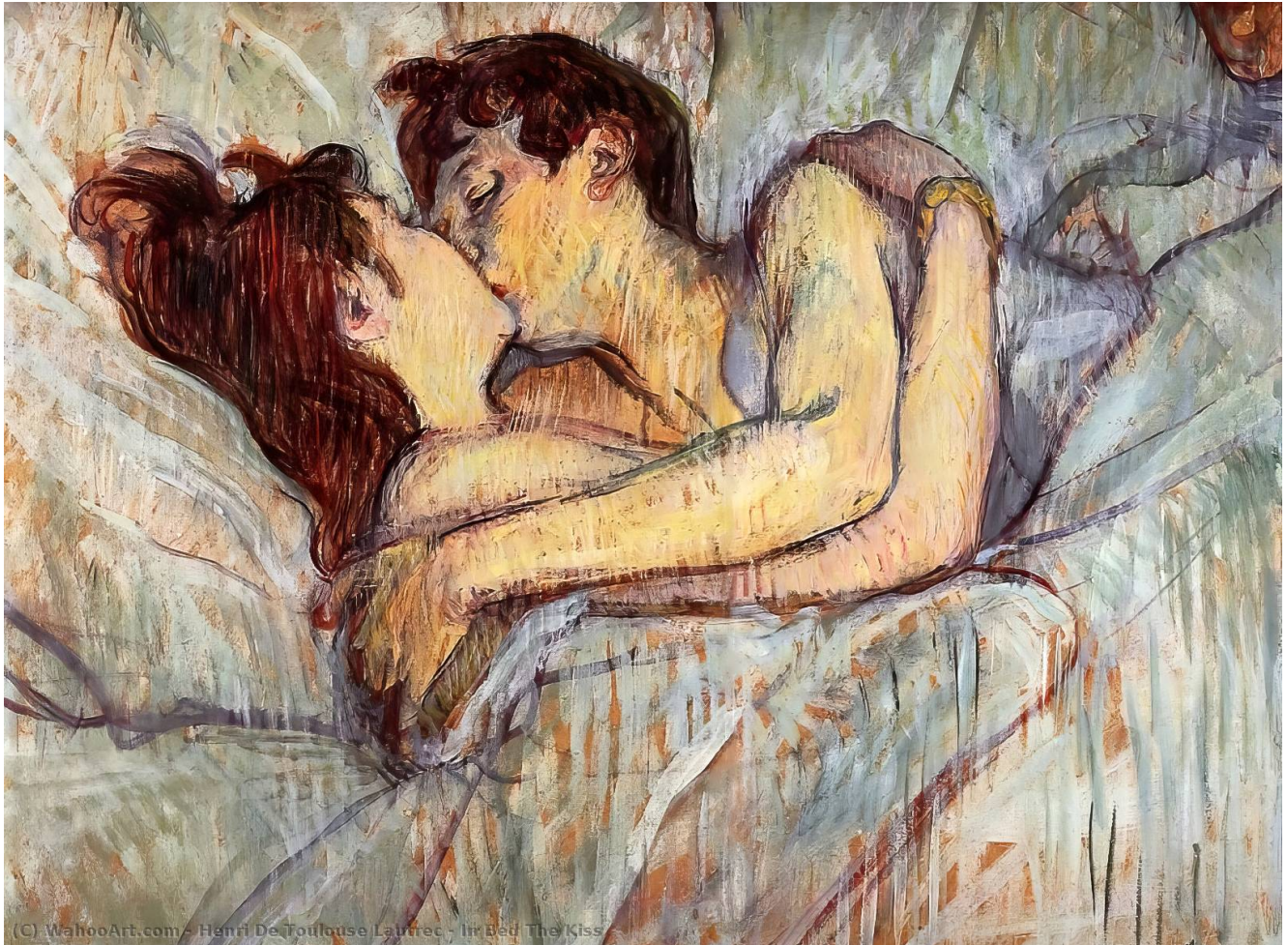


# Lesbians (Baudelaire)

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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