

xii. *The Mother of Sin.*

In the corner of the land  
where snakes pass by with a curious grin  
we are given to understand  
there lives an old snake called the Mother of Sin.

No one remembers how she came  
to be called by such an name  
but nowadays, they all agree,  
she lives unostentatiously.

*I am waiting in mid-winter's dawn  
searching for a way  
to unlock the secrets of the day  
when God alone gave birth,  
when an ocean of uncertainty was filled  
by the distant passion of the sun  
and love first spilled  
its fire upon the earth.*

*I watched as Adam in his dream  
reached with hope for the skies  
and the sun's first beam  
drew out the rib of flesh and opened his eyes  
to a companion in creation.*

*I could feel his gaze  
as the loving conversation  
rambled along Eden's ways,  
until we both came peacefully to rest  
and, among our whisperings, agreed  
that touch and taste had made us blessed  
beyond all need.*

*But in those moments hidden from the sun  
our lips betrayed that shadow of pretence  
in which the lurking harbinger of grief  
makes lovers discontented with belief.*

*Our triumph was to be undone  
when friendly footsteps in the grass  
playfully laid bare our shame  
and arguments of wounded innocence  
and angry protestation were to pass  
into a fretful measurement of blame.*

*Bowed beneath the burden of his fear  
and undecided love, I came to toil  
among the secrets of the soil  
where kindly prophecies appear.*

*And the pride of one who longs  
for beauty gentleness and songs  
by the shore of ancient seas  
among half hidden memories  
will walk beside us yet.  
There is a joy that lives beyond regret.*