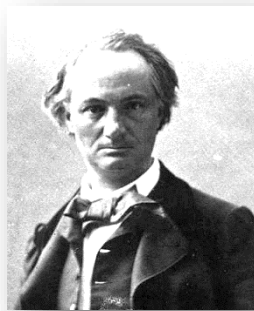


CHARLES BAUDELAIRE

1821-1867



Cats (“Les Chats”)

Stiff scholars and the hotly amorous
Will in their ripeness equally admire
Powerful, gentle cats, pride of the house,
Who, like them, love to sit around the fire.

- 5 Friends both of sciences and of l’amour,
They seek the silent horror of the night;
Erebus wants them for his funeral corps,
But in their pride they’d never choose that fate.

- 10 They take in sleeping noble attitudes—
Great sphinxes in the desert solitudes,
Who seem to be entranced by endless dreams;

Within their potent loins are magic sparks,
And flakes of gold, fine sand, are vaguely seen
Behind their mystic eyes, gleaming like stars.

—Translated from the French by James McGowan

1847/1857

