

Which is the True One?

by Charles Baudelaire
translated by Aleister Crowley

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I once knew a girl called *Benedicta*, who filled the atmosphere with the ideal, whose eyes shed forth the desire of greatness, beauty, glory—all that which makes a man believe in immortality.

But this miraculous girl was too lovely to live for long, and, some days after I had become acquainted with her, she died. It was I myself that buried her, one day when the Spring swung its thurible even within cemeteries. It was I that buried her, well shut up in a bier of perfumed wood, incorruptible as are the coffers of India.

And as my eyes remained fastened on the place wherein was buried my treasure, I saw (on a sudden) a little person who resembled the dead woman strangely; who, stamping on the fresh earth with a strange and hysterical violence, shouted with laughter, and said, "I am the *real* *Benedicta*, and a rare jade I am, and for the punishment of your folly and blindness you shall love me!"

I, furious, answered, "No, no, no!" and to emphasize my refusal I struck the ground so firmly with my foot that my leg buried itself to the knee in the fresh-turned earth, and, like a wolf taken in a snare, I remain attached, perhaps forever, to the grave of the ideal.