The Empathetic Experience of Beauty

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Charles Baudelaire
“Beauty”

O mortals, I am beautiful as a stone dream
My breast—where each is bruised again and again--
Inspires the poet to a love
As mute and eternal as itself.

I am enthroned in azure – an incomprehensible sphinx –
I unify the cold heart to the white of the swan –
I hate the movement that distorts the line –
I never cry and I never laugh.

Before my pomp,
Where I may have lent my most prideful monuments,
Poets will have consumed their days in austere pursuits.

To fascinate these docile lovers,
I have pure mirrors that make all things more beautiful.
My eyes, my immense eyes eternally clear.