



THE LITANIES OF SATAN

BY CHARLES BAUDELAIRE (1821-1867)



O thou, of Angels loveliest, most wise,
O God betrayed by fate, deprived of praise,

Satan, have mercy on my long distress!

O Prince of exile, who was dispossessed,
Who ever rises stronger when oppressed,

Satan, have mercy on my long distress!

O thou who knowest all, Hell's sovereign,
Known healer of mankind's afflictions,

Satan, have mercy on my long distress!

Thou who the lepers and pariahs doomed
Show out of love the Paradise to come,

Satan, have mercy on my long distress!

Thou who in Death, your mistress old and strong,
Breeds Hope - delightful aberration!

Satan, have mercy on my long distress!

Thou who dost give the outlaw the proud glance
Which damns the crowd who watch his sufferance,

Satan, have mercy on my long distress!

Thou who dost know where greedy earth enfolds
The precious stones a jealous God concealed,

Satan, have mercy on my long distress!

Thou whose clear eye knows the deep sepulchres
Where multitudes of metals lie interred,

Satan, have mercy on my long distress!

Thou whose great hand conceals the precipice
From the somnambulist whom roofs entice,

Satan, have mercy on my long distress!

Thou who by magic softens the old bones
Of loitering drunks by horses trampled down,

Satan, have mercy on my long distress!

Thou who, consoling frail mankind in pain,
Taught us to make our guns and gun-cotton,

Satan, have mercy on my long distress!

Thou who didst set thy mark, accomplice skilled,
Upon the heart of Croesus harsh and vile,

Satan, have mercy on my long distress!

Thou who put into women's hearts and eyes
The cult of wounds, the love of poverty,

Satan, have mercy on my long distress!

Staff of the exile and discover,
Confessor of condemned conspirator,

Satan, have mercy on my long distress!

Father to those whom in his sombre wrath
God drove from his Paradise on earth,

Satan, have mercy on my long distress!

- PRAYER -

To thee, o Satan, glory be, and praise,
In Heaven, once thy kingdom, the abyss
Of Hell, where, now, thou dreamest silently!
Grant that my soul, one day, beneath the Tree
Of Knowledge, may rest near thee, when o'erhead,
Like a new Temple, its wide branches spread!

