

THE CAT

Charles Baudelaire

Come, handsome cat, at my fond heart to laze;
Disarm each tender paw,
And let me melt into your glorious gaze
Where agate blends with ore.

When leisurely my fingers stroke your head
And on your lithe back float,
And my hand thrills at the sensations shed
By your electric coat,

My loved-one's image comes to me. Her glance
Sweet pet, like that you steal,
Piercing and cool, transfixes like a lance;

And, spread from head to heel,
A subtle charge, a threatening perfume, swims
Around her dusky limbs.

—Translated by Philip Higson

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