

**The Project Gutenberg eBook of Poems & Poèmes; autres alliances,
by Natalie Clifford Barney**

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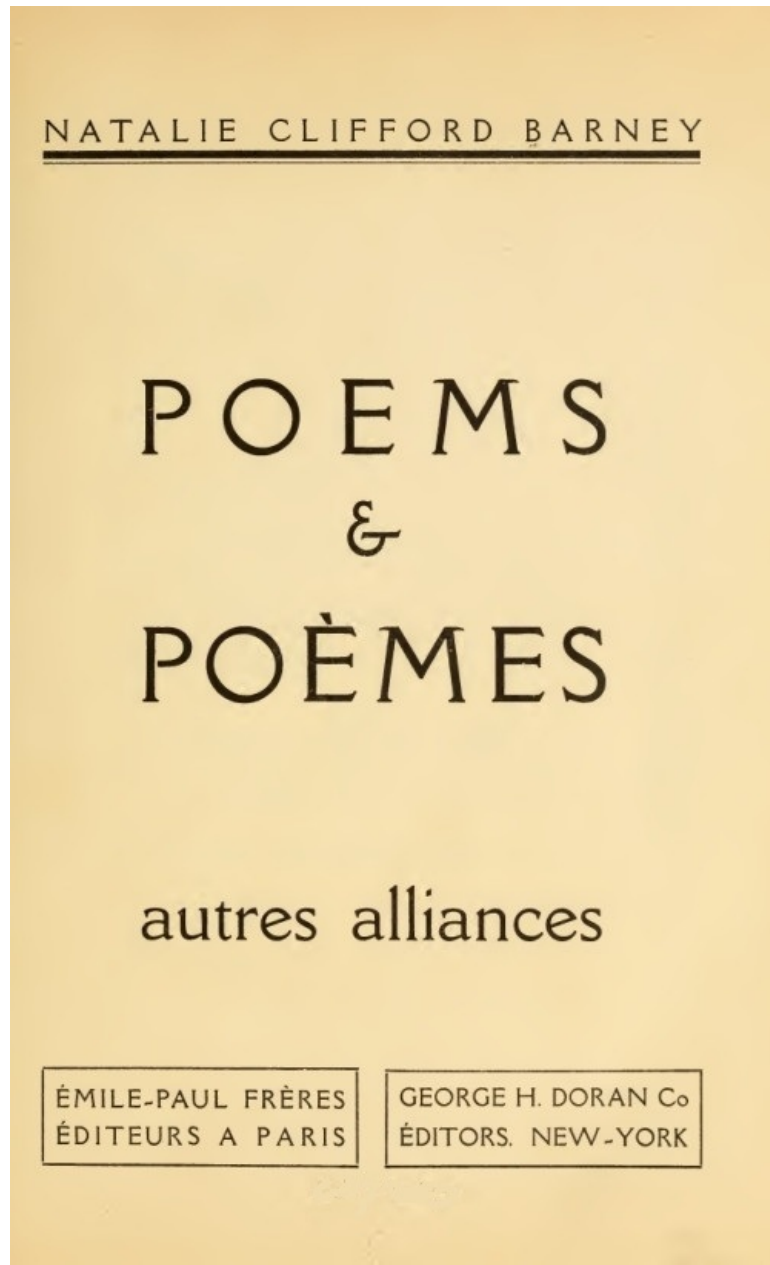
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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK POEMS & POÈMES; AUTRES
ALLIANCES ***



POEMS & POÈMES

autres alliances

Par

NATALIE CLIFFORD BARNEY

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APOLOGY

While blue and khaki share the heroes mud,
And women tend in white or weep in grey,
Though all expressiveness seems over-dressed,
Yet some must wear the colours of their hearts
Upon their sleeves, like troubadours, of old;
And sing, and sometimes write their singing down.

... To "chase them from republics" were as vain
As to disturb the hurdy-gurdy man.
Let him go grinding music as he likes;
You see him turn his wheel, but need not hear
The tune he's playing in the noisy street?...

(Some have an organ, some an axe to grind,
While others seek how best to bury hatchets.)
We all are poets in our different ways
And may your dreams be harmless as my own.

AH! NIGHT!

Ah! night!
To feel the stab of beauty at the heart!
To drink, with lifted throat,
The silent throb and music of the stars,
The first kiss of the spring on spell-bound trees,
To stretch out arms to hold and soothe the world,
—A love too vast in aught to be contained,
Helpless and great: a poets youthfulness,...

Alone, might all this emptiness be you!

May first 1915

THE LOVE OF JUDAS

Love, take me back to you, and make me whole,
Who am divided and in unbelief:
An infidel in thought and word and grief,
A double heart and a promiscuous soul!

And what if Judas offered Christ that bowl
Of greatest bitterness without relief.
Revenge, not silver, tempted such a thief:
Betrayed betrayer of the kiss he stole.

He loved the most; those others loved but well,
They drowsed: in dreadful paths his anguish trod,
Nor thrice denied the love that sold his God.

No pity for his throbbing jealous side,
No pity for his false obscure farewell;
Yet he alone for his lost master died!

THE WEeping VENUS

by Romaine

Laid out as dead in moonlight shroud
Beneath a derelict of cloud:
A double wreckage safe from flight,
High-caged as grief, in prisoned night.—
Unseeing eyes whose clustering tears
Tell the pure crystal of her years.—
No crown of thorns, no wounded side,
Yet as the God-man crucified,
Her body expiates the sin
That love and life with her begin!

MORE NIGHT!

Moon-love, star-love, the love of silver water.
The weeping face of love touched in the dark,
And murdered joy, lost souls of joy that caught her
A glow-worm's warmth and spark.

Birds of prey, invisible, now hover
About her midnights hammocked in unrest—
A moving shadow, faithless as a lover,
Is all her arms have pressed—

Too luminous the dreaming of the sleeper
Whose tears are prophecies and second-sight.
Has death no under-sea, no darkness deeper,
In which to satiate our need of night?

THE PHANTOM GUEST

We lay in shade diaphanous
And spoke the light that burns in us

As in the glooming's net I caught her,
She shimmered like reflected water!

Romantic and emphatic moods
Are not for her whom life eludes...

Its vulgar tinsel round her fold?
She'd rather shudder with the cold,

Attend just this elusive hour,
A shadow in a shadow bower,

A moving imagery so fine,
It must have been her soul near mine

And so we blended and possessed
Each in each the phantom guest,

Inseparate, we scarcely met;
Yet other love-nights we forget!

DOUBLE BEING

A northern mind, a face from Italy,
A double fate lived all too fatally,
A look fresh as a child's, both soft and sharp,
A clarion-voice, then liquid as a harp!
A natural being, yet from nature freed,
Like a Shakespearean boy of fairy breed—
A sex perplexed into attractive seeming—
Both sex at best, the strangeness so redeeming!—
Hands hard to loosen if for once they cling,
Yet frail as Leicester's wearing a queen's ring.
A page-clothed Rosalind to play a part,
A brow of genius and a lonely heart.

SINGING

Ethereal vibrations
And soulful pulsations
Of song,
Afloat on the air
—More aspiring than prayer—
How strong
The wings that uplift!
As soaring adrift,
A throng
Of angels there are,
And an echoing star,
As along
You rise ever higher,
Sole voice of a choir
How long
Shall we follow your flight,

Through crystalline night,
And belong
—Through the high vaults of space—
To your archangel's face,
And long,
—With the heavens still ringing—
To be one with your singing?

ON A PICTURE TO MUSIC

Music, language of the mortal soul.
The face of twilight,
The mouth of bitterness made lyrical,
Eyes closed on poignant joys that might have been!
A profile turned to life, and yet beyond ...
Reborn, transfigured; penetrating sense
To gather an acute expressiveness
Vibrant within itself: all our lost lives!
—We must play gently to the living dead—
Fingers outstretched, by that responsive lid
Where Angel harps lie buried at full length,
Yet still in touch and resonant—Arise
To laying on of hands—
Invisible, a phantom of pure sound
Voices the spirit sitting there, awakes
The sighing, and the soaring and the beat
(O dispossessed and silenced King: my heart!)
Until we too are echos of that tide,
Where winds and waves become articulate,
Our being tossed so high, beyond itself,
Winged by the elements!
Our human weight of woe no longer felt
Until we meet
—By some familiar fall of minor chords—
The inner God of Sorrow face to face.

LOVE'S COMRADES

You say I've lived too long in France
And wearied of the senses' dance?

Like fresh air in an opium den
You'll lead me out—to where? and when?

.... I fear no country's ready yet
For our complexities: forget
The best of flesh and food to go
A'roaming o'er the world, and know
Discomfort's great surprises few—?
No, let me travel just to you!

WITH TWO DWARF JAPANESE MAPLES

These ancient trees for your new room.
May many happy evenings fall
With their reflections on the wall,
Making embroideries of the gloom,
And let their leaves of red and green
Rustle with small desires and fears,
But never water them with tears
For all that is or has not been.
Lives pass as shadows on a screen,

Whether you dream or sing or sew,
Or if some time Regret instead
Should bow, my Loveliest, your head,
Send me a leaf so I shall know:
For Hope the green, for Love the red.

AVERTISSEMENT

*Her name begins as Love begins,
Mine as "November", "Nevermore".*

No thousand nights and one between these covers,
No miniatures, enluminures or dyes—
For art is but a prostitute that hovers
To court outsiders—you alone may prize
These pages which your idle hand unties?—

... Leaving art to artists—we, loves lovers,
Keep for out-worn Beauty a disguise.
—(A line traced round a shadow as it dies,
Some semblance of the scattered rose recovers?)—
So making everything seem otherwise:
Associations are our deities!
—And ivy leaves, transparent eggs of plovers
Are fragments of the feast they symbolize.—

Here, visible as sleeping Eros, lies
A book of dreams and broken memories,
A living past for which blind Love has eyes?

THE FLUTE-PLAYER

Her flute's clear solo greets the maiden day—
Above the waking of melodious May,
Its notes are like a trellised flight of flowers.

The chirping birds whose orchestra of bills
Accompanies rain—the tea-rose best distills—
And then the smell of earth between the showers!

From garden bright, in drops of crystal gown'd,
I hear the breezes make a leafy sound
Through vibrant buzz of flies that seek the shade—

... And wonder whether—as sweet noon reposes—
The roses make the air, the air the roses
Within the house kept cooler than a glade.

Against the wall, upon the sunny side,
Their fruitful branches fixed and crucified,
The pear-trees stretch out arms in martyred line—

While we that surfeit, nap, as calyx'd bees,
Who murmurs, still pursuing imageries
... «Like Jewish candelabras». (relight mine!)

Rising as to welcome a newcomer
The flute pipes to the first eve of the summer
—Nocturnal nature moves to minor bars—

A golden crescent in a druid's tree
Reminds her that the forest has a key—
And out she goes to serenade the stars!

A PARISIEN ROOF GARDEN IN 1918

As I must mount to feed those doves of ours,
Perhaps you too will spend nocturnal hours
 Upon your roof
 So high aloof
That from its terraced bowers
We catch at clouds and draw a bath from showers.
Before the moon has made all pale the night,
Let's meet with flute and viol, and supper light:
A yew lamb, minted sauce, a raisined bun,
A melon riper than the melting sun—
A flask of Xeres, that we've scarce begun—
Well try the «lunar waltz» while floats afar
Upon the liquid night—night's nenuphar.
Or else, with senses tuned alike perchance,
Reclining love will make the heavens dance;
And if the enemy from aerial cars
Drops death, we'll share it vibrant with the stars!

HOW WRITE THE BEAT OF LOVE

How write the beat of love, the very throb,
The rhythm of our veins' deep eloquence?
How fix that darkness-rending final sob,
That perfect swoon of each united sense.

The full-sailed rising of your body's sweep
—Adrift and safe on joy's last tidal wave—
Will toss you on the silver sands of sleep,
Forgetful of the ecstasy you gave.

Your breath ebbs restful as the falling tide:
A sea becalmed!... Lay me in valleyed part
Of breasts whose undulating crests subside—
Ah how they marked the high beats of your heart!

A LA CAMPAGNE

The night, whose silences detach each sound,
The leaves, as whispering heralds in a wood,
Stir hopes of you about my solitude.
Was that a carriage wheel upon the ground?
—The grassy ground that brings the road uphill
Would muffle horses hoofs—I listen still—
A nervous motion at my heart: the bound
Of too responsive veins—a hush profound.

I hear a night bird call its mate?... a hound
Out on the farm bark at some peasant maid
Too tired with harvesting to feel afraid.
... Loosed, and now tied, scenting the sunny air,
All day she combed and tossed the fields' dim hair,
As some mute servant tending a fair queen
She works in beauty neither felt nor seen,
While I have nature, all the whole earth over,
For company. Yet anxious as a lover
Prisoned in sentiment, I watch and start.
Is it then just for you I live apart?
The moon, as milk caught in a pail, now flows
Over its rim, whit'ning the dark that glows—
I saw your absence less by day, and less
This summers brilliant, living emptiness.

Another day in flowered light comes through
 The curtains of the room that waits for you.
 I leave it so, to its Byronian gloom:
 In vain red roses at your casements bloom.
 The lyre-shaped clock that once struck hours of gold,
 Has stopped, the prisoned summer air turns cold.
 The mirrors that no longer see you pass,
 Seem frames without their pictures, lengths of glass
 Bored to reflect a house without expression.
 Only my mind can image the procession
 Of past realities, that flutter by
 Invisible to all. These guides and I
 Live a repeated life in which we follow
 Through the deserted rooms, through tree-topped hollow
 Roads, the joyful phantoms gone before.
 The rhododendrons hedge-like corridor,
 Must lead you, now and ever, back to me!
 As often as our eyes have sought the sea,
 I rest mine on this woodland resting-place.
 Ah when again, the blossom of your face?
 And, many times to aid the incantation,
 Seeking some proof to fix my meditation,
 I pause where the soft earth still bears the seals
 Of your once-waiting and impatient heels!
 And stoop, to find again the marks I found,
 The little marks your feet leave on the ground!

A PILGRIMAGE

Is that your window with the moving shade
 In pilgrimage I've come so far to see?
 —The air may enter, you are not afraid
 Of the «great air» that plays invisibly
 About your neck, moving your opened hair
 (That busy shadow is perhaps your maid?)
 While I must wait, as near as I may be,
 Upon the sands, wishing that I were made
 Like Ariel to skip accross the sea
 Bringing you kisses, in small waves that bear
 The prostrate happy sun-flushed evening there,
 And all unseen cover you every where:
 To rise up with the tide and fall on you
 With lips that moisten, cling, and sting like spray—
 To want you, and so wanting turn away?
 Or beat my way into that prisoned hue:
 Now that your window is a golden square
 Cut in the darkness? Must I homeward fare
 With flapping cape against the wind to fight,
 Or like a sea-gull wing towards your light?

D'une plage lointaine.

BACKWARD

"The predominacy of custom is every where visible, it sounds as a man would wonder to hear man profess, protest, engage, give great words, and then do just as they have done before, as though they were dead images and moved only by the wheels of custom."

Francis BACON.

My Hopes white-plumed, in valiant mail,
 Have beaten at her heart grown pale
 —Have failed, as all proud hopes must fail—
 Lower the mast, fold up the sail.

In vain we faced the high-winged gale
And laughed as those whom Gods assail.
The reefs near port now crush our bark,
The jealous hounds of habit bark
On land. As children in the dark
My Lady shudders in the veil
Of her meek hair—shall naught prevail?
And only fears their echo find
Within her torn and timid mind?

Helplessly, my courage tears
To free her of the doubts she wears
Closer than Life.... Yet Time prepares
The end of all things.... Melt, my tears!
And flow as bitter as the sea
Over my drowning Love and me!

A SONNET

TO MY LADY WITH THE JAUNDICE.

Was not Titania golden? See these flowers
Are they for being yellowish less fair?
Apollo and the Goddesses all share
In this most glorious hue. The jealous bowers

Of Kings are coloured thus, their reed of powers,
Their rings, their chains, the crowns that they must wear
Golden their mistress and their minion's hair
Golden the bannered sun above their towers!

Reflecting butter-cups amuses Puck
But flower-rubbed eye-lids, and complexions mend:
So fear not broken crystals long ill-luck

But look in this new mirror, lovely friend.
Both gods and fairies wait on lovers wills.
That jaundices be changed to daffodils!

EASTER DAY

Much longer than these lilies, you or I,
This book lives on mysterious memory
Of an enchanted place to which you lent
A fragrance that will render somnolent?
—Sweet poisons are narcotics for our tears!
Our ressurected past through dreams appears
An angel standing by an empty tomb.
What sadder thing may Time spin on her loom
Than words?—Return to that once petaled door
Through which Love passed—adding a few leaves more
To the strange book of life: open its covers
Only to the worn page where we were lovers
Lost in fair imageries, there to forget
Our hearts that weep as little children yet!

LINES TAKEN FROM POEMS

I SHALL NOT WRITE

Love, all our colours
Fade into shadows
—Shadows, but empty
Forms of the darkness?

Pale with the spring-time,
Wandering without you—
Sick with love-sickness!

To sigh upon this chill air of December,
To wonder why, and wondering why, remember!

As through the air
Her little fan-shaped feet

What beauty in the way the light fell on her eye-brows....

These pages are as silent as drowned cries....
Come back, my Love, and with more fervent eyes
Than pity, Lips that bear the ivy-leaf
Once chose for emblem Love that never dies?

Bow thy head, O shadow on the wall,
And weep a shadows grief.
... And so the rain arrived instead of you!
Its falling tears on the seas bitterness....

... But I, who am loves prodigal and fool,
What right have I to that high horse of verse?
Whose wings in cadenced soaring sweep the sky
Taking the waning moons for virgin dawns!
Ethereal beast to find a home in clouds
And pasture on the plenteous voids of heaven!

... Small are these in love and in understanding ...
Lift your voice in song, you alone can sing me
Songs as white and strong as the marble columns
Of Mitylene

Songs as pure pure as stars on the silver midnights,
Near as moonbeams over the limbs of lovers,
Strange as sleep in fields of lethean stillness
Heavy with summer.

You alone can waken my soul to sorrow,
You alone can mend all the broken music:
Subtler tones of thought than this shattered singing
Words have divided!

I cannot weep for you as others weep.
My last and dearest dead,
For all my tears on lesser griefs are shed!

I BUILT A FIRE

I built a fire to welcome her,
And my voice sighed
Aloud her name. To be with her
This night, I would have died....
Upon the hours, all in vain
My tears, the rain,
Fall uselessly, unceasingly....
The heavy door
Has closed again ... again!
I wait, yet know she will not brave
The midnight,—give
One hour more, so utterly to live;
Wise and mild and shy,
Afraid as the heart of a child,
I know her heart to be.
And mine, that naught will save,
Must love and live and crave
And break unceasingly!

HOW COLD ...

How cold the autumn night,
Fearing that never more,
As before,
Will she pour
In with the moonlight through my door.
—On nights when the moon over-brimmed with light
Was like a loving-cup she bore.
... My love, my love's delight,
How are you lost? How fight
Against an angels flight?
Tarnished upon the floor
The halo desire kept bright!
Like a lonely child afright
Questions each empty fold —
When loves fairy tales are told,
In midnights anguish might
My golden head turn white
Under the moons down-pour:
In a moment a million moons more
Drown, chill and cover me quite ...
Rather than feel the cold,
The gradual growing cold—
Make me one with the autumn night.

HABIT

Ah! habit, how unmusical and shy
That outworn miracle: our ecstasy!
Between our hands that clasp their empty palms,
This daily prayer is this our psalm of psalms!
What is this nothing that was more than all?
Thinned as a golden ring that dare not fall,
That unsuspected danger: faithfulness,
Has linked us strangers, and a something less!
Exchanging vows and other platitudes,
As beggars chained in separate solitudes,
Though jealousy keep live the rotten core,
Lovers that were be lovers nevermore.

THE NEAR ENEMY

Rash games of chess do hateful lovers play,
Their towers, queens and kings all thrown away
In wild offensives, desperate retreats.
To that sick inner-sounding drum that beats
In terror of some tender thing just killed!
New warriors on the battle-field, unskilled
In prudent war-fare: friends of yesterday
What they most cherished seem most keen to slay.
More treacherous than Prussians in command,
Entrenched and feigning not to understand,
They plan how best to poison, maim and mar!
Masked in bad silence, turned against their star.
Through what black forces are so changed to foes
Those fed on our high hearts, yes, even those!

LIFE

Life,
The unloosening of hands
—The unloosening of little hands—

About the heart.
 The welling up of tears:
 Old habits, old deaths, good-bye!
 You are sacred ground under my on-faring,
 I shall tread so lightly that you will not feel my leave-taking?
 Yet the breath of a new world—the ever promised-land—exalts my nostrils.
 I am on the war-path towards peace:
 The peace of single choice.
 Determination—onward,
 Evolutions open your arcana,
 Shower down your nearest spears of truth,
 Great fear throbs in me, fear that leads me on,
 I have shut my eyes long enough
 —Shut eyes grow blind!—
 Clinging to just one little human life!
 Limiting, repressing all it would not share,
 I who had an easy world to give
 In the first heart-beats of my hope—
 Yet now, with forty years, has come another youth
 —A youth in which I recognize myself!
 —Myself, how long you've lingered, waited, strayed—
 Beauty seems an empty shell—out-worn.
 Great longing of my sea, break forth, be uncontained!...
 Count not your shipwrecks—every spar may save.
 So I, not cruelly, not impetuously,
 But with keen, shrewd resolve—rise up.
 Why do I rise on timid stealthy feet?
 In the dark to take leave of the dark,
 To kiss the eyes of night farewell,
 And turn love's withered face full on the dawn.
 May the dawn learn through me,
 Not tint and play with empty shadows here,
 But raise the arch of triumph of its day.
 ... I hear a sound as of a world on flame.
 My past a burning city?
 Shall I look round?
 —Salt of my earth: all my tears crystalized!
 You'd call me back into the phantom house?
 —O, Psyche holding high your awkward lamp,
 O, Psyche, loved in darkness, see the day!

FEMME

Femme à la souple charpente,
 Au poitrail courbe, arqué pour
 Les gémisséments d'amour,
 Mon désir suivra tes pentes—
 Tes veines, branchages nains
 Où la courbe rejoint l'angle;
 jambes fermant le triangle
 Du cher coffret féminin

—O femme, source et brûlure—

Je renverse dans ma main
 Ta tête—somet humain.
 Cascade ta chevelure

TIERCE-RIME

Sensible auprès de toi, muet comme l'enfance,
 Je t'offris la pâleur de l'été maladif
 Dans une seule rose ouverte et sans défense.

Quelle fée ouvra, puis unit sans motif
 Ses pétales—qu'un fil de parfum semblait joindre—
 Et que tu vins casser d'un geste trop hâtif.

Ils tombent un par un. Je te regarde feindre
De ne pas voir combien se seront effeuillés.
Ah! se défaire ainsi doucement sans se plaindre!

Et j'embrasse en silence (aveugle que tu es!)
De larmes, de baisers, tes deux mains que je touche
Avec mes lèvres moins qu'avec mes cils mouillés.

Et tu repars distraite, et moi je me recouche
Sur tout ton souvenir... Tel un pauvre histrion,
Je mime un rôle ardent sur ta lointaine bouche!

Et nous pleurons ensemble ainsi que nous rions
A l'heure passagère et vide—Ta présence,
Amour, n'est donc jamais ce que nous voudrions?

Quand perdras-tu sur moi ton étrange puissance?
Mon cœur malade, ah! quand va-t-il ne plus sentir,
Ou des yeux oublieux de la convalescence,

Quand pourrai-je sans peur te regarder partir?

J'AVAIS CRAINT LA NEIGE

J'avais craint la neige,
Je vous avais espérée.
—La neige est venue,

La neige,
Pareille à l'effeuillement
De ces roses.

Soyez la première à marcher sur la blancheur des pétales
—Fleurs du froid effeuillées par l'hiver—
Avant que d'autres ne les écrasent.

Les pétales tombées, les étoiles fondantes se rejoignent,
Dallage éphémère,
Marquez l'empreinte de ses pieds tournés vers moi!

Que la neige dans ma cour,
Tachetée par ses pas,
Soit un tapis d'hermine!

SUFFISANCE

Quand ton regard mi-clos, luisant entre tes cils,
Peut évoquer l'amour sans forme et sans visage,
Tu ne rêves donc plus aux amants de passage?
—Quelle joie égalant ton dégoût t'offrent-ils?—
Ils rôdent tels des loups à l'affût d'une proie,
Désirant mat ton corps que leur désir salit;
Mais, loin d'eux, ton désir, seul maître de ton lit,
Reste le créateur nocturne de ta joie.
Et lorsque le désir te tient éperdument
Livrée, et qu'il te rend plus ardente et plus souple,
Lorsque ton être double, à la fois ton amant
Et ta maîtresse, sait te prendre, mieux qu'un couple
Tu t'exaltes, ton geste est plus harmonieux.
N'aimant que Toi, tu plains la femme qui s'encombre
Du danger des amours faciles; toi, les yeux
Pleins d'orgueil, tu ne sers qu'à ta beauté, dans l'ombre.

VERS LIBRES

Ils sont là, quelque part, les êtres de mon cœur,
Dans de sombres demeures,
Gardés par des esclaves ...
Moi, je vais sans entraves,
Et me navre de leurs peurs.

J'abattraï les cloisons
De leurs dures maisons,
Les sauvant de leurs murs,
Car c'est moi qui endure
La vue de leurs prisons ...

Et pendant que toi tu dors,
C'est moi que l'on enferme—dehors!

UN VIEUX CHAT DE MISÈRE

Un vieux chat de misère
Est entré dans ma serre,
Chargé des éléments
Electriques de l'orage—
Ses yeux, charbons ardents,
Brûlent au dedans
De sa tête sans pelage—
De sa vieille tête d'amant,
Déchiquetée par la guerre,
L'amour et le carnage;
Il manque d'aliments,
Non d'ongles ni de dents!

Enviez-les gens prudents,
Soupirez, ô femmes sages!

DISTIQUES

Tu veux que je te fasse un amoureux poème.
Ecoute donc plutôt si mon silence t'aime!

Je ne saurais donner au sage alexandrin
Les plaintes du plaisir, le rythme de nos reins!

Quand, sous mon corps élu, je sens battre ta joie,
Exprimer mon désir qui t'effleure et te broie?

Sois ma maîtresse douce et folle; au lieu de mots
Accepte sur ta chair d'extatiques sanglots!

Et lorsque je retombe avec toi—si ma bouche,
Eloquence muette, est celle qui te touche,

Laisse moi parcourir ton être harmonieux
De tes pieds recourbés à tes courbes cheveux.

Nerfs d'accord, bien tendus: musique, sortilège,
Harpe dont je détiens le secret des arpèges—

Pour toi, l'art de mes mains, orgueilleux instrument,
Fait l'amour en poète, et les vers en amant!

EFFLUVE D'UN VIEUX LIVRE

Effluve dun vieux livre,
Humide odeur du temps—
Console bien de vivre
—De vivre trop longtemps—
Dans ces pages respire
Le passé des élans,
Des voyages à lire
Par ce vieux nouvel an!

MES MORTS

*Je suis ivre du vin des ténèbres, plus fort
Que le vin des vivants: l'amour plante sa vigne
Au-delà de la vie. Et mon cœur, enfin digne
De son sang survivant, va revivre ses morts.*

A chaque projet de voyage
Une blessure s'ouvre en moi.
—J'ai bien trop aimé des visages
Pendant des saisons et des mois!
—Semblant choisir une personne
—Aigu comme un chat Siamois—
Mon désir fixe s'y cramponne
De ses yeux clairs, phosphorescents.
Et je te prend et je me donne,
—Et tout redevient innocent:

Deux fauves vivant leur idylle
De cris, puis âme, vos accents!
Et c'est l'amour qui fait la ville
Déserte, et peuple le désert!
—Allons à Tunis, à Séville,
A Bagdad, au Pôle sud?—vers
Ce jardin suspendu, miracle,
Ce lit de fleurs sur l'univers.
Seules ensemble, qu'on me bâcle
Ces souvenirs, que libres, nus,
Nous échappions aux débâcles....

Quels sont ces êtres inconnus?
Nous attendant après la houle ...
Au nouveau monde survenu?
Quels sont ces mendiants, ces foules?
—Ah! tous nos morts sont avec nous!
J'ai le vin triste: rien ne saouïle!

Et seuls à seuls et à genoux,
Mes morts sont venus me reprendre,
—Où fuir leurs terribles yeux doux?
Pas de Cythère, il faut descendre,
—Il faut se quitter au retour?
Chez moi, plus rien ne me demande,
Assez de landes et de "moors",
De villas et de cimetières—
Pour t'enterrer vivant, amour?
Et vous, mes ardentes poussières,
Vous tous mes Morts, mes Sans-Soucis,
Je vous reviens donc toute entière?

Ces quais, ces platanes: Passy!
Je vous reconduis à la porte
Du cimetière que voici!
Trop tard pour entrer mais qu'importe!
—Ce haut navire attend Paris:
Mon tout premier amour, ma morte....
Pleurez encor, mes yeux taris!...

L'AUBE

L'aube.
Le sifflement d'un train
Déchirure ... Banlieue ... Aube.
Quelqu'un qui n'est pas dans mon sommeil me touche l'épaule,
—Quelqu'un qui n'est pas dans mon sommeil me dit: Lève-toi: viens

Et mon cœur saute, hors de son élément, vers le soleil:
Un instant mon cœur m'échappe—
Puis mon corps reprend son fardeau d'angoisse:
Ma chair enceinte de mon cœur bat:
Et je redeviens le rythme et la chose de mon cœur.
Mon cœur, dominé par sa prison, s'égalise,
Reprend son cours, se fait au jour à vivre.
—Jours à vivre: orchestration du bruit: tout se tait dans le bruit—
Prêt à oublier ce saut hors de soi qui voulait renaître ...
Ailleurs, l'aube passe!

RÉVEILLON

Puisqu'aucun soir nouveau ne vient tourner la page,
Je vis penchée encor sur la dernière image:
Et reste en la turquoise enclose, à votre table,
T'invitant, souvenir, à ces mets délectables
Qui triomphent des vins, et fleuri de nos verres,
Votre visage au bout d'un chemin de lumières!
Moi, face à votre face entre les dix chandelles,
Je vois briller pour moi les douces étincelles
De vos yeux, de vos dents entre vos frêles joues,
Et les doigts scintillants, et votre ombre qui joue
D'un roseau ... fait jaillir parmi des pierreries
L'art nocturne des sons en longues rêveries ...
Et je reste attentive à la place où vous fûtes!...

Plus tard, vers le silence autre des autres flûtes
Qui furent consacrées jadis aux fumeries,
—Nos pieds vêtus de soie et parmi vos soieries—
Nous suivons la doctrine agréable et stoïque
D'un sage qui remue une âme asiatique,
Tandis que se dédouble, en route droite et fine,
L'encens: souffle du dieu monté vers nos narines!

BAL PARÉ

Le trente Juin, vers les dix heures,
Daignez étonner vos miroirs
De travestis et de loups noirs,
Et venir, laissant vos demeures,
Jusqu'à mon petit pavillon.
Nous y dessinerons des danses
De jadis, et maintes cadenses
Préférables au cotillon.
La vie ayant sa parodie,
On donnera la comédie,
Ou bien des airs au clavecin
Egrèneront leur mélodie.
Mais tant me plaît que sans dessein
Chaque heure amène sa plaisance,
Que ce programme est incertain:
Je veux surtout votre présence
Du soir jusqu'au nouveau matin.
Dans vos déguisements fantasques
Vous me serez les bienvenus,
Par vos sourires reconnus
Sous l'uniformité des masques.

FÊTES

Les lanternes parmi les arbres ont des joues
Peintes: telles mousmés lumineuses qu'on loue!
La chasse aux vers luisants prendra pour son taïaut
Les sons de quelque flûte invisible qui joue:
Arabesques d'une âme ancestrale et mantchoue
Qui s'enfle du désir d'arriver sans défaut
A cette lune prise au pommier le plus haut?

Un tourbillon de neige,
Comme les lucioles
Ont blanchi!

.....
En ajoutant vos regards
Aux regards de mes hôtes,
Je croirai au retour des lucioles.

Voici du maître Avril la frêle orfèvrerie:
Hyacinthes, muguets, cloisons pleines de miel;
La branche du pommier, fragilement fleurie,
Semble être l'éphémère ouvrage d'Ariel.
Je mets tout ce printemps sur ton grand lit: qu'il vienne
Se rouler à tes pieds afin qu'il t'en souvienne.

DIFFÉRENCES

Vous vivez du temps qu'il fait,
De projets et de voyages;
De tel ennui, de tel fait,
Dun besoin d'air, de visages
Nouveaux, de rien et de tout.

Je ne vis que de vous...

De vous ... et sans voir les pages
Des livres, de tout distrait,
Ma barque est un lit défait,
Vos traits sont mes paysages,
L'air qu'il me faut sont vos doux

Parfums: je vis de vous!

JEUX SUPRÊMES

Ce toit porte ta nudité,
Ta forme: couleur ou bien vivre.
Je bois le loin de ma bouche ivre
De ta divine crudité.

En pleine chair, en plein ciel suis-je,
(Trébuchant vers quatre horizons
Pour retomber en un frisson)
Seule pour ce double vertige?

Quitter, en tremblant des genoux,
Ce baldaquin où la nuit sème
Peu d'astres, descendre de même
Vers Paris—éteint comme vous!

VERS PRIS AUX POÈMES QUE JE N'ÉCRIRAI PAS

Sentiments exprimés: libretti d'opéra.

La saveur à venir des choses retrouvées...

Ces lointaines vallées
Qui fument de l'azur...

Je fus heureux
Avec ses seuls yeux
—Et cet amour miraculeux
Entre nous deux.

Heureuses, bienheureuses,
Les villes vaniteuses
Se mirent dans ses eaux...

Un homme, au chapeau dur, de la ville coupable,
A travers la forêt a l'air d'un corbillard.

L'humidité du sol clapote à mes semelles,

Mars accourt, secouant ses écharpes de vent.

De toute leur adolescence
Ils se ruent contre la nuit.

Le mois de mai, comme un poète anglais

Le soleil est venu me chercher dans mon lit

S'en aller n'importe où,
Le bras autour d'un cou.

Vers ces autres couleurs que contiennent nos ombres.

Piano: harpe couchée en ton cercueil sonore.

Harpe, eau mise en musique, cordes ... pluie...

Quelque mort pourrissant au fond des marécages

Et le crépuscule laisse tomber la lune....
La lune, lanterne sourde aux mains de la nuit...

Luisante aumône,
Pièce d'argent que nous jette la nuit...

La lune haut cernée de tout son devenir...

Son profil blanc et froid: un fragment de la lune

Et ses mains dans la nuit, fargilités lunaires.

Les grands bouleaux aux yeux de Pharaonne,
Noirs dans leur blanche peau.

De ma verdure citadine.
La branche verte se dandine
A ma fenêtre—Un vers anglais
Ignore le mal qu'il me fait.

M'évanouir dans du brouillard

La face d'un noyé flotte au ras des hublots.

LE PREMIER DÉPART

Ah! le silence, le multiple silence,

Vivant dans les départs,
Et le pressentiment traversant comme un phare
L'ombre et la distance.
Qu'elle semble loin, qu'elle semble tard
L'absence.

Dans un tourbillon d'heures—un jour, pas davantage—
Que de naufrages,
Que de débris épars,
Restés de ces naufrages!

Et cet embrun aux yeux,
Et ces morts sur la plage,
Et ces trésors sombrés au fond de la douleur
La houle de vagues au cœur!

AUCUNE CLEF N'A LE DESTIN

Les bourgeois rentrent un par un
Ou deux par deux: dans l'habitude
De partager leurs solitudes
—Des clefs ils ont la certitude!
Aucune clef n'a le destin!
je loge enfin près de ta rue;
—Mais toi tu semble disparue.
Ah! si tu m'étais accourue!
Je veille, et c'est déjà demain!
La route blanche sous la neige
Tourne vers ton absence; fais-je
Bien de rester seule, que sais-je?
M'emmurer d'un «secret jardin»,
Mourir des fleurs de lune mortes?
La poigne de mes mains est forte.
Garde aux spectres: j'ouvre la porte—
Reprendre, vivante, tes mains!
... Le passé n'est un pur festin
De flûtes et luths délectables,
Que si l'amour inaltérable
Se plait encor à notre table!

ÉQUINOXE

Ce soir, j'ai tout l'automne en moi,
Ses gris, ses désespoirs, ses morts et ses tempêtes,
Et tout le menaçant émoi
Des malfaiteurs de route—oh fières et fortes têtes!
Moi, le déshérité des humains, dont vous êtes,
Volontaire déshérité,
Que vous me faites mal avec votre gaîté!
—Car j'ai quitté toutes vos fêtes.
Prenez garde! je vous rendrai le mal que vous me faites.
Je suis le Juif errant et le déshérité—
Dieu de ma destinée, et souvent de la tienne,
O femmes, trop diverses: «toi».
Mais, la marque reste seule en moi.—
Toi, par le mauvais temps, faut-il qu'il t'en souviennne
—A peine?
Voici venir l'automne, et l'on rentre chez soi:
L'amour familial dans la maison jolie!
Mais nous qui nous chauffons au feu de la folie,
Où donc est notre épaule, où donc est notre toit?
Amants des grands chemins, usons nos bons cerveaux,
Nos bras qui ne savent qu'êtreindre.
—Etreindre? Mieux vaudrait étrangler—et sans geindre
Se tuer dans l'égout pour l'amour vieux-nouveau,
La face bien marquée de tous leurs crocs, (répliques
Que nous auront données ces chiennes dites nos sœurs)
Mais la face levée vers le ciel, extatiques,

D'un dernier coup de poing, au cœur!

NUIT BACHIQUE

Ivre de boire à flots la belle nuit bachique,
Je n'avais plus besoin que vous vous soyiez Vous:
—Je n'avais plus besoin de la bonne musique!

Je mâchais des débris d'étoiles—tels des fous
Se reposant enfin d'être de trop eux-mêmes
—Des dieux impersonnels courtisent mes genoux.

Les ombres prenaient corps. Je leur disais "je t'aime"
—Disant à tout: "je t'aime" est-ce à toi seule, à Toi
Nuit dont je partageais les vastes diadèmes!

J'étais libre un instant, universel et roi
—Libre des sentiments qui font notre esclavage,
Mais me voici repris par tout le désarroi ...

Par le doute et le trouble et le double engrenage!
Je ne suis plus que moi! Les choses d'alentour
Ne sont plus qu'à leur place ... Et sûr d'un seul visage
J'ai quitté tout amour pour retrouver l'Amour!

L'ŒUVRE ÉTRANGE

Mes mains, sculpteurs incompetents,
Cherchent à faire leur statue:
J'oppose une lutte têtue
Au vide; mes gestes contents
Tracent tes poses effacées,
Et mon écho poursuit en vain
Dans le silence—ce ravin—
Les voix aux formes enlacées.

Echappé de mes doigts palpant
Ton corps—éclipse ou suicide?—
Dans cet espace, où coïncident
Des cubes d'air entre des pans
De mur, limites plus opaques
De contenir le transparent
Où flottent vos contours errants,
Sirène, aux stériles attaques?

... Faut-il que l'immatériel
Nous ouvre à jamais tous ses gouffres
De l'œuvre étrange dont je souffre
Monte la race d'Ariel!

SONNET D'AUTREFOIS

(Genre Anthologie!)

Sans plus tâcher de plaire ou même d'émouvoir,
Laisse-moi m'approcher de toi, plus virginale
Que la neige; apprends-moi ta paix impartiale,
Anéantis en moi la force et le vouloir.

Je veux cacher mes yeux, plus tristes que le soir,
A tes yeux, oublier jusqu'au petit ovale
De ta face, et, mon front dans le frais intervalle
De tes seins, sangloter des larmes sans espoir.

Mes pleurs sont un poison très lent que je veux boire,
Au lieu de mendier à quelque amour banal
L'ingrate guérison, l'aveuglement final.

Près de toi mon désir se consume, illusoire.
O mes regrets! combien j'éprouve encor ce mal
De rêver au bonheur auquel on ne peut croire.

MÉDUSES

Dans la forêt de mort, sans saisons, sans feuillages,
—Où la sève des pins, de leurs troncs mutilés,
Coule en lente agonie—il est un exilé
De la vie, attendant de vains appareillages.

Il regarde la vague apporter sur la plage
Les masques transparents, aux traits annihilés,
Des méduses.—Semblable aux ruines de Philæ,
A ces visages d'eau s'oppose son visage.

Masques faits et défaits du mouvement des flots,
La mer toujours les roule à même ses sanglots,
Des soleils de minuit jusqu'à l'aube des lunes.

Les immolés ont tous la face de Jésus,
Qui, des sables passifs, rejetés par le flux,
Comptent le temps sans fin au sablier des dunes.

ÉPILOGUE

Amis, voici mon livre; et qu'il n'ait aucun vice
Autre que celui-là dont nous sommes complices!
Des amours décidés dans notre froid cerveau:
Préparer sa folie et le geste qui vaut
Est affaire de sport, non de veule nature;
Car pour nous ressembler, créer notre aventure,
Il nous faut déjouer tous les jeux du hasard,
Congédier le sort, se choisir, non trop tard,
Ses poisons, se disant: C'est moi qui m'exécute.
—je ne serai jamais celui que persécute
Autrui qui m'indiffère.—Et j'assiste, invité
Curieux, mais distant, à l'Emotivité.
Et l'on ne m'aimera que si je veux qu'on m'aime!
... Mais parfois je m'invente un plus proche moi-même.

—Mécanisme du corps, viscères: peuple vil....
Obéis à ce moi détourné de profil;
Puisque la volonté m'incite à l'énergie,
Je veux bien que ces vers portent mon effigie.

TABLE

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Equinoxe
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Sonnet d'autrefois (genre anthologie)
Méduses
Epilogue

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