

# The Seekers of Lice

By Arthur Rimbaud

Translated by Wallace Fowlie

When the child's forehead, full of red torments,  
Implores the white swarm of indistinct dreams,  
There come near his bed two tall charming sisters  
With slim fingers that have silvery nails.

They seat the child in front of a wide open  
Window where the blue air bathes a mass of flowers  
And in his heavy hair where the dew falls  
Move their delicate, fearful and enticing fingers.

He listens to the singing of their apprehensive breath.  
Which smells of long rosy plant honey  
And which at times a hiss interrupts, saliva  
Caught on the lip or desire for kisses.

He hears their black eyelashes beating in the perfumed  
Silence; and their gentle electric fingers  
Make in his half-drunken indolence the death of the little lice  
Crackle under their royal nails.

Then the wine of Sloth rises in him,  
The sigh of an harmonica which could bring on delirium;  
The child feels, according to the slowness of the caresses  
Surging in him and dying continuously a desire to cry.

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