

The Celestial Bed, London, 1780

*... for the propagating of beings rational, and far stronger
and more beautiful in mental as well as bodily endowment, than
the present puny, feeble and nonsensical race of probationary
mortals. — Dr. James Graham*

You can't conceive supreme beings in the same narrow place
where each weary day's weight lays you low, or where you're
cleansed, scented for the tomb. Come to our bed, where
miracles come to pass. Family trees blossom and root. Races

are won. The bed's supported by massive pillars charged
with current, lodestones potent as the snorting Vandals
who wrenched apart Rome's fair clenched knees and bloodied
her art, the mattress taut with the tails of English stallions.

A mirror long as Adam and Eve together, eight limbs wide,
or more if that's what moves you, hangs under the canopy
to illustrate the pleasure lovers return to heaven. Hymen's
goat-eyes glow like torches at a Roman revel above the only

instructions necessary: *Be Fruitful. Multiply.* Cupid
and Psyche, limbs entwined, cling to the bedstead, in awe
of the inspired choreography of your endeavor, eloquence
of supple tongue, the biting wit. The orchestra's hidden

nearby, but while you can hear their sinuous music and be
made whole over and over, the musicians fiddle, finger and blow
too intently to hear the symphony you make. Censers glow
with scents of the fecund East tart as gin, sweat, blood:

love. One hundred candles, wicks straight and thick, light
this most human and divine of rites. We guarantee a depth
of pleasure from which only good can issue. Night's the only
proper paradise. Spend, and live forever. God provides nature,
we the science. The art, you learned the night love made you.

— David Citino