

L'HEAUTONTIMOROUMENOS

By
CHARLES BAUDELAIRE

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Calm as a headsman at the block
I smite thee, not for anger's sake,
Even as Moses smote the rock;
And from thine eyelid I will make

Flow forth the streams of suffering
To water my Sahara years.
My swollen passions, maddening,
Shall swim upon thy sea of tears,

Like ships beyond the bar that bound.
And in my heart that they enlarge
With hope thy dear sobs shall resound.
A drummer rattling out the "Charge

For am I not a discord-note
In God's great anthem—thanks to thee
Black Irony with greedy throat
That shaketh me, devoureth me?

Through my soft voice this harpy screams!
My blood, this viper-venom base!
I, the black mirror by whose gleams
Megaera watches her own face.

I am the wound and I the steel;
I am the buffet and the ear;
I am the limbs, and I the wheel,
Victim and executioner!

The Vampire of my heart am I,
Lord of that God-forsaken train
That, damned to laugh eternally,
Know they can never smile again.

Translated by Aleister Crowley.