

Gaspard de la nuit

*After Maurice Ravel's "Gaspard de la nuit"
and Aloysius Bertrand*

I. Ondine

*"...Ondine who brushes drops of water on the resonant panes
of your windows lit by the gloomy rays of the moon..." - Aloysius Bertrand*

La nuit.

I hear trickling. I hear
rivulets— no, waves—
waves on a vast lake
shaded in mist,
delicate like the sway of
a mossy alder branch
in the water; the leaves,
Evergreen— and
in shadow, submerged,
dipped in midnight.

La lune.

It washes everything
in light silk. Ondine—
pauvre âme, drapes
amorphously, flows,
effortless,
carries a wistful echo—
wades to the shore
only to sing and lull
back under.

A faint melody for those who move an inch closer each day to sleep.

II. Le Gibet

*“It is the bell that tolls from the walls of a city, under the horizon, and
the corpse of the hanged one that is reddened by the setting sun...” - Aloysius Bertrand*

Desert. Hazy as snowfall:
when you cross your eyes—
blinding. Bright. A white
Opal with eroded luster.

The air shifts.
Slightly, like a blurred
nymph in vigil:
aureas pulsing
to the bell toll.

Heat mirage. The
faint form of figure
Dangled. Le Gibet,
gradual steps—
gradual look,
closer. Dried sand
on a body
as it becomes
Granular.

— and the setting sun.
Omnipotent—
Fire before
the falling sky.

It is the bell that marks the coming of the moon.

III. Scarbo

*“...the dwarf grows between the moon and
me like the belfry of a gothic cathedral...” - Aloysius Bertrand*

Scarbo: the goblin,
the conniver, sculpted gothic—
harsh like the
gargoyles at Notre
Dame in Dijon—
prances to the rhythm
of some flame—
miniscule, gilded with
gifts from Le
Gaspard, caught
because of a
glint, torchlight
illuminating its
vague silhouette
behind mahogany
with hands you’d
shake if only
to keep away
from your neck.

Scarbo: the charlatan—
calls to Le Gaspard—
The flame flares,
erupts like geysers
supporting a Hellish throne—
the torch—
the goblin—
Fire Dancer,
agitated embers
foot to
foot, heat—
swallowing wax—
éteindre.

Blue, translucent, the absence after Le Gaspard.