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- 1 My research work is rooted in amazement. While novels, music, painting and theatre each have a figurehead, a herald representing their art, this disparate whole nevertheless forms a unified whole. But there is no poet.
- 2 Of the poets to which Proust alludes, Baudelaire seems to be by far the most important. Baudelaire not only frequently resurfaces in Proust's writing, he is also often found implicitly.
- 3 My aim was thus first a philological one. Setting myself the objective of researching on what Proust has borrowed from Baudelaire as exhaustively as possible, I used the notion of intertextuality in its broadest sense to find not only what came from Baudelaire, but also what pertained to Baudelairism. The study of the drafts of *In Search of Lost Time* sheds light on the evolution and gradual disappearance of a reference or an allusion, which appears in the final version as trace.
- 4 This process allows me to shed light on a singular practice: the more diffuse and implicit a reference or allusion to Baudelaire is, the more seminal it is. But the opposite holds equally true: the more an allusion to Baudelaire is obvious, the more it should be considered on a deeper level. Two figures of Baudelaire therefore traverse the *Search*: the one appears in the form of *cliché*, while the other deeply inspires the Narrator. The direct implication of this distinction is not insignificant, because it begs the question of the potential irony in the pages where poetic prose appears. Should the passages that have often been considered as poetic pages not be read less literally, as a form of self-pastiche by the Narrator making fun of the novice poet he once was? Finding Baudelaire on every page does not make him the forgotten poet. The absence of the poet is explained rather by what Proust understands to be poetry.
- 5 For Proust, poetry flows according to the situation and is experienced as a form of relationship to the world and to humans, and, as such, describes a certain way of relating to time. Poetry is at the hearth of modernity, in that it allows us to access a lost past, to "extract the eternal from the ephemeral". The poet compromises with the

present, by developing careful attention to that which is contemporary to him. Just as Baudelaire gives in to what he calls “the tyranny of circumstance”, Proust renews the realist novel, allowing himself to write in touches, with attentiveness to the trivial. That is perhaps where we would find the poet, who is not apparent in the *Search* and who is everywhere. We should look for him in the attention paid to what is forgotten and lost. The poet must come to terms with triviality; it is by accepting it that one successfully avoids it and becomes original.

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