

---

---

PROSE POEM. By Charles Baudelaire.

No. 3.—THE ARTIST'S CONFESSION.

HOW penetrating are the ends of autumn days! Ah, keen like pain. For there are certain delicious feelings whose vagueness does not prevent them from being intense, and no point is sharper than that of the Infinite.

How great is the delight of drowning one's look in the vastness of sky and sea; solitude, silence, incomparable chastity of the blue; one little sail shuddering on the horizon, which by its smallness and its isolation is like a reflection of my irremediable existence; the melodious monotony of the swell; all these things think by virtue of me, or I think by virtue of them (for in the vastness of the reverie the Ego is soon lost)—they think, I say, but musically and picturesquely, without quibbles, syllogisms, and deductions.

At the same time these thoughts, whether they arise from myself or dart forth from things external, soon become too intense. Energy in pleasure creates uneasiness and positive suffering. My nerves, too highly strung, no more give forth any but scolding and painful cries.

And now the depth of the sky affrights me; its limpidity exasperates me. The insensibility of the sea, the changelessness of the prospect revolt me. Ah! must one eternally suffer, or fly eternally before the face of beauty? O! no, pitiless enchantress, ever victorious rival, leave me alone; cease to tempt my passion and my pride! The study of the beautiful is a duel where the artist cries with fear even before he is conquered.