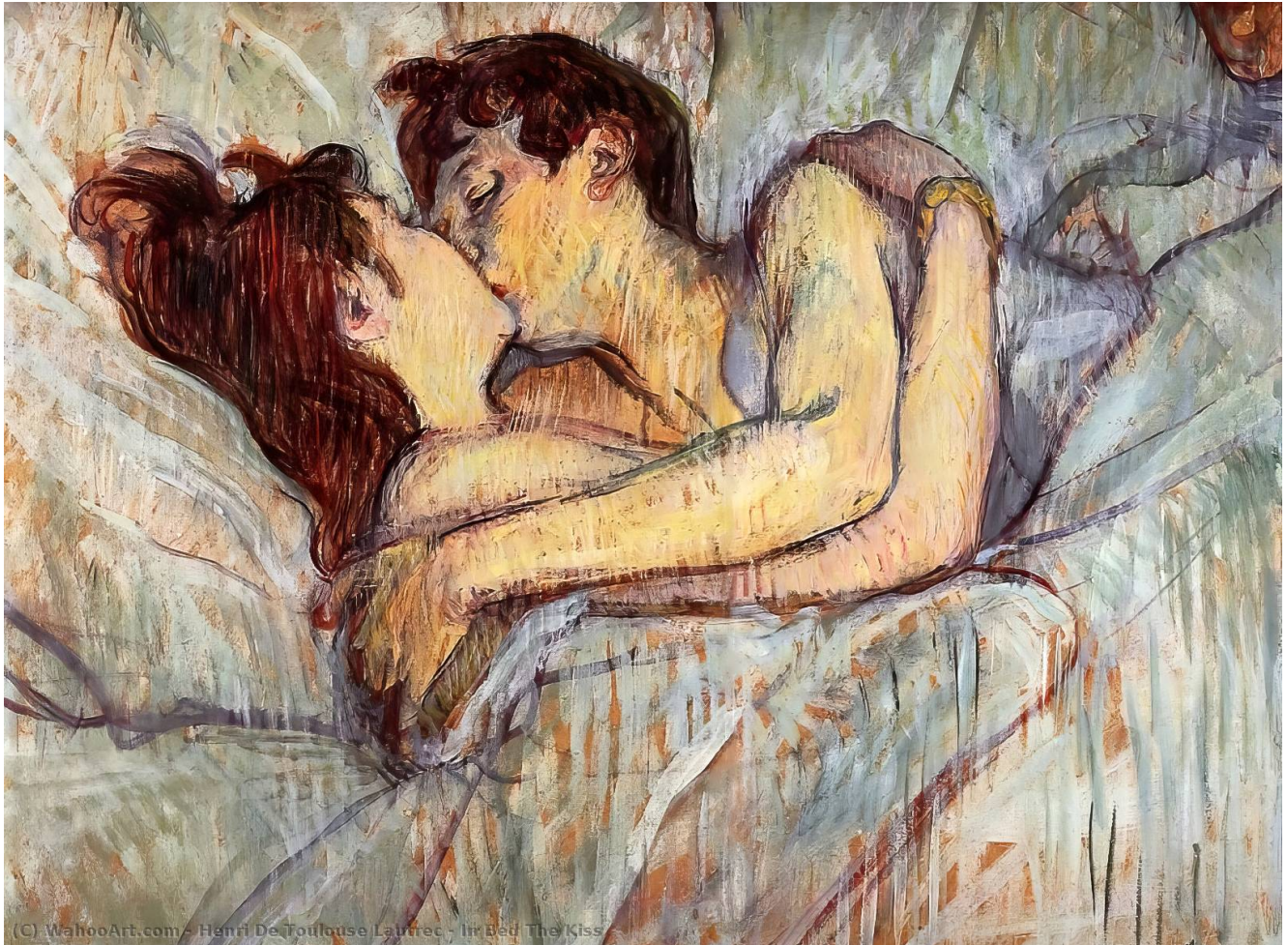


Lesbians (Baudelaire)

by [DJ Tyrer](#) (November 2023)



In Bed, The Kiss, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, 1892

Crafting a collection of poetic shockers
Baudelaire reached for a name
Calling his collection 'The Lesbians'
A term loaded doubly with meaning—
One inoffensive, of poetic repute
That excused any and all offence
The other risqué, sexual, sapphic
Poetic only tangentially—
And, boasted of it in print.
But, the Lesbians of Lesbos

That is, the inhabitants of the isle
Took offence and wrote to complain
Threatened to take Baudelaire to court.
One father in an interview
Proudly proclaiming publicly
"My daughter was born a Lesbian
And I pray she'll remain a Lesbian
Until her dying day."
His daughter smiled a secret smile
Glanced coyly at a passing maid
And, prayed the same and not the same
As her doting father ruffled her hair
Not understanding the blazing urges
That the poet, Baudelaire, could comprehend
And, proceeded with his threats
Forcing the collection to be renamed.
No longer 'Lesbians,' but blooms
'The Flowers of Evil' taking root
Only to take their author to court
After all, for their mild obscenity
Cementing his reputation down the ages
Albeit without homosexual femininity.

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DJ Tyrer is the person behind Atlantean Publishing, editor of *View From Atlantis* and the *5-7-5 Haiku Journal* webzines, and has been published in issues of *Genre: Urban Arts*, *Haiku Journal*, *Lothlorien Journal*, *Poetry Quarterly*, and *Tigershark*, and online at *A New Ulster*, *Enchanted Conversation*, *Library Love Letter*, *Morphrog*, *Plato's Caves* and *Poetry Pacific*. DJ Tyrer's website can be seen [here](#).

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