

## THE ENEMY

*Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867)*

My youth was nothing but thundering storm,  
broken up here and there by blinding sun.  
Rain and lightning so ravaged every form  
that in my garden few red fruits remain.

Now having reached the autumn of my soul,  
I must take up the spade and rake to save  
this inundated ground—refill each hole  
dug out by waters hollow as a grave.

But, who can say the new flowers I conceive  
will find in soil wiped flat as ocean shore  
the mystic ingredient of vigor?

Pain only follows pain; Time eats at life:  
while the hidden Enemy who drains us  
of the blood we spill gluts, and greater grows.

*—Translated by Mark Francis*

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