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