

In a chamberpot he came floating down,  
 Dressed for a wedding, along the Rhine.  
 And when he arrived at Rotterdam town,  
 He said, "Dear lady, will you be mine?"

To which, as imagined riposte, I compose these lines ("Big Nerve"):

Little red king, so shriveled and bare,  
 Your malarkey's seductive and winsome,  
 But your conveyance is not debonair,  
 Used for a jakes it looks like it's been some!

Which only goes to prove that Heine is Heine.

Nathan Cervo

Yvonne Bargues Rollins. Baudelaire et le grotesque. Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1978. 233 pp. \$10.25.

The grotesque is one of those literary phenomena which perpetually intrigue critics but elude precise definition. Professor Rollins' study, Baudelaire et le grotesque, treats familiar essays, poems, and prose poems from the Baudelaire corpus, utilizing as well familiar themes in the critical analysis; what is fresh is the lens (the grotesque) through which this material is given new life.

The original version of this book was a doctoral dissertation, L'Eshétique du grotesque dans l'oeuvre de Charles Baudelaire, completed at Duke University in 1975 under the direction of Wallace Fowlie. A short article, "Baudelaire et le grotesque," also appeared before this work in the French Review, 50 (1976), 270-277. Professor Rollins justly claims that French critics have tended to relate Baudelaire to the prevailing classical tradition of French literary history, thus neglecting his aesthetic of the grotesque, a major means by which he achieves modernity.

The book is divided into four long chapters in which Professor Rollins develops a definition of the grotesque, analyses major figures cited by Baudelaire because of their use of the grotesque (for example, Maturin, Rabelais, Hoffmann, and major caricaturists), shows the relationship between images of the grotesque and the prevailing themes of Baudelaire's oeuvre, and