**L'Héautontimorouménos**

*À J.G.F.*

Je te frapperai sans colère  
Et sans haine, comme un boucher,  
Comme Moïse le rocher  
Et je ferai de ta paupière,

Pour abreuver mon Saharah  
Jaillir les eaux de la souffrance.  
Mon désir gonflé d'espérance  
Sur tes pleurs salés nagera

Comme un vaisseau qui prend le large,  
Et dans mon coeur qu'ils soûleront  
Tes chers sanglots retentiront  
Comme un tambour qui bat la charge!  
  
Ne suis-je pas un faux accord  
Dans la divine symphonie,  
Grâce à la vorace Ironie  
Qui me secoue et qui me mord

Elle est dans ma voix, la criarde!  
C'est tout mon sang ce poison noir!  
Je suis le sinistre miroir  
Où la mégère se regarde.

Je suis la plaie et le couteau!  
Je suis le soufflet et la joue!  
Je suis les membres et la roue,  
Et la victime et le bourreau!

Je suis de mon coeur le vampire,  
— Un de ces grands abandonnés  
Au rire éternel condamnés  
Et qui ne peuvent plus sourire!

— *Charles Baudelaire*

**The Man Who Tortures Himself**

To J. G. F.

I shall strike you without anger  
And without hate, like a butcher,  
As Moses struck the rock!  
And from your eyelids I shall make

The waters of suffering gush forth  
To inundate my Sahara.  
My desire swollen with hope  
Will float upon your salty tears

Like a vessel which puts to sea,   
And in my heart that they'll make drunk   
Your beloved sobs will resound   
Like a drum beating the charge!

Am I not a discord   
In the heavenly symphony,   
Thanks to voracious Irony   
Who shakes me and who bites me?

She's in my voice, the termagant!   
All my blood is her black poison!   
I am the sinister mirror   
In which the vixen looks.

I am the wound and the dagger!   
I am the blow and the cheek!   
I am the members and the wheel,   
Victim and executioner!

I'm the vampire of my own heart  
— One of those utter derelicts   
Condemned to eternal laughter,   
But who can no longer smile!

— William Aggeler, *The Flowers of Evil* (Fresno, CA: Academy Library Guild, 1954)

**Heautontimoroumenos**

To J. G. F.

I'll strike you, but without the least  
Anger — as butchers poll an ox,  
Or Moses, when he struck the rocks —   
That from your eyelid thus released,

The lymph of suffering may brim  
To slake my desert of its drought.  
So my desire, by hope made stout,  
Upon your salty tears may swim,

Like a proud ship, far out from shore.   
Within my heart, which they'll confound   
With drunken joy, your sobs will sound   
Like drums that beat a charge in war.

Am I not a faulty chord   
In all this symphony divine,   
Thanks to the irony malign   
That shakes and cuts me like a sword?

It's in my voice, the raucous jade!   
It's in my blood's black venom too!   
I am the looking-glass, wherethrough   
Megera sees herself portrayed!

I am the wound, and yet the blade!   
The smack, and yet the cheek that takes it!   
The limb, and yet the wheel that breaks it,   
The torturer, and he who's flayed!

One of the sort whom all revile,   
A Vampire, my own blood I quaff,   
Condemned to an eternal laugh   
Because I know not how to smile.

— Roy Campbell, *Poems of Baudelaire* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1952)

**Heauton Timoroumenos**

I mean to strike you without hate,  
As butchers do; as Moses did  
The rock. From under either lid  
Your tears will flow to inundate

This huge Sahara which is I.  
My heart, insensible with pain,  
Caught in that flood will live again:  
Will care whether it live or die —

Will strive as in the salty sea,  
Drunken with brine and all but drowned,  
Yet driven onward by the sound  
Of your wild sobbing endlessly!

For look — I am at war, my dear,   
With the whole universe. I know   
There is no medicine for my woe.   
Believe me, it is called Despair.

It runs in all my veins. I pray:   
It cries in all my words. I am   
The very glass where what I damn   
Leers and admires itself all day.

I am the wound — I am the knife   
The deep wound scabbards; the outdrawn   
Rack, and the writhing thereupon;   
The lifeless, and the taker of life.

I murder what I most adore,   
Laughing: I am indeed of those   
Condemned for ever without repose   
To laugh — but who can smile no more.

— George Dillon, *Flowers of Evil* (NY: Harper and Brothers, 1936)

**Heautontimoroumenos**  
The Man Who Tortures Himself

I shall cleave without scrape or shock,   
And, like a butcher, without hate,   
Like Moses, when he struck the rock.   
From your eyes I shall generate   
Waters of woe throughout the years   
To quench my fierce Sahara fires,   
Swollen with vast hope, my desires   
Shall float upon your bitter tears   
Like a proud vessel, sailing large;   
And in my heart, drunk at the sound,   
Your cherished sobbing shall resound   
Like drums beating the long lost charge.

Am I not a discordant note   
In the celestial symphony,   
Thanks to voracious Irony   
Who shakes and bites me at the throat?   
She's in my voice, the scold; her black   
Poison is all my blood, alas!   
I am the direful looking glass   
Which flashes her reflection back.   
I am the wound, the knives that strike,   
The blows that crush, the head that reels,   
I am wrenched limbs and grinding wheels,   
Victim and hangman, as you like!

Vampire of my own heart, meanwhile,   
A derelict, I am of those   
Doomed to eternal laughter's throes,   
Yet powerless to frame a smile!

— Jacques LeClercq, *Flowers of Evil* (Mt Vernon, NY: Peter Pauper Press, 1958)

**Heautontimoroumenos**

I'd slip it to you  
Without the least qualm or queasiness  
Like a butcher slitting the throat of a chimp  
Or Bunuel turning the bourgeois into a limp gallery  
Of frustrated meat.

What, the waters of suffering to   
Slake the Saharas of my desire?  
Your few tears won't ever sell  
In the dead and tedious ocean  
That swims through my heart  
Of war.

I was born into this dissonant symphony  
To be a puncturing chord among the factions,  
Spite has been my spirit's  
Unadministerable poison  
And I am locked in the show  
That wants most of all  
To have itself.

There is an inconsolable ache  
In this member's voice, a lust for unhappeningness  
In Borges' library or endlessly branching plot trees   
Excited testaments of paper.

I can be the wound  
And simultaneously the knife  
Be the active thought  
And a catacomb piled with unidentifiable bones  
The Latin American Terrorist incarcerated  
And the sadistic attaching  
Electrodes to his balls.

I am the Judas who plays both parts  
And whom all try to revile  
A vampire of my own blood  
Condemned to a hysterical laugh  
And ferocious smile.

— Will Schmitz

**L'Héautontimouroménos**

I'll strike thee without enmity  
nor wrath, like butchers at the block,  
like Moses when he smote the rock!  
I'll make those eyelids gush for me

with springs of suffering, whose flow  
shall slake the desert of my thirst;  
— a salt flood, where my lust accurst,  
with Hope to plump her sail, shall go

as from the port a pitching barge,  
and in my heart they satiate  
thy sobs I love shall fulminate  
loud as a drum that beats a charge!

for am I not a clashing chord  
in all Thy heavenly symphony,  
thanks to this vulture Irony  
that shakes and bites me always, Lord?

she's in my voice, the screaming elf!  
my poisoned blood came all from her!  
I am the mirror sinister  
in which the vixen sees herself!

I am the wound and I the knife!  
I am the blow I give, and feel!  
I am the broken limbs, the wheel,   
the hangman and the strangled life!

I am my heart's own vampire, for  
God has forsaken me, and men,  
these lips can never smile again,  
but laugh they must, and evermore!

* Lewis Piaget Shanks, *Flowers of Evil* (New York: Ives Washburn, 1931)
* Robert Bridges' drama "The Feast of Bacchus" is partly based on the work.

Heautontimoroumenos: literally (in Greek), 'that which punishes itself'. It is also the title of a play by the Roman dramatist Terence. for J.G.F.: Baudelaire's study of the effects of opium, The Artificial Paradises, is also dedicated to J.G.F., but biographers have not yet identified this person. In fact, Baudelaire himself remarked in the latter case, 'I want this dedication to be unintelligible'. Moses smote the rock: in Exodus 17; Moses, directed by God, provided water for his people in the wilderness by striking a rock with his staff.  
To laugh, but who can smile no more: very likely a reference to the last line of Poe's 'The Haunted Palace', an allegory of a disordered mind. J.Dupont also sees a reference to Maturin's novel Melmoth (see note to no. XIV), where it is written that the nature of the vampire betrays itself notably in that it cannot smile, and we recall that the speaker of this poem is '[his] own blood's epicure'. <http://www.baudelaire.cz/works.html?aID=200&artID=85>

William Hazlitt, *On Personal Character*:

A self-tormentor is never satisfied, come what will. He always apprehends the worst, and is indefatigable in conjuring up the apparition of danger. He is uneasy at his own good fortune, as it takes from him his favourite topic of repining and complaint. Let him succeed to his heart's content in all that is reasonable or important, yet if there is any one thing (and *that* he is sure to find out) in which he does not get on, this embitters all the rest. I know an instance. Perhaps it is myself.

Samuel Johnson in his *Dictionary* defines *seeksorrow* as "One who contrives to give himself vexation," i.e. self-tormentor, in Greek ἑαυτὸν τιμωρούμενος (*heauton timoroumenos*).