

SHOWING CHICAGO TO BAUDELAIRE

This was probably our last production. I'm broke. I thought Chicago would be a good venue for your verse. And The Lakefront Players delivered it well. But, no doubt you saw how your poems played the house. Out of sync with immortality. Killing the audience is what we hope for but not that way. At least they died politely. Be glad you aren't available for an interview with the Tribune critic. He's already rummaging your rhymes, fingering words like passe.

You were always attracted to big city nights, monsieur. I own a copy of Les Fleurs du Mal in French, ripe with urban musk, erotic alliteration, the patina of impacted space. Park your own demons backstage, Mr. B. Unlace your strophes, your dodecasyllables. Walk The Loop with me and the rest of the Jack Daniels. I'm not too drunk to be your docent.

This old broad's broadened since dragging her petticoats through swamping black mud, Indian twilight and the evil stink of skunk cabbage. Lake breezes flutter the curtain of Diesel fumes--not a smell you would know. The phallic towers of the powerful probe the high haze, challenging low-flying angels. Michigan Avenue fires millions of rounds of glowing ammo from all angles. You can't escape the shrapnel of light, incendiary shards of it, infecting you with a virus that keeps you coming back for another pelting and piercing.

Now we're in the outback, still in sight of magnanimity, magnificence, maggots. The lower level is pocked with puddled reflections, shimmering shades of logic, lust, obligatory beauty. The trumpet in that bistro is tonguing out blues-- a color, a condition.