

Don Juan in Hell

By Charles Baudelaire

The night Don Juan came to pay his fees
To Charon, by the caverned water's shore,
A Beggar, proud-eyed as Antisthenes,
Stretched out his knotted fingers on the oar.

Mournful, with drooping breasts and robes unsewn
The shapes of women swayed in ebon skies,
Trailing behind him with a restless moan
Like cattle herded for a sacrifice.

Here, grinning for his wage, stood Sganarelle,
And here Don Luis pointed, bent and dim,
To show the dead who lined the holes of Hell,
This was that impious son who mocked him.

The hollow-eyed, the chaste Elvira came.
Trembling and veiled, to view her traetor spouse.
Was it one last bright smile she thought to claim,
Such as made sweet the morning of his vows?

A great stone man rose like a tower on board,
Stood at the helm and cleft the flood profound:
But the calm hero, leaning on his sword,
Gazed back, and would not offer one look round.