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Correspondences

Charles Baudelaire

Irene Spears

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Correspondences

Nature stands as a temple in which living columns
 Will release now and then words' confused interplay,
 As through forests of symbols mankind makes his way
 Which observe him with glances familiar and solemn.
 Thin-drawn echoes from far interblendings will reach
 And through shadowy depths into oneness unite,
 As immense as pure brightness, as vast as the night,
 Colors, sounds and aromas respond each to each.
 Some sweet odors there be cool as flesh of a babe,
 Gentle as plaining oboes, with bright meadow green,
 And still other corrupted, triumphant and brave,
 Possessed of expansion of objects unseen,
 Benjamin, amber light and music, incense,
 That sing ecstasies of the spirit and sense.

Charles Baudelaire
 Translated by Irene Spears*

Correspondances

La Nature est un temple où de vivants piliers
 Laissent parfois sortir de confuses paroles;
 L'homme y passe à travers des forêts de symboles
 Qui l'observent avec des regards familiers.
 Comme de longs échos qui de loin se confondent
 Dans une ténébreuse et profonde unité,
 Vaste comme la nuit et comme la clarté,
 Les parfums, les couleurs et les sons se répondent.
 Il est des parfums frais comme des chairs d'enfants,
 Doux comme les hautbois, verts comme les prairies,
 —Et d'autres, corrompus, riches et triomphants,
 Ayant l'expansion des choses infinies,
 Comme l'ambre, le musc, le benjoin et l'encens,
 Qui chantent les transports de l'esprit et des sens.

Charles Baudelaire

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