



Charles BAUDELAIRE

*A hemisphere in your hair*

(Published in 1862 in, *Le Spleen de Paris*).

“Long, long let me breathe the fragrance of your hair.

Let me plunge my face into it like a thirsty man into the water of a spring, and let me wave it like a scented handkerchief to stir memories in the air.

If you only knew all that I see! all that I feel! all that I hear in your hair! My soul voyages on its perfume as other men’s souls on music.

Your hair holds a whole dream of masts and sails; it holds seas whose monsoons waft me toward lovely climes where space is bluer and more profound, where fruits and leaves and human skin perfume the air.

In the ocean of your air I see a harbor teeming with melancholic songs, with lusty men of every nation, and ships of every shape, whose elegant and intricate structures stand out against the enormous sky, home of eternal heat.

In the caresses of your air I know again the languors of long hours lying on a couch in a fair ship’s cabin, cradled by the harbor’s imperceptible swell, between pots of flowers and cooling water jars.

On the burning hearth of your hair I breathe in the fragrance of tobacco tinged with opium and sugar ; in the night of your hair I see the sheen of the tropic’s blue infinity; on the shores of your hair I get drunk with the smell of musk and tar and the oil of cocoanuts.

Long, long, let me bite your black and heavy tresses. When I gnaw your elastic and rebellious hair I seem to be eating memories.”