



Twenty Prose Poems

Charles Baudelaire , Michael Hamburger (Translator)

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) ➔

Twenty Prose Poems

Charles Baudelaire , Michael Hamburger (Translator)

Twenty Prose Poems Charles Baudelaire , Michael Hamburger (Translator)

From the introduction by Michael Hamburger:

“Baudelaire's prose poems were written at long intervals during the last twelve or thirteen years of his life. The prose poem was a medium much suited to his habits and character. Being pre-eminently a moralist, he needed a medium that enabled him to illustrate a moral insight as briefly and vividly as possible. Being an artist and sensualist, he needed a medium that was epigrammatic or aphoristic, but allowed him scope for fantasy and for that element of suggestiveness which he considered essential to beauty. His thinking about society and politics, as about everything else, was experimental; like the thinking of most poets it drew on experience and imagination, rather than on facts and general arguments. That is another reason why the prose poem proved a medium so congenial to Baudelaire.”

Translation of selections from: *Le spleen de Paris*.

Original French text accompanied by English translation on opposite pages.

Twenty Prose Poems Details

Date : Published January 1st 2001 by City Lights Publishers (first published 1869)

ISBN : 9780872862166

Author : Charles Baudelaire , Michael Hamburger (Translator)

Format : Paperback 81 pages

Genre : Poetry, Classics, Cultural, France, European Literature, French Literature, Literature

 [Download Twenty Prose Poems ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Twenty Prose Poems ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Twenty Prose Poems Charles Baudelaire , Michael Hamburger (Translator)

From Reader Review Twenty Prose Poems for online ebook

Anna says

I adore this book. Yes, adore.

Twenty Prose Poems (or, if you must, *Petits Poemes en Prose*) is a 70-some page book, and half of it is the French originals. When a friend passed it on to me more than a month ago, I thought I'd devour the thing in a day or two. But it turned out that my usually voracious appetite for reading only wanted one, maybe two prose poems a day. And not because they are particularly dense, or difficult, or dull--in fact, just the opposite. I enjoyed each one of these strange little genre-hybrids so much that I didn't want to dilute the experience by gulping it too fast. I wanted every bite.

In a letter, Baudelaire wrote that he was aiming for nothing less than "the miracle of poetic prose, musical but with neither meter nor rhyme, supple enough and rugged enough to lend itself to the lyrical movements of the soul, to the undulations of reverie, to the jolts and spasms of conscience?"

Bold, Mr. Baudelaire, very bold. And accurate.

Such ambition did nothing to stifle his a sense of humor--evident just from his titles, which range from "Get Drunk!" to "The Soup and the Clouds" to "Let's Beat Up the Poor." Baudelaire's got a love of wordplay and a taste for epiphany. The doubleness manifested in his very genre--prose poem--finds constant textual echoes, from his scathing remarks on hypocrisy to his sight for the strange oppositions alive in Paris in the mid-nineteenth century. I was particularly struck by the image at the end of "The Double Room" (natch):

"Yes! Time rules now; he has returned his brutal dictatorship. He pushes me, as though I were an ox, with his two-pronged goad: 'Move on there, beast! Sweat, you slave! Live, convict, live!'"

It seems that he had originally intended to write a set of one hundred prose poems, but these twenty were written over a long span of time, and while some were published during his lifetime, it wasn't until two years after his death that they were collected.

But thank god for that.

N.T. says

Presented in both French and English, it is a walk through observations, Paris and age and time and perverts/society included. (The Double Room was personally appreciated, thinking of my own writing room) It is playful, with language lifting, and I appreciated being offered both languages. The intro makes the case for the prose poem and the limits of French poetic form during Baudelaire's time--thus why these efforts allowed more, essentially, to be said.

Youssef Elbrawy says

??? ?????? ?? ????? ?????? ??? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? "????? ??????" ???
"???? ??????" ??? ?????? ??? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ??????

?????? ??????? ??????? ??? ????? "????? ???????".

???? ???? ? ? ?????? ?????? ??????? ??????? ?????????? ?????? ??????? ???? ???? ??????
?? ????? ???? ???? ??????? ?????????? ????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ???? ???? ?????????? ??? ? ???? ????
???? ?????.

Jerome K says

I found this in a secondhand bookshop. And since I'd heard so much of Baudelaire but haven't read anything of his, I decided to pick it up and was pleasantly surprised by his "prose poems". It's a bit like Barthes' Mythologies, but less pointed. I imagine Baudelaire would've been great to share a bottle of wine with and just talk all day. It's a fun little collection.

Nicolas Shump says

My favorite poem so far is On Drunkenness, which I used to share with my students either at the beginning or the end of the semester. Good stuff!

Jacqueline says

Where evil comes up softly like a flower.

???????? ? ???? ? ?????????, ???, ??????? ?????????. ????? ? ???? ? ??????????? ????? ??, ????? ? ?
?? ??????????? ????? ???? ?????????- ??? ? ????? ????????? ??????????? ? ? ??????????? ???? ????? ? ??????...
?? ????????????? ? ???? ? ???? ? ?????. ????? ??, ? ??????. ? ??? ???- ??????; (...) like
reflections of fireworks in hell.
? ? ? ? ?????. ????? ? ? ?????, ? ??????? ??????? ? ?????????????, ????? ? ? (? ? ? ? ?): *The vulgar herd can never understand.*
???????????? ?????????- (...) *a mournful harmony, like that of the rising tide or of a storm brewing.*

Perhaps you will say to me: "Are you sure that it is the real story?" What does it matter, what does any reality outside of myself matter if it has helped me to live, to feel that I am, and what I am?

(view spoiler)

Caterina says

Incomparable. Oui, j'adore ce livre. Baudelaire's prose poems are to me his most astonishingly original and best. Having the original French and the English translation on facing pages is ideal. There's already a good review posted, so instead, here is a sample of the poetry itself.

The Favours of the Moon

The Moon, who is caprice itself, looked through the window while you were sleeping in your cradle and said to herself: 'I like this child.'

And softly she descended her staircase of clouds and, noiselessly, passed through the window-panes. Then she stretched herself out over you with the supple tenderness of a mother, and laid down her colours on your face. Ever since, the pupils of your eyes have remained green and your cheeks unusually pale. It was while contemplating this visitor that your eyes became so strangely enlarged; and she clasped your neck so tenderly that you have retained for ever the desire to weep.

However, in the expansion of her joy, the Moon filled the whole room like a phosphorescent vapour, like a luminous poison; and all the living light thought and said: 'You shall suffer for ever the influence of my kiss. You shall be beautiful in my fashion. You shall love that which I love and that which loves me: water, clouds, silence and the night; the immense green sea; the formless and multiform streams; the place where you shall not be; the lover whom you shall not know; flowers of monstrous shape; perfumes that cause delirium; cats that shudder, swoon, and curl up on pianos and groan like women, with a voice that is hoarse and gentle!

'And you shall be loved by my lovers, courted by my courtiers. You shall be the queen of all men that have green eyes, whose necks I have clasped in my nocturnal caresses; of those who love the sea, the sea that is immense, tumultuous and green, the formless and multiform streams, the place where they are not, the woman whom they do not know, sinister flowers that resemble the censers of a strange religion, perfumes that confound the will; and the savage and voluptuous animals which are the emblems of their dementia.'

And that, my dear, cursed, spoiled child, is why I am now lying at your feet, seeking in all your person the reflection of the formidable divinity, of the foreknowing godmother, the poisoning wet-nurse of all the lunatics.

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

Written over many years, the twenty poems in this volume are quite different from one another. The longest, *The Generous Gamester* (or Gambler) can be read here in another translation.

Ehsan Sadraei says

????? ????? ?? ????? ??????? ????? ????????. ????????? ??????? ??????? ?? ????? ????? ? ????????? ?? ?????
????? ?? ??? ????? ?????????.

«????????? ????? ?????????? ?? ????? ?? ????????????? ????? ?? ?????? ?? ????? ?????? ?? ????????? ?????? ??? ???
?? ?? ?????? ?? [?????] ??? ??? ?????? ?????? ?? ?????? ?? ?????? ?????????? ?? ????????? ?????? ?????? ??????
?????: ?????????? ?????????????? ?????????????? ?????????? ?????? ? ?????????? ? ?????????? ??????
????? [?? ?????????? ??????] ????? ??? ?????? ?????????????? ?????? ?? ?????????????? ?????????????? _?? ?? ?????? ?? ?????
????? ?????? ?? ?? ?? ?????? ??????????_ ?? ?????????????? ?????? ?????? ??????
????? ?????? ?????????? ?????? ?? ?? ?????????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ? ?????????? ?? ?????????? ?????? ??? ?????? ?????? ??
????? ??? ?? ?? ?????? ?????????????? ?????? ?????? ?? ??????????????»
? ?? ?????? ?????????? ?? ?????? ?????????? ?????? ?????? ?? ?????? ?????????? ?? ?????? ?????????? ?????????? ??????????.

Bill Kerwin says

There is some great stuff here of course, but it doesn't sing in this Michael Hamburger translation. It's been a long time since I read the Richard Howard or Varese translations, but I think they are better.

Bruno Ribeiro says

“Ah! miserável cão, se eu tivesse lhe oferecido um pacote de excrementos, você o teria farejado com prazer e talvez até devorado. Assim você mesmo, indigno companheiro de minha triste vida, você se parece com o público a quem não se pode jamais presentear com perfumes delicados que o exasperam mas com sujeiras cuidadosamente escolhidas.”

Cheyenne Black says

If you like vision and saucy philosophers, read this book.

June Geiger says

Monsieur Baudelaire's conflicted longings to immerse himself in / separate himself from the world shall forever bind us.

Black Elephants says

Jocose. Grim. Lovely. Sample:

One should always be drunk. That's all that matters; that's our one imperative need. So as not to feel Time's horrible burden that breaks your shoulders and bows you down, you must get drunk without ceasing.

But what with? With wine, with poetry, or with virtue, as you choose. But get drunk.

And if, at some time on the steps of a palace, in the green grass of a ditch, in the bleak solitude of your room, you are waking up when drunkenness has already abated, ask the wind, the wave, a star, the clock, all that which flees, all that which groans, all that which rolls, all that which sings, all that which speaks, ask them what time it is; and the wind, the wave, the star, the bird, the clock will reply: 'It is time to get drunk! So that you may not be the martyred slaves of Time, get drunk; get drunk, and never pause for rest! With wine, with poetry, or with virtue, as you choose!'

Dean says

One of the best books of poetry I've read. Baudelaire has a great, twisted sense of humor and is also able to conjure up wonderful images. I'm definitely planning to check out Les Fleurs Du Mal after this one.

Kris says

A beautiful quick set of rich pieces of prose. Feed on this when you're hungry for something better.

Most of these I believe are in Paris Spleen, but since I read this first, it's what created my love for Baudelaire. Even with a limited knowledge of literature I feel one could appreciate the simple and engaging little slices of life he's fashioned. Definitely would love to have analyzed these in a lit class, and I'll for sure return to them again some day.
