

# Пушкин и Baudelaire, via СТРАННИКОВ

*by strannikov*

## **the sleepless serpent's return**

in time for dark the batteries die  
the clock's numerals erase to grey:  
in silence shuts the visor of night.

the city's streets vacated soon  
all visible lights stare at the ground—  
dim streetlamps distant stars the moon.

—but night does not reduce me to sleep  
the dragging minutes keep awake  
the dark that only opens its deep:

a snake, my memory unfurls  
and slithers black from out its black night—  
inside my aching chest it curls.

this snake recites scenes long since spent  
returns to life those vivid scenes  
those loathsome scenes I'd as soon forget—

the curses and shames the vain regrets  
the bitter complaints the scorching tears:  
the snake coils tighter in my chest—

then squirms away back to its black night  
leaves me to face these mem'ries alone  
as bleak sorrows dawn and day arrives.

**more memories than any petrified tree**

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walnut drawers crammed with booklets and odd stuff,  
ink-stained pages, love notes, tickets, receipts,  
a thin braid of hair in onionskin sheets,  
could not yield the murk my seething skull schemes.  
my brain a hollow pyramid, mummy-stuffed,  
with stench of the dead and embalmmnt sealed.  
I am a lost graveyard the moon detests:  
with guilt and remorse worms writhe through their dead,  
feeding on those cherished dead who stare appalled.  
I'm a noir boudoir of wilt, must, cloy, and rot,  
the latest dead fashions themselves stiff embalmed,  
where bloodless young girls in pale pastel styles  
breathe pervading stale scents and ghosts of scents.

only days near the end could be so slow,  
when accumulated weights of wet snows  
sheathe every surface, seed indifferent sleeps  
enduring longer than years we can count.  
O living life, your career finds its scope—  
a cold rock orbits a suspicious sun,  
a blind desert surveys its wealth of wastes,  
a mute sphinx before burial forgot,  
no longer marked on any map—mood fierce  
as suns set with threats, nights rise with new fears.

