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WEIRD TALES ISSUED 1st OF EACH MONTH

Hymn to Beauty*

By CHARLES P. BAUDELAIRE

Fallest thou from the heavens, or soarest from the abyss,
 O Beauty? Thy regard infernal and divine
 Pours out, in vast confusion, crime and benefice,
 And therefore one might well compare thee unto wine.

The sunset and the dawn in thy deep eyes are holden;
 Thou sheddest forth perfumes like a tempestuous eve;
 Thy mouth, a philter, doth the very child embolden,
 And heroes fail in the web thy slow caresses weave.

Comest thou from the black profound, or stars above?
 Destiny, like a dog, ensues thy haunted gown;
 Sowing, all chancefully, disaster, joy and love,
 Thou art the imperatrix of all, the slave of none.

Thou tramplest on the dead with mockeries eternal;
 Horror is half thy jewel-laden rosary;
 And Murder is a charm most precious and infernal
 That on thy haughty bosom trembles amorously.

The ephemera flies to hail thee, candle of all our night!
 And, flaming, dies in adoration of its doom;
 The lover leans toward the breast of his delight
 Even as a dying man, fain to caress his tomb.

Be thou from hell or heaven flown, what matters it,
 O fearful monster, sphinx ingenuous, if alone
 Thine eye, thy foot, thy smile, unbar the Infinite
 Which I have always loved and never yet have known?

Angel or sorceress, from God or Lucifer,
 What matter, O my fay with velvet eyes, if thus
 Thou renderest, by rhythm, gleam and flying myrrh,
 The world less execrable and time less burdensome?

* Translated by Clark Ashton Smith from the French.