



## Charles Baudelaire's Fleurs du mal / Flowers of Evil

### Le Crépuscule du matin

La diane chantait dans les cours des casernes,  
Et le vent du matin soufflait sur les lanternes.

C'était l'heure où l'essaim des rêves malfaisants  
Tord sur leurs oreillers les bruns adolescents;  
Où, comme un oeil sanglant qui palpite et qui bouge,  
La lampe sur le jour fait une tache rouge;  
Où l'âme, sous le poids du corps revêché et lourd,  
Imite les combats de la lampe et du jour.  
Comme un visage en pleurs que les brises essuient,  
L'air est plein du frisson des choses qui s'enfuient,  
Et l'homme est las d'écrire et la femme d'aimer.

Les maisons çà et là commençaient à fumer.  
Les femmes de plaisir, la paupière livide,  
Bouche ouverte, dormaient de leur sommeil stupide;  
Les pauvresses, traînant leurs seins maigres et froids,  
Soufflaient sur leurs tisons et soufflaient sur leurs doigts.  
C'était l'heure où parmi le froid et la lésine  
S'aggravent les douleurs des femmes en gésine;  
Comme un sanglot coupé par un sang écumeux  
Le chant du coq au loin déchirait l'air brumeux  
Une mer de brouillards baignait les édifices,  
Et les agonisants dans le fond des hospices  
Poussaient leur dernier rôle en hoquets inégaux.  
Les débauchés renaient, brisés par leurs travaux.

L'aurore grelottante en robe rose et verte  
S'avavançait lentement sur la Seine déserte,  
Et le sombre Paris, en se frottant les yeux  
Empoignait ses outils, vieillard laborieux.

— *Charles Baudelaire*

### Dawn

They were sounding reveille in the barracks' yards,  
And the morning wind was blowing on the lanterns.

It was the hour when swarms of harmful dreams  
Make the sun-tanned adolescents toss in their beds;  
When, like a bloody eye that twitches and rolls,  
The lamp makes a red splash against the light of day;  
When the soul within the heavy, fretful body  
Imitates the struggle of the lamp and the sun.  
Like a tear-stained face being dried by the breeze,  
The air is full of the shudders of things that flee,  
And man is tired of writing and woman of making love.

Here and there the houses were beginning to smoke.  
The ladies of pleasure, with eyelids yellow-green  
And mouths open, were sleeping their stupefied sleep;  
The beggar-women, their breasts hanging thin and cold,  
Were blowing on their fires, blowing on their fingers.  
It was the hour when amid poverty and cold  
The pains of women in labor grow more cruel;  
The cock's crow in the distance tore the foggy air  
Like a sob stifled by a bloody froth;

The buildings were enveloped in a sea of mist,  
And in the charity-wards, the dying  
Hiccupped their death-sobs at uneven intervals.  
The rakes were going home, exhausted by their work.

The dawn, shivering in her green and rose garment,  
Was moving slowly along the deserted Seine,  
And somber Paris, the industrious old man,  
Was rubbing his eyes and gathering up his tools.

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

### Morning Twilight

Reveille in the barracks and the camps.  
The wind of morning blew upon the lamps.  
It was the hour when evil dreams in swarms  
On pillows twist brown, adolescent forms:  
When like a bleeding eye that's twitched with pain  
Each lantern smudged the day with crimson stain:  
The soul, against its body's weight of brawn,  
Lay struggling, like the lanterns with the dawn:  
Like a sad face whose tears the breezes dry  
The air grew tremulous with things that fly,  
And women tired of love, and men of writing.

The chimneys, here and there, showed fires were lighting.  
Women of pleasure, slumber to be-slut,  
Lay open-mouthed with livid eyelids shut.  
Dangling thin dugs, cold pauper-women blew  
Upon the embers and their fingers too.  
It was the hour when, what with cold and squalor,  
Women in labour aggravate their dolour,  
And like a sob, choked short with bloody froth,  
The cock-crow tore the foggy air as cloth.

Like seas the mists round every building poured  
While agonising patients in the ward,  
In broken hiccoughs, rattled out their lives:  
And worn-out rakes reeled homeward to their wives.  
Aurora, in a shift of rose and green,  
Came shivering down the Seine's deserted scene  
And Paris, as he rubbed his eyes, began  
To sort his tools, laborious old man.

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

### Dawn

Outside the barracks now the bugle called, and woke  
The morning wind, which rose, making the lanterns smoke.

It was that hour when tortured dreams of stealthy joys  
Twist in their beds the thin brown bodies of growing boys;  
When, like a blood-shot eye that blinks and looks away,  
The lamp still burns, and casts a red stain on the day;  
When the soul, pinned beneath the body's weight and brawn,  
Strives, as the lamplight strives to overcome the dawn;  
The air, like a sad face whose tears the breezes dry,  
Is tremulous with countless things about to die;  
And men grow tired of writing, and women of making love.

Blue smoke was curling now from the cold chimneys of  
A house or two; with heavy lids, mouths open wide,  
Prostitutes slept their slumber dull and stupefied;  
While laborers' wives got up, with sucked-out breasts, and stood  
Blowing first on their hands, then on the flickering wood.  
It was that hour when cold, and lack of things they need,  
Combine, and women in childbirth have it hard indeed.

Like a sob choked by frothy hemorrhage, somewhere  
Far-off a sudden cock-crow tore the misty air;  
A sea of fog rolled in, effacing roofs and walls;  
The dying, that all night in the bare hospitals  
Had fought for life, grew weaker, rattled, and fell dead;  
And gentlemen, debauched and drunk, swayed home to bed.

Aurora now in a thin dress of green and rose,  
With chattering teeth advanced. Old somber Paris rose,  
Picked up its tools, and, over the deserted Seine,  
Yawning, rubbing its eyes, slouched forth to work again.

— Edna St. Vincent Millay, *Flowers of Evil* (NY: Harper and Brothers, 1936)

### Le Crépuscule du matin

across the barracks came the bugle-blare:  
the wind of dawn made all the street-lamps flare.

it was the hour dreams of evil swarm  
and dark-eyed striplings writhe in pallets warm;  
when, like a bleeding, palpitating eye,  
the lamp's a red blot on the daylight sly:  
when the soul struggles, crushed and overborne  
by cumbering flesh, like lamplight with the morn.  
the air is full of quivering things; each flees  
like slackening tear-drops cancelled by the breeze,  
and poets tire of verse and maids of love.

spirals of smoke arose, the roofs above.  
dainters of joy, wide-mouthed, with livid eye,  
lay drowned in stupid sleep, their lips awry;  
gaunt women, dragging breasts which hunger knew,  
breathed on their embers and their fingers blue.

it was the hour that loads, by cold and dearth,  
the woes of mothers waiting to give birth;  
when, like a blood-choked sobbing cry, afar,  
a cock's crow tore the air crepuscular  
and each tall hive lay drowned in misty seas,  
while from the poorhouse wall of secrecies  
rang the last broken gasps of dying men.

outside, rakes worn with toil rode home again.

Dawn, in her green and rosy garment shivering,  
down the deserted Seine came loitering,

and dark-browed Paris — toiler old and wise! —  
caught up his shovel, rubbing both his eyes.

— Lewis Piaget Shanks, *Flowers of Evil* (New York: Ives Washburn, 1931)

### Morning Twilight

Reveille was blown in the courtyards of barracks,  
And the morning wind fanned the lanterns.

It was the hour when those swarms of unwholesome dreams  
Twist on their pillows the brown adolescents;  
When, like a bloody eye, throbbing and roving,  
The lamp marks the day with a red freckle,  
When the soul, burdened by the irritable, heavy body,  
Copies the struggles of the lamp and the day.  
Like a weeping face, wiped by breezes,  
The air is filled with quivering of escaping things  
And man is tired of writing and woman of loving.

Here and there houses began to smoke.  
The ladies of delight, with livid eyelids,  
Mouths open, slept their futile sleep;  
Pauper women, dragging their thin, cold breasts,  
Blew on their brands and blew on their fingers.  
It was the hour when in cold and frugality  
The pangs of the laboring woman are quickened;  
Like a sob sliced by spumy blood  
The misty air was slashed by the song of the cock;  
A sea of fog bathed the buildings,  
And the agonized in the depths of asylums  
Uttered their last death-rattles in irregular hiccups.  
The debauchees returned, broken by their business.

Dawn, chattering with cold, in its pink and green robe,  
Advanced slowly over the deserted Seine,  
And gray Paris, rubbing its eyes,  
Reached for its tools, like an aged workman.

— Geoffrey Wagner, *Selected Poems of Charles Baudelaire* (NY: Grove Press, 1974)

## Navigation

Two editions of *Fleurs du mal* were published in Baudelaire's lifetime — one in 1857 and an expanded edition in 1861. "Scraps" and censored poems were collected in *Les Épaves* in 1866. After Baudelaire died the following year, a "definitive" edition appeared in 1868.

- 1857 *Fleurs du mal*

First edition with 100 poems
- 1861 *Fleurs du mal*

Second edition missing censored poems but including new ones
- 1866 *Les Épaves*

Twenty-three "scraps" including the poems censored from the first edition
- 1868 *Fleurs du mal*

Comprehensive edition published after Baudelaire's death

- All Poems (Alphabetical)

Every poem from each edition
- Audio

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