tant à triturer *ma chair*” [Who used to love so much to attack *my flesh*], and at the conclusion of “L’Amour et le Crâne,” when the skull complains that the contents of the bubbles the cupid is blowing “c’est ma cervelle, / Mon sang et *ma chair!*” [that’s my brain, / My blood and *my flesh!*] (lines 19-20). The speaker at this moment in “L’Amour et le Crâne” is the skull, not the narrator, but what he says parallels what the narrator of the other poem has to say. Both are pointing out that something else--the hanged man, the bubbles that so amuse the cupid--are their own flesh. This parallelism continues in the last line of each poem, “Mon sang et ma chair” in “L’Amour et le Crâne” recalling “mon coeur et mon corps” [my heart and my body] in “Un Voyage à Cythère.”

RÉVOLTE

90. “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,
 4 Il s'endort au doux bruit de nos affreux blasphèmes.

Les sanglots des martyrs et des suppliciés
 Sont une symphonie enivrante sans doute,

- 8 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
12 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
16 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 pâlisant,
20 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,
24 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
28 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!
32 — Saint Pierre a renié Jésus . . . il a bien fait!

The Cupid was seated “sur *le crâne* / De *l'Humanité*” [on the *skull* / Of *Humanity*] (lines 1-2); in “Le Reniement de saint Pierre” [Saint Peter’s Denial] Baudelaire gives those two elements a new combination when the speaker addresses Jesus: “ton *crâne* où vivait l’immense *Humanité*” [your *skull* where resided immense *Humanity*] (line 16). The suffering skull in the other poem prayed: “J’entends le crâne à chaque bulle / *Prier* et gémir” [I hear the skull at each bubble / *Pray* and groan] (lines 13-14); so too does the suffering Jesus, in the Garden of Olives; “Dans ta simplicité tu *priais* à genoux / Celui qui dans son ciel *riaît* au bruit des clous” [In your simplicity you *prayed* on your knees / To him who in his heaven *was laughing* at the sound of the nails] (lines 10-11). Like God, the cupid to whom the skull prayed was laughing too: “le profane, / Au *rire* effronté // Souffle gaîment des bulles rondes / *Qui montent* dans l’air” [the impious one, / With an impudent *laugh* // Gaily blows spherical bubbles / *That mount up* into the air] (lines 3-6). “Le Reniement de saint Pierre” begins with a repetition of the bubbles’ upward movement: “Qu’est-ce que Dieu fait donc de ce flot d’anathèmes / *Qui monte* tous les jours vers ses chers Séraphins?” [What does God then do with this stream of anathema / *That mounts up* every day towards his dear Seraphim?] (lines 1-2). Like the stream of curses from suffering humanity, the bubbles rise to heaven: “montent dans l’air, / Comme pour rejoindre les mondes / Au fond de l’éther” [mount up into the air, / As if to reach the worlds / At the depth of the ether] (lines 6-8).

What mounts up in both poems is liquid: bubbles and a “flot” [stream]. The liquid in both includes blood: “Mon *sang*” [My *blood*] (line 16), says the skull; “le *sang*” [the blood] (line 7) of martyrs. In one poem, blood comes out of the skull; in the other, from the head: “ton sang / Et ta sueur coulaient de ton front” [your blood / And your sweat flowed from your head] (lines 18-19).

Each bubble takes flight upwards, then “Crève et crache son âme grêle / Comme un songe d’or” [Bursts and spits out its flimsy soul / Like a golden dream] (lines 11-12). The gentle noise of the bubbles bursting as well as their association with dreams and therefore sleep, as well as the syllable “d’or,” are hauntingly remembered when God “s’endort aux doux bruit de nos affreux blasphèmes” [falls asleep to the gentle noise of our horrid blasphemies] (line 4). In this way Baudelaire continues the parallel between the mounting bubbles and the mounting blasphemies. Baudelaire in pairing these poems does not simply recombine elements from the first poem in the second (as he often does), but makes the second an allegory of the first, consistently aligning Jesus, whose skull held “l’immense Humanité,” with the skull of Humanity and with humanity itself, and God with the cruel cupid. God is Love, as it were. Humanity suffers to see its essence burst and “crache” [spit]; Jesus suffers, the narrator recalls, “Lorsque tu vis *cracher* sur ta divinité / La crapule du corps-de-garde et cuisines” [When you saw *spitting* on your divinity / Vile bodyguards and scullions] (lines 13-14). Only in these two poems does the verb *cracher* appear.

The three poems “Un Voyage à Cythère,” “L’Amour et le Crâne,” and “Le Reniement de saint Pierre” should be read together as meditations on Golgotha, “the place of the skull” (as Mario Richter reminds us [Richter, 1425]). In the hanged man in whom the narrator recognizes himself, on a gibbet with room for two more victims--“un gibet à trois branches” [a gibbet with three arms] (line 33)--we can recognize the Jesus (as Richter notes, p. 1469) in whom humanity recognizes itself, on a cross surrounded by two others. The man on Cythera was pierced by “ses *bourreaux* . . . à coups de bec” [his *torturers* . . . with blows of the beak” (lines 35, 36); the man on Golgotha was pierced by the nails that “d’ignobles *bourreaux* plantaient dans tes chairs vives” [ignoble *torturers* planted in your living flesh] (line 12). The division Baudelaire made within his 1857 volume according to which “Le Reniement de saint Pierre” begins the new section “Révolte” has no effect whatsoever on the continuities linking that poem to “L’Amour et le Crâne,” the last poem in the section “Fleurs du mal.”

91. “Abel et Caïn”

Race d'Abel, dors, bois et mange:
Dieu te sourit complaisamment,

Race de Caïn, dans la fange
Rampe et meurs misérablement.

5 Race d'Abel, ton sacrifice
Flatte le nez du Séraphin!

Race de Caïn, ton supplice
Aura-t-il jamais une fin?

10 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
A ton foyer patriarcal;
- 15 Race de Caïn, dans ton antre
Tremble de froid, pauvre chacal!
- Race d'Abel, sans peur pullule:
L'argent fait aussi des petits;
- 20 Race de Caïn, ton coeur brûle;
Éteins ces cruels appétits.
- Race d'Abel, tu crois et broutes
Comme les punaises des bois!
- Race de Caïn, sur les routes
Traîne ta famille aux abois.
- 25 — Ah! race d'Abel, ta charogne
Engraissera le sol fumant!
- Race de Caïn, ta besogne
N'est pas faite suffisamment;
- 30 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!

“Abel et Caïn” is a call to arms in harmony with the sentiment expressed in the last stanza of “Le Reniement de saint Pierre.” Peter, who cut off the ear of the high priest’s servant in the Garden of Olives in an attempt to defend Jesus from the Romans soldiers who had come to arrest him, did well to use the sword. And did well to deny Jesus for having told him to put it away. The poet wants to take up it up again: “Puissé-je user du glaive et périr par le glaive!” [May I use the sword and perish by the sword!] (line 31), echoing Jesus’ rebuke to Peter (Matthew 26. 52). As Mario Richter argues (p. 1476), Jesus himself had used a whip when he chased the merchants from the temple (line 26). It is clear in stanzas 6 and 7 of “Le Reniement” that the poet regrets the change that came over Jesus in the Garden of Olives when in his “simplicité” he prayed to an unfeeling God and subsequently submitted meekly to his fate. Jesus should feel remorse (line 27) for having betrayed his the eternal promise he had come to fulfill (lines 22-23), and that he had been fulfilling when he whipped the merchants. Action should be sister to the dream (line 30).

It is ironic, as Richter points out (p. 1462), that this praise of the fraternity of action and dream should be followed by a poem about enmity between two brothers. God smiled on Abel’s sacrifice, but rejected Cain’s. Subsequently, Cain’s descendants, vagabond and poor, become the wretched of the earth; Abel’s live off the fat of the land. Peter’s sword, that the poet would brandish in support of the promise Jesus abandoned, is here replaced by the pike. Rooting for Cain’s descendants, the poet is happy to see that “le fer est vaincu par l’épieu” [iron is vanquished by the pike] (line 30). Antoine Adam writes: “Since [Baudelaire] makes Cain nomadic [un

nomade] and Abel sedentary, which is exactly the opposite of the Genesis version, iron is the symbol of Abel the plowman--that is, the iron of the plow. The *épieu* is the symbol of Cain the hunter. Baudelaire announces the victory of the revolutionary proletariat" (Adam, 422). Pichois concurs (*OC*, I: 1082).

But Adam is wrong to say that Baudelaire reverses the Biblical version. In Genesis 4: 2-15, Abel was a shepherd ("pastor ovium," in the Latin Vulgate) and Cain a farmer ("agricola"). Cain offered as a sacrifice to God the fruits of the earth ("de fructibus terrae"), while Abel sacrificed the firstborn of his flock and some of their fat ("de primogenitis gregis sui et de adipibus eorum"). God accepted Abel's sacrifice, but not Cain's. Cain was depressed and angry, and killed his brother. God told Cain that from now on the land he had tilled would no longer be fruitful, and he must wander the earth as a vagabond and an exile ("vagus et profugus eris super terram").

The characters in the poem's drama are not Cain and Abel but their descendants. With Cain's descendants condemned to be vagabonds, Abel's are now free to be both farmers and herdsmen: "Race d'Abel, vois tes semailles / Et ton bétail venir à bien" [Abel's race, see your seeds / And your livestock flourish] (lines 9-10). They continue to raise sheep and cattle, but expand their domain into what had been Cain's territory, tilling the soil. Adam's error is two-fold: (1) He conflates the vagabondage to which Cain was condemned with sheep-raising, calling the latter nomadic. It is less sedentary than tilling the earth, but it is far from being as nomadic as the eternal exile to which Cain was condemned, and that for Baudelaire resembles the lifestyle he describes in "Bohémiens en voyage." We see this spelled out in lines 23-24: "Race de Caïn, sur les routes / Traîne ta famille aux abois" [Cain's race, on the roads / Drag your fleeing family]. Like the Bohemians, they are constantly on the road. (2) He forgets that Abel's descendants continue to raise livestock--"bétail" (line 10), a category that includes sheep as well as cattle (Bescherelle defines the term to include goats, lambs, and sheep along with cattle [*Dictionnaire universel de la langue française*, 1856]). If those who raise sheep are nomadic, then Abel's children would be nomadic too.

The conflict in line 30 between "le fer" and "l'épieu" can indeed be understood as Adam would have it, as a struggle in which the iron of the plow--the agricultural practice of tilling the soil that Abel and his descendants, like the greedy capitalists Baudelaire portrays them to be, were able to take over from Cain once God told him the soil would no longer respond to his efforts--is conquered by the pike. But it would be wrong to conclude that the "épieu" could only be "the symbol of Cain the hunter [le chasseur]," for it was also a weapon of war (Bescherelle, *EPIEU*; according to the Larousse *Grand dictionnaire universel du XIXe siècle* [1866-1877], in the Middle Ages it found a particular use in the infantry). The sword the poet wants Cain's descendants to take up may be more a weapon of war, and thus of revolutionary uprising, than a hunter's weapon. Not a clash of cultures (hunter-gatherer vs. agricultural) but class warfare.

In "Le Reniement de saint Pierre" God, "Comme un tyran gorgé de viande et de vins, / . . . s'endort [Like a tyrant gorged with meat and wines, / . . . falls asleep] (lines 3-4). Abel's descendants engage in the same three activities (as Richter notes, p. 1467), with God's blessing: "Race d'Abel, dors, bois et mange: / Dieu te sourit complaisamment [Abel's race, sleep, drink and eat: / God smiles on you complacently] (lines 1-2). The same "Séraphins" [Seraphim] (line 2) who experience "volupté" [sensual delight] (line 7) at the curses and sobs of the oppressed whose sound mounts up to heaven take pleasure as well in the smell of the sacrifices Abel's children send their way: "Race d'Abel, ton sacrifice / Flatte le nez du Séraphin!" [Abel's race, your sacrifice / Delights the nose of the Seraphim!] (lines 5-6).

The suffering of Humanity at the hands of the god of Love in "L'Amour et le Crâne," which continued in the suffering of Jesus who represented that Humanity in "Le Reniement de saint Pierre," continues here in the suffering of Cain's descendants, the oppressed of the earth. Baudelaire underlines that continuity by formulating the same question for both: The skull asked, "Ce jeu féroce et ridicule, / Quand doit-il finir?" [This ferocious and ridiculous game, /

When will it end?]) (lines 15-16); the poet in “Abel et Caïn” asks, “Race de Caïn, ton supplice / Aura-t-il jamais une fin?” [Cain’s race, your torture / Will it ever have an end?] (lines 7-8).

92. “Les Litanies de Satan”

O toi, le plus savant et le plus beau des Anges,
Dieu trahi par le sort et privé de louanges,

O Satan, prends pitié de ma longue misère!

O Prince de l'exil, à qui l'on a fait du tort,
5 Et qui, vaincu, toujours te redresses plus fort,

O Satan, prends pitié de ma longue misère!

Toi qui sais tout, grand roi des choses souterraines,
Aimable médecin des angoisses humaines,

O Satan, prends pitié de ma longue misère!

10 Qui même aux parias, ces animaux maudits,
Enseignes par l'amour le goût du Paradis.

O Satan, prends pitié de ma longue misère!

O toi, qui de la Mort, ta vieille et forte amante,
Engendras l'Espérance, — une folle charmante!

15 O Satan, prends pitié de ma longue misère!

Toi qui qui peux octroyer ce regard calme et haut
Qui damne tout un peuple autour d'un échafaud,

O Satan, prends pitié de ma longue misère!

Toi qui sais en quels coins des terres envieuses
20 Le Dieu jaloux cacha les pierres précieuses,

O Satan, prends pitié de ma longue misère!

Toi dont l'oeil clair connaît les profonds arsenaux
Où dort enseveli le peuple des métaux,

O Satan, prends pitié de ma longue misère!

25 Toi dont la large main cache les précipices
Au somnambule errant au bord des édifices,

O Satan, prends pitié de ma longue misère!

Toi qui frottes de baume et d'huile les vieux os
 De l'ivrogne attardé foulé par les chevaux,
 30 O 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,

 O Satan, prends pitié de ma longue misère!

 Toi qui mets ton paraphe, ô complice subtil,
 35 Sur le front du banquier impitoyable et vil,

 O Satan, prends pitié de ma longue misère!

 Toi qui mets dans les yeux et dans le coeur des filles
 Un amour de la plaie et l'amour des guenilles!

 O Satan, prends pitié de ma longue misère!

 40 Bâton des exilés, lampe des inventeurs,
 Confesseur des pendus et des conspirateurs,

 O Satan, prends pitié de ma longue misère!

 Père adoptif de ceux qu'en sa noire colère
 Du paradis terrestre a chassés Dieu le Père,
 45 O Satan, prends pitié de ma longue misère!

 Gloire et louange à toi, Satan, dans les hauteurs
 Du Ciel, où tu régnes, et dans les profondeurs
 De l'Enfer, où, fécond, tu couves le silence!
 Fais que mon âme un jour, sous l'Arbre de Science,
 50 Près de toi se repose, à l'heure où sur ton front
 Comme un Temple nouveau ses rameaux s'épandront!

While Abel's race can warm its belly at the "foyer *patriarcal*" [*patriarchal* hearth] (line 14), Cain's descendants, bereft of that patriarchal hearth, must tremble in the cold of a cave. But in "Les Litanies de Satan" [The Litanies of Satan] the latter find a new father in Satan, "*Père adoptif de ceux qu'en sa noire colère / Du paradis terrestre a chassés Dieu le Père*" [Adoptive *Father* of those whom, in his black ire, / God the *Father* chased out of the earthly paradise] (lines 43-44). Like Cain, whom God condemned to wander on the earth, Satan too, having been chased out of heaven, is an exile: "O Prince de l'exil, à qui l'on a fait tort" [O Prince of exile, who has been done wrong] (line 4). Satan, "Bâton des exilés" [Staff of the exiled] (line 40), "aux parias . . . / Enseign[e] par l'amour le goût du Paradis" [inculcates in pariahs, through love, the taste for

Paradise] (lines 10, 11). Satan would like to regain heaven, and teaches other pariahs to have the same goal; the poet encouraged Cain's race to strive for the same end in "Abel et Caïn": "Race de Caïn, au ciel monte, / Et sur la terre jette Dieu! [Cain's race, ascend to heaven, / and cast God down to earth!] (lines 31-32).

The poet had smiled on the victory of the pike over the plow ("Le fer est vaincu par l'épieu!" (line 30), as Cain's race triumphed over Abel's. He speaks again here of the weapons the oppressed take up in the struggle for domination: "O Satan . . . qui, pour consoler l'homme frêle qui souffre, / Nous appris à mêler le salpêtre et le soufre" [O Satan . . . who, to console frail suffering mankind, / Taught us how to mix saltpeter with sulfur] (lines 30, 31-32) to make gunpowder, the great equalizer in the struggle between the weak and the strong. For Abel's race, "L'argent fait aussi des petits" [Money too has its progeny] (line 18). Money begets money for those who charge interest, but on them Satan puts his mark: "Toi qui mets ton paraphe, ô complice subtil, / Sur le front du banquier impitoyable et vil" [You who put your paraph, O wily accomplice, / On the forehead of the pitiless and vile banker] (lines 34-35). That paraph is the counterpart to the mark of Cain, and will have the opposite effect. The "signum" (Genesis 4. 15) God placed on Cain would save his life from those who would have killed him because he killed his brother, but the mark the Devil puts on the banker singles him out, it would seem, for destruction. Just in case the allusion to the mark of Cain might be missed, Baudelaire changed "paraphe" to "marque" in the 1861 edition; in a version earlier than the published 1857 edition, the line had read "Toi qui mets un *opprobre* éternel et sanglant" [You who put an eternal and bloody *opprobrium*] (*OC*, I: 1085), which wouldn't have been a mark at all. At some point between "opprobre" and "paraphe" Baudelaire realized that here was an opportunity to invent a counterpart to the mark of Cain.

LE VIN

93. "L'Âme 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,
 4 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;
 8 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
 12 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,
 16 Tu me glorifieras et tu seras content:

J'allumerai les yeux de ta femme ravie;
 A ton fils je rendrai sa force et ses couleurs
 Et serai pour le frêle athlète de la vie
 20 L'huile qui raffermir 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
 24 Qui jaillira vers Dieu comme une rare fleur!»

“Les Litanies de Satan” glorified Satan: “*Gloire* et louange à toi, Satan” [*Glory* and praise to you, Satan] (line 46); “L’Âme du vin” [The Soul of Wine] glorifies wine: “Tu me *glorifieras* et tu seras content” [You *will glorify* me and be happy] (line 16). Satan, “Aimable médecin des angoisses humaines” [Amiable physician of human anguish] (line 8), consoles “l’homme *frêle* qui souffre” [*frail* suffering mankind] (line 31); wine will be “pour le *frêle* athlète de la vie / *L’huile* qui raffermir les muscles des lutteurs” [for the *frail* athlete of life / The *oil* that firms up wrestlers’ muscles] (lines 19-20). Ironically, it was someone who had imbibed too much wine who needed the oil Satan applied: “Toi qui frottes de baume et d’*huile* les vieux os / De l’ivrogne attardé foulé par les chevaux” [You who rub with balm and *oil* the old bones / Of the drunkard, late getting home, trampled by horses], (lines 28-29). When “L’Âme du vin” was moved in 1861 so that it no longer followed “Les Litanies de Satan” the oil disappeared from Satan’s pharmacopeia: “Toi qui, magiquement, assouplis les vieux os / De l’ivrogne . . .” [You who, magically, make supple the old bones / Of the drunkard . . .]. It was no longer needed to connect two poems no longer neighbors.

Another textual change offers additional proof of Baudelaire’s practice of adding connections: When “L’Âme du vin” was first published, in a magazine in 1850 (and again in 1851), the second line had been: “Homme, je pousserai vers toi, mon bien-aimé” [Man, I will send to you, my beloved]. On a page proof for the 1857, he had first written “Homme, je passerai vers toi, pauvre déshérité” [Man, I will pass to you, poor disinherited one]. As Claude Pichois points this is two syllables too many for an alexandrine; Baudelaire then corrected “je send vers toi, pauvre” (8 syllables) to “vers toi je pousse, ô cher” (6 syllables) (*OC*, I: 1046). He was apparently so intent on changing “mon bien-aimé” to “déshérité” that he forgot to count the syllables! Why so was he so fixed on that word? Because he wanted to forge another link with the preceding poem, in which Satan comforts the disinherited: “Père adoptif de ceux qu’en sa noire colère / Du paradis terrestre a chassés Dieu le Père” [Adoptive Father of those whom, in his black ire, / God the Father chased out of the earthly paradise] (lines 43-44).

Although Satan and wine both comfort the afflicted, the anti-God stance of “Les Litanies de Satan” and the two poems that precede it is no longer present (and neither is Satan). Wine is praised (actually, praises itself, as the soul of wine speaks throughout the poem) as the gift of God, growing from seed cast by “l’éternel Semeur” [the eternal Sower] (line 22), and as a means of access to God on high: “Pour que de notre amour naisse la poésie / Qui jaillira vers Dieu comme une rare fleur!” [So that from our love would be born poetry / That would shoot up towards God like a rare flower!] (lines 23-24). This forms a striking contrast to the Satan who teaches pariahs (the equivalent in that poem to the disinherited in this one) “par *l’amour* le goût du Paradis” [by *love* a taste for Paradise] (line 11), though it is also by *amour* that the flower of poetry that reaches heavenward is born. The poem that aims for heaven has replaced the taste for Paradise that motivated Satan, in league with those the Father disinherited, to storm heaven and overthrow God.

By paying close attention to a word that appears in only these two poems among the *Fleurs du mal*, we can how this change takes place. “Ô Satan . . . toi, qui de la Mort . . . /

Engendras l'Espérance [O Satan . . . you who from Death . . . / *Will engender Hope*] (lines 12, 13, 14); "Je sais" [I know]," Wine tells mankind," 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" [how much is required, on the hill in flame, / Of pain, sweat and blistering sun / *To engender* my life and give me a soul] (lines 5-7). Satan engenders hope; man engenders Wine, which provides hope: "l'espoir qui gazouille en mon sein palpitant" [the *hope* that gurgles in my throbbing breast] (line 14).

94. "Le Vin des 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,
 4 OÙ l'humanité grouille en ferments orageux,

On voit un chiffonnier qui vient, hochant la tête,
 Buttant, et se cognant aux murs comme un poète,
 Et, sans prendre souci des mouchards, ses sujets,
 8 Épanche 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
 12 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,
 Le dos martyrisé sous le hideux débris,
 16 Trouble vomissement du fastueux Paris,

Reviennent, parfumés d'une odeur de futailles,
 Suivis de compagnons blanchis dans les batailles,
 Dont la moustache pend comme les vieux drapeaux;
 20 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,
 24 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
 28 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, saisi de remords, avait fait le sommeil;
 32 L'Homme ajoute le Vin, fils sacré du Soleil!

A connection between poetry and wine is one of many threads uniting “L’Âme du vin” with “Le Vin des chiffonniers” [The Ragpickers’ Wine]. In the former, wine’s soul claims that its divine purpose is that “de notre amour naîsse la *poésie* / Qui jaillira vers Dieu comme une rare fleur!” [from our love would be born *poetry* / That would shoot up towards God like a rare flower!] (lines 23-24). In the latter, the drunken ragpicker staggers around and bumps into walls “comme un *poète*” [like a *poet*] (line 6). Baudelaire is alluding to his earlier poem “Le Soleil,” where the poet is depicted “Trébuchant sur les mots comme sur les pavés, / Heurtant parfois des vers depuis longtemps rêvés” [Stumbling on words as on cobblestones, / Bumping up at times against lines long dreamed of] (lines 7-8). In *Du vin et du hachisch*, an article published in March 1851 in *Le Messager de l’Assemblée* in which can be found a prose version of “L’Âme du vin” followed immediately followed by one of “Le Vin des chiffonniers,” he draws out the resemblance: the *chiffonnier* “arrive hochant la tête et butant sur les pavés, comme les jeunes poètes qui passent toutes leurs journées à errer et à chercher des rimes” [arrives nodding his head and stumbling on the cobblestones, like young poets who spend their days wandering about and looking for rhymes] (*OC*, I: 381). In the same passage, he goes into more detail than he does in the poem about what specifically a *chiffonnier* does:

Voici un homme chargé de ramasser les débris d’une journée de la capitale. Tout ce que la grande cité a rejeté, tout ce qu’elle a perdu, tout ce qu’elle a dédaigné, tout ce qu’elle a brisé, il le catalogue, il le collectionne. . . . Il fait un triage, un choix intelligent; il ramasse, comme un avare un trésor, les ordures qui, remâchées par la divinité de l’Industrie, deviendront des objets d’utilité ou de jouissance. (*OC*, I: 381)

[Behold a man charged with the responsibility of amassing the debris of a day in the capital. All that the great city has rejected, all that it has lost, all that it has disdained, all that it has broken, he catalogs it, he collects it. . . . It makes a selection, an intelligent choice; he amasses, like a miser his treasure, the garbage that, chewed over again by the god of Industry, will become objects of use or enjoyment.]

Rosemary Lloyd, commenting on this passage, writes of “Baudelaire’s identification with the old rag and bone man . . . picking over the city’s detritus to refashion it into the work of art” (Rosemary Lloyd, *Baudelaire’s World* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002], p. 155). Although this is inexact, since it is not the ragpicker but the god of Industry that effects the transformation, yet the collection and triage the *chiffonnier* performs is surely, in Baudelaire’s mind, the same work he does as he wanders the city, finding “bric-a-brac that the poet reassembles in his great city poems, part of the dross that his alchemy turns to gold,” as Lloyd writes (p. 154). But it is also the work his poems do, each poem being for the next in sequence something like the debris of the day that is collected and assembled into the object of use and enjoyment that is the succeeding poem. It is also the work of dream as Freud describes it in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (trans. and ed. James Strachey [New York: Avon Books, 1965]), where the “day’s residues” (p. 262), the events of the day immediately preceding the dream, become raw material for the dream. “The psychically significant impression and the indifferent experiences from the previous day are brought together in the dream-material, provided always that it is possible to set up communicating ideas between them” (p. 261). The day’s residue are raw material with which the unconscious disguises its repressed wish in the dream.

In “L’Âme du vin” wine sings “Sous ma prison de *verre*” [Beneath my *glass* prison] (line 3) and recalls “la colline en *flamme*” [the hill in *flame*] (line 5)--the flame of the “soleil cuisant”

[blistering sun] (line 6), the hill of the vineyard where it was engendered. In “Le Vin des chiffonniers” glass and flame are recycled and given a new combination: “Souvent, à la clarté rouge d’un réverbère / Dont le vent bat la *flamme* et tourmente le *verre*” [Often, in the brightness of a street lamp / Whose *flame* the wind beats and whose *glass* it torments] (lines 1-2). Now, as Freud would ask, is there a communicating idea between them--that is, between the “flamme” + “verre” in one poem and the “flamme” + “verre” in the next (a combination that appears in no other poem in the collection)? Yes, for as Ross Chambers comments, “the staggering gait of the ragpicker, the uncertainty of his progress through the city, reproduces this image”--that is, the image of the vacillating flame (p., 183 in Ross Chambers, “Recycling the Ragpicker: ‘Le Vin des chiffonniers,’” in *Understanding Les Fleurs du mal: Critical Readings*, ed. William J. Thompson [Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1997], pp. 176-91). Chambers also points out that the ragpicker’s “zigzagging” is not just “characteristic of drunkards but also, quite independently of alcohol intake, of those whose trade is scavenging” (p. 189). For the *chiffonnier* moves from object to object, going toward what looks promising. But if the vacillating flame within the glass of the street lamp is a version of the ragpicker so too, as Baudelaire himself asserts, is the poet. And since, in the way his poems have of scavenging their predecessors, the flame-begotten wine under glass that strives toward engendering poetry as a *fleur* is recycled (reverberated, one could say) as the zigzagging flame of the *réverbère*, poetry-making is the communicating idea.

The ragpicker who walks and works “comme un poète” talks like the soul of wine. The ragpicker “relève les victimes, . . . / S’enivre des splendeurs de sa propre vertu” [lifts up the victims, . . . / Becomes intoxicated with the splendors of his own virtue] (lines 10, 12); wine waxed enthusiastic about its power to raise up life’s victims: “À ton fils je rendrai sa force et ses couleurs / Et serai pour ce frêle athlète de la vie / L’huile qui raffermi les muscles des lutteurs” [I will give back to your son his strength and color / And will be for this frail athlete of life / The oil that firms up wrestlers’ muscles] (lines 18-20). Both seek glory: the ragpicker “Épanche tout son cœur en *glorieux* projets” [Pours out all his heart in *glorious* projects] (line 8); the soul of wine says to mankind “Tu me *glorifieras*” [You will *glorify* me] (line 16).

In both poems wine sings: “l’âme du vin *chantait* dans les bouteilles . . . / Un *chant* plein de lumière et de fraternité” [the soul of wine *was singing* in the bottles . . . / A *song* full of light and brotherhood] (lines 1, 4); “Le vin . . . *chante* ses exploits” [Wine . . . *sings* of its exploits] (lines 26, 27). Wine is happy to fall “Dans le *gosier* d’un homme usé par ses travaux” [Into the *throat of a man* worn down by his labors] (line 10); the ragpicker and his comrades are “Moulu par le *travail*” [worn out by labor] (line 14), but “Par le *gosier* de l’homme” [out of the throat of man]--that is, of the ragpickers--wine sings of its exploits (the combination “gosier” + “homme” appears in no other poem). Wine goes *into* (*Dans*) of the throat of man in one poem; wine’s song comes *out* [*Par*] of it in the next.

95. “Le Vin de l’assassin”

Ma femme est morte, je suis libre!
Je puis donc boire tout mon saoul.
Lorsque je rentrais sans un sou,
4 Ses pleurs me déchiraient la fibre.

Autant qu’un roi je suis heureux;
L’air est pur, le ciel admirable.
— Nous avons un été semblable
8 Lors que j’en devins amoureux!

— L'horrible soif qui me déchire
 Aurait besoin pour s'assouvir
 D'autant de vin qu'en peut tenir
 12 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.
 16 — Je l'oublierai si je puis!

Au nom des serments de tendresse,
 Dont rien ne peut nous délier,
 Et pour nous réconcilier
 20 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!
 24 — Nous sommes tous plus ou moins fous!

Elle était encore jolie,
 Quoique bien fatiguée! et moi,
 Je l'aimais trop; — voilà pourquoi
 28 Je lui dis: sors de cette vie!

Nul ne peut me comprendre. Un seul
 Parmi ces ivrognes stupides
 Songea-t-il dans ses nuits turpides
 32 A faire du vin un linceul?

Cette crapule invulnérable
 Comme les machines de fer
 Jamais, ni l'été ni l'hiver,
 36 N'a connu l'amour véritable,

Avec ses noirs enchantements,
 Son cortège infernal d'alarmes,
 Ses fioles de poison, ses larmes,
 40 Ses bruits de chaîne et d'ossements!

— Me voilà libre et solitaire!
 Je serai ce soir ivre-mort;
 Alors, sans peur et sans remord,
 44 Je me coucherai sur la terre,

Et je dormirai comme un chien!
 Le chariot aux lourdes roues
 Chargé de pierres et de boues,
 48 Le wagon enragé peut bien

Écraser ma tête coupable
 Ou me couper par le milieu,
 Je m'en moque comme de Dieu,
 52 Du Diable et de la Sainte Table!

The prose versions of “L’Âme du vin” and “Le Vin des chiffonniers” in *Du vin et du hachisch* are remarkably close to the poems. Take, for example, the following passage, in which we see another version of lines 9-28:

Maintenant il complimente son armée. La bataille est gagnée, mais la journée a été chaude. Il passe à cheval sous *des arcs de triomphe*. Son coeur est heureux. Il écoute avec délices les acclamations d’un monde enthousiaste. Tout à l’heure il va *dicter* un code supérieur à tous les codes connus. Il jure solennellement qu’il rendra ses peuples heureux. La misère et le vice ont disparu de l’humanité.

Et cependant il a *le dos* et les reins écorchés par le poids de sa hotte. Il est *harcelé de chagrins de ménage*. Il est *moulu par* quarante ans de *travail* et de courses. L’âge le tourmente. Mais *le vin*, comme un *Pactole* nouveau, *roule* à travers l’humanité languissante un *or* intellectuel. Comme *les bons rois*, il *règne par ses services* et *chante ses exploits par le gosier* de ses sujets.

[Now he compliments his army. The battle is won, but the action had been hot. He rides on horseback *under triumphal arches*. His heart is happy. He hears with delight the acclamations of an enthusiastic crowd. Soon he is going to *dictate* a legal code superior to all known codes. He solemnly swears that he will make his people happy. Poverty and vice have disappeared from the human condition.

And yet *his back* and his loins are tormented by the weight of his basket. He is *hassled by household problems*. He is *worn out* by forty years of *work* and walking. He is tormented by old age. But *wine*, like a new River *Pactolus*, *rolls* an intellectual *gold* across languishing humanity. Like good *kings*, it *reigns by* the services it renders and *sings of its exploits through the throats of its* subjects.]

It is therefore very interesting to see just how much of the last stanza--

Pour noyer la rancoeur et bercer l’indolence
 De tous ces vieux maudits qui meurent en silence,
 Dieu, saisi de remords, avait fait le sommeil;
 L’Homme ajoute le Vin, fils sacré du Soleil!

[To drown the rancor and cradle the indolence
 Of all those old condemned ones who die in silence,
 God, seized with remorse, had made sleep;
 Man added Wine, sacred son of the Sun!] (lines 29-32)

--does *not* appear in the prose version: “Il y a sur la boule terrestre une foule innombrable, innommée, dont le sommeil n’endormirait pas suffisamment les souffrances. Le vin compose pour eux des chants et des poèmes” [There are on the terrestrial ball a countless, nameless multitude whose sufferings slumber would not sufficiently put to sleep. For them, wine makes up songs and poems] (*OC*, 382). There is no God here (nor in the prose version of “L’Âme du vin”), no

remorse, and no drowning. Drowning and remorse, however, have their place (remorse by its absence) in “Le Vin de l’Assassin” [The Murderer’s Wine], in which a man drowns his wife and will sleep without remorse, with the help of wine:

16 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 puis!

 Je serai ce soir ivre-mort;
 Alors, sans peur et sans *remord*,
 Je me coucherai sur la terre,

 Et je dormirai comme un chien!”

[I threw her into a well
 And I even pushed onto her
 All the stones of the rim
 I will forget her if I can!

Tonight I’ll be dead drunk.
 Then, without fear and without *remorse*,
 I will lie down on the ground

And *I’ll sleep* like a dog!] (lines 13-16, 42-45).

Wine will help him forget, and to sleep; but he will need a lot of it: “D’autant de vin qu’en peut tenir / Son tombeau; — ce n’est pas peu dire” [As much wine as her tomb can hold—and that’s not a small amount] (lines 11-12). Thus in both poems wine is the supplement that makes sleep and the relief of suffering possible; and remorse figures in both as well, but in radically different ways: God’s remorse that leads him to create sleep vs. a murderer’s remorse for which he seeks oblivion in wine-assisted sleep.

“*Autant qu’un roi je suis heureux*” [I am as happy as a king] (line 5), he declares, echoing two moments in “Le Vin des chiffonniers.” One of them is when wine sings of its exploits “Et règne par ses dons *ainsi que les vrais rois*” [And reigns by its gifts *like true kings*] (line 28). This passage closely follows the prose version, as we can see in the last sentence of the passage quoted above. The other is when the ragpicker “sans prendre souci des mouchards, ses sujets, / Épanche tout son cœur en glorieux projets” [without worrying about the spies, his subjects, / Pours out all his heart in glorious projects] (lines 7-8). The “mouchards” [spies] are the police who patrol the city at night, “des patrouilles” [patrols] in an earlier version of the poem (*OC*, I: 1049). He doesn’t worry about their listening to his discourse and reporting it to the authorities because in his delusion he takes them to be “ses sujets” [his subjects], and himself to be their king. The police spies are not present in the prose version: “Il parle tout seul; il verse son âme dans l’air froid et ténébreux de la nuit” [He speaks in solitude; he pours out his soul in the cold and shadowy night air] (*OC*, I: 381).

Why does Baudelaire add the “mouchards” to the scene? I think it is because it to do so sets up a connection with “Le Vin de l’assassin,” in which a murderer confesses to his crime, heedless of the consequences of his confession. He doesn’t care who hears, because he plans to lie down dead-drunk in the street, where

Le chariot aux lourdes roues
 Chargé de pierres et de boues,
 Le wagon enragé peut bien

Écraser ma tête couplable
 Ou me couper par le milieu,
 Je m'en moque

[The heavy wheeled-cart
 Loaded with stones and mud,
 The hurtling wagon may well

Crush my guilty head
 Or cut me in half,
 I don't care] (lines 46-51)

--his "Je m'en moque" answering the "sans prendre souci." In Baudelaire's sketch for a play to be called "L'Ivrogne" that recounts a more complicated version of the same murder the murderer tries to escape detection but ultimately cannot help confessing, and the police take him away (*OC*, I: 634).

96. "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,
 4 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,
 8 Semblable au cri lointain de l'humaine douleur,

Tout cela ne vaut pas, ô bouteille profonde,
 Les baumes pénétrants que ta panse féconde
 11 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,
 14 Qui nous rend triomphants et semblables aux Dieux!

In the play the motive for murder is not at all what it is in the poem. In the first stanza, the murderer tells us that he killed his wife so that he could drink as much as he wanted without being torn apart by her tears when he came home with no money because he'd spent it all on drink. But in the play, that isn't a problem because he is no longer living with her (*OC*, I: 631). A rich young man is in love with the wife, but she resists his advances. The husband is aware of this, and is jealous, but uses "le prétexte de sa jalousie surexcitée pour se cacher à lui-même qu'il en veut surtout à sa femme de sa résignation, de sa douceur, de sa patience, de sa vertu" [the pretext of his overheated jealousy to conceal from himself the fact the he is most of all angry at his

wife for her self-denial, her sweetness, her patience, her virtue] (*OC*, I: 632). Baudelaire changed the motive for the crime to something much more like the sentiment expressed in “Le Vin du solitaire” [The Solitary Man’s Wine], that the singular glance from a desirable woman or a libidinous kiss “ne vaut pas” [are not worth] (line 9) the penetrating balms the wine bottle can furnish the “solitaire.” Indeed, the murderer was happy to declare “Me voilà libre et *solitaire!*” [Now I am free and *solitary!*] (line 41) (as Mario Richter notes, 1282). That the rejected woman’s glance slides in our direction like a white ray of light that the moon sends to the trembling surface of a lake “Quand elle y veut baigner sa beauté nonchalante” [When she wants to bathe her nonchalant beauty in it] (line 4) is surely not unconnected to the woman in the well. The speaker in this poem finds wine more attractive; the speaker in the other would forget the woman in the water if he could, and covers her with stones to blot out her image, and is now free to be alone with his wine.

97. “Le Vin des amants”

Aujourd'hui l'espace est splendide!
 Sans mors, sans éperons, sans bride,
 Partons à cheval sur le vin
 4 Pour un ciel féérique et divin!

Comme deux anges que torture
 Une implacable calenture,
 Dans le bleu cristal du matin
 8 Suivons le mirage lointain!

Mollement balancés sur l'aile
 Du tourbillon intelligent,
 11 Dans un délire parallèle,

Ma soeur, côte à côte nageant,
 Nous fuirons sans repos ni trêves
 14 Vers le paradis de mes rêves!

While in “Le Vin du solitaire” (as in “Le Vin de l’assassin”) the narrator turns his back on a woman for the sake of wine, in “Le Vin des amants” (The Lovers’ Wine) the opposite takes place in that the narrator enjoys both at the same time. Wine doesn’t destroy love; it contributes to amorous ecstasy.

Or at least that is the possibility the narrator holds out in hopes that his mistress will accept his proposal that they drink wine together to flee to the paradise of his dreams. But as Mario Richter points out (1296) it is the paradise of *his* dreams. And there is something more troubling: the torturing “calenture” (line 6) that will affect the poet and his lover, angels though they be. Both Adam and Pichois quote the definition Littré’s *Dictionnaire* (1873) gives the word: “species of furious delirium to which sailors are subject in the torrid zone” (*OC*, I: 1057). Which is too bad, because they miss the essential, which can be found (as Richter notes, 1293) in Bescherelle’s *Dictionnaire* of 1856, more contemporaneous with the first publication (and possibly the composition) of the poem (1857): “Espèce de délire furieux auquel les navigateurs sont sujets sous la zone torride . . . caractérisée particulièrement par le désir irrésistible de se jeter à la mer” [species of furious delirium to which sailors are subject in the torrid zone . . . characterized in particular by the irresistible desire to throw oneself into the water]. It is that

particular characteristic that is behind its appearance in the poem (in which Baudelaire's formulation "*implacable* calenture" seems to echo Bescherelle's "*désir irrésistible*"). It explains why even though the narrator and his lover would be flying through the air he imagines them "nageant" [swimming] (line 23). And it recalls the singular look of an amorous woman transformed in the poem before into a ray of moonlight "Que la lune onduleuse envoie au lac tremblant, / Quand elle y veut baigner sa beauté nonchalante" [That the undulant moon sends to the trembling lake, / When she wants to bathe her nonchalant beauty in it] (lines 3-4). The moon, in other words, wants to go into the water, a desire that is becoming "implacable" (line 6)--that is, insistent--in that it has appeared now in two successive poems. In fact, the action of going into the water appears in three successive poems, if we remember the woman thrown into the well in "Le Vin de l'assassin." Indeed, it is as if the poems ("Le Vin du solitaire" and "Le Vin des amants") were remembering it.

LA MORT

98. "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,
4 Éclores 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
8 Dans nos deux esprits, ces miroirs jumeaux.

Un soir plein de rose et de bleu mystique,
Nous échangerons un éclair unique,
11 Comme un long sanglot, tout chargé d'adieux

Et bientôt un Ange, entr'ouvrant les portes,
Viendra ranimer, fidèle et joyeux,
14 Les miroirs ternis et les flammes mortes.

"La Mort des amants" [The Lovers' Death] begins a new section, "La Mort" (after "Le Vin"). But the poem's title so strongly parallels that of the immediately preceding poem, "Le Vin des amants," that it is obvious Baudelaire does not want the division into sections to trouble the continuing connections between sequential poems. The motif of two-ness predominates in both: in "Le Vin des amants," the lovers are "Comme deux anges" [Like two angels] (line 5), "Dans un délire parallèle" [In a parallel delirium] (line 11), and "côte à côte" [side by side] (line 12); in "La Mort des amants," their "deux coeurs seront deux vastes flambeaux, / Qui réfléchiront leurs doubles lumières / Dans nos deux esprits, ces miroirs jumeaux" [two hearts will be two immense torches, / That will reflect their double lights / In our two spirits, those twin mirrors] (lines 6-8). In this respect two poems are like the two lovers, each a mirror reflecting the other, and what they reflect is doubling itself.

Yet in other ways they diverge. "Le Vin des amants" was an invitation to erotic ecstasy, "La Mort des amants" an invitation to death. The former looked to "le bleu . . . du matin" [the

blue . . . of morning] (line 7), the latter to “Un soir plein . . . de bleu” [An evening full . . . of blue] (line 9). Both allude to a better sky, the “ciel féérique et divin” [magical and divine sky] (line 4) where wine would take the lovers, the “cieux plus beaux” [more beautiful skies] (line 4) under which the flowers bloomed, but the latter is a destination, the former a provenance. One poem describes one a departure, the other a final destination.

99. “La Mort des pauvres”

C'est la Mort qui console et la Mort qui fait vivre;
 C'est le but de la vie, et c'est le seul espoir
 Qui, divin élixir, nous monte et nous enivre,
 4 Et nous donne le coeur de marcher jusqu'au soir;

A 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,
 8 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,
 11 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,
 14 C'est le portique ouvert sur les Cieux inconnus!

At least three items are recycled from “La Mort des amants” in “La Mort des pauvres” [The Death of the Poor] besides death: beds, an angel that does household chores, and opening doors. The lovers will have “des lits pleins d'odeurs légères, / Des divans profonds comme des tombeaux” [*beds* full of light scents, / Divans deep as tombs] (lines 1-2), beds that are or will become tombs; an “Ange . . . refait le lit des gens pauvres et nus” [Angel . . . remakes the *bed* of poor and naked folk] (lines 9, 11); that Angel is Death, those beds tombs. This Angel remakes beds; the other Angel will open the doors of the room where the lovers have died, polish the mirrors and relight the fires.

Yet the lovers are fortunate. Their death seems willed, as if they had made a suicide pact. Their beds are gently scented; exotic flowers have been brought in just for them. They die in luxury. But the the poor are so unfortunate in life that death is their only hope. Their certain death is their only wealth, their “grenier *mystique*” [*mystic granary*] (line 12); they know that when it comes they will find rest. Death does, though, have a “mystique” in both poems, as the lovers die on “Un soir plein de rose et de bleu *mystique* [An evening full of pink and *mystic* blue] (line 9).

In the first poem we see an Angel “entr'ouvrant les portes” [*opening the doors*] (line 12), complemented in the second by a “portique ouvert sur les Cieux inconnus” [*portico open to unknown Skies*] (line 14). The Angel will pass through the doors to “ranimer” [bring back to life] (line 13) the lovers, allegorized as flames and mirrors. Thus, the lovers remain where they are, and new life comes to them through the doors. The poor, on the other hand, will leave where they are and exit through the *portique* to unknown skies, possibly life after death. What the Angel is expected to do at the end of “La Mort des amants,” to “ranimer” the lovers, is ironically echoed by

what Death does in the first line of “La Mort des pauvres”: “C'est . . . la Mort qui fait vivre” [It is . . . Death that brings life]. Ironically, because what Death here does is merely to allow the poor to live with at least the hope that Death will put an end to their suffering. Death is not, at least not at this moment in the poem, bringing life after death.

100. “La Mort des artistes”

Combien faut-il de fois secouer mes grelots
 Et baiser ton front bas, morne caricature?
 Pour piquer dans le but, mystique quadrature,
 4 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
 8 Dont l'infernal désir nous remplit de sanglots!

Il en est qui jamais n'ont connu leur Idole,
 Et ces sculpteurs damnés et marqués d'un affront,
 11 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,
 14 Fera s'épanouir les fleurs de leur cerveau!

Whereas Death was associated with something mystic in “La Mort des amants”—the “bleu mystique” of the evening the lovers will die—and in “La Mort des pauvres” with the “grenier mystique” that is one of its names, in “La Mort des artistes” [The Death of Artists] that adjective is reserved not for Death directly but for “le but” [the goal]: “Pour piquer dans *le but, mystique quadrature*” [To strike *the goal, mystic quadrature*] (line 3). (Baudelaire is alluding to the quadrature of the circle, traditionally an impossible yet dreamed-of goal.) The phrase “le but” appears in only one other poem in 1857, “La Mort des pauvres,” where it is another name for Death: “*le but de la vie*” [*the goal of life*] (line 2). So that of these three poems Death as “mystique” unites the first and second, and “le but” as “mystique” the second and third.

In the same line as it is “le but,” Death for the poor is also “le seul espoir” [the only hope] (line 2); and it is that as well for the artists, who “N'ont qu'un espoir” [Have but one hope] (line 12), which is that Death will make the flowers of their brain to blossom. Note that there are three parts to this mirroring effect: (1) that there is only one (“le seul,” “N'ont qu'un”), (2) hope (“espoir”), and (3) that it is Death (“la Mort”). As the Angel will “ranimer” the lovers in “La Mort des amants,” and Death “*fait vivre*” (line 1) the poor in “La Mort des pauvres,” Death “*Fera s'épanouir*” the flowers in “La Mort des artistes.”

Thus does the 1857 *Fleurs du mal* end with an allusion to itself, and to the difference between realization and intent. Baudelaire's hope that after his death the flowers he envisioned would eventually blossom—and that his intent be realized—comes closer to fulfillment every time a mirroring effect such as this is brought to light.