

ELEVATION

Charles Baudelaire

Above where lakes, above where valleys lie,
Past every mountain, forest, cloud and tide,
Beyond the sun, beyond where ethers glide,
Beyond the bounds of starry realms on high,

My mind, you move with proud agility,
And, like strong swimmers revelling in the wave,
So do you cleave deep vastness that you brave
With measureless and manly ecstasy.

Far from these foul miasmas flee apace;
Go, cleanse your being in the loftier air,
Imbibing, like the Gods' pure nectar there,
The clear fire that prevails in limpid space.

Beyond those cares and huge despondencies
Which heavy on our fogged existence weigh,
Happy the man who, zestful-pinioned, may
Ascend to realms of radiancy and ease;

The man whose thoughts, like larks far-fluttering,
Can soar in freedom towards morning skies,
—Who rides above life, swift to recognize
The speech of flowers and every silent thing!

—Translated by Philip Higson

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