MAD MESSIAH.

The Third Cycle –

Two Dead Israelites

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Fragment – bruised male.

We raise our tent of flesh and blood
to occupy the public place
with proud physique and bold
display and boastful brotherhood,
but, when bravado cannot hold
its poise and all the bragging fails,
we greet hilarity - the laughing face,
the howls, the wagging tails.

i. Manoah's Wife.

(Judges 13:1-25)

Manoah of the tribe of Dan
was a fine and faithful man.
He resolutely tried
to make his own dear wife confess
her sin - her long unoccupied
and barren womb, devoid of fruitfulness.

A son would bring him joy;
the boy would taste no wine
or unclean food. No blade or knife
would touch his head. He would destroy
the cruel and much hated Philistine.

That very day, Manoah's foolish wife
told him that a man of God had come:

He spoke of a long awaited son.
No unclean food, no wine
will pass his lips. No blade or knife
will touch his head. He will bring life
to Israel and torment to the Philistine.

The man of God, in dazzling white,
appeared with folded arms and regal height:

Your much loved woman speaks the truth.

Manoah's eyes were filled with long lost youth:

You and I will roast and eat
the lean and tender meat
of a wild kid goat!

The creature's throat
was placed along the sacrificial stone
but, when the sharp blade swept,
the man of God, without delay, leapt
flame-like to the ancient throne.

Man and woman, side by side,
fell trembling to the ground –
and to his fretful whispering
the woman's voice replied:

Let Adonai receive your offering!

When her time of birth came round,
her boy-child, Samson - ‘Man of the Sun’ -
became the pride and joy of everyone.

ii. The Lion's Throat.

(Judges 14:1-11)

Walking through the open door
with your spurs and your cowboy hat,
you came and sat with a friendly sigh.
Maw looked up with a curious eye
and paw just cleared his throat and spat
and said no more.

> *I went down – unafraid -*
> *to Timnah, where the cliffs are sheer,*
> *I watched the Philistines parade*
> *and, when she turned her head,*
> *I quietly drew near*
> *and a voice within me cried*
> *that my days*
> *were incomplete*
> *without the presence of her sweet*
> *and noble gaze.*
> *You must get her for me as a bride!*

Maw and paw and son went down
to Timnah, where the cliffs are sheer
and vineyards wait beneath the summer sky.

You saw a roaring lion appear
and could feel the breath of Adonai
take hold. With a warlike frown,
you seized the creature's throat
and tore its flesh apart
like a man might tear a timid wild kid goat.

The beast was dead.
The joy of triumph stirred
but to your parents not one word
was said.

You went to her who held your heart
and, when she kindly spoke your name,
you were pleased and turned to go.

Once more with proud delight you came
to seek a wife, but first you went to see
the carcass lying on the ground
and from the lion's body came the sound

of bees humming and the lazy flow
of honey. Your fingers, searching artfully,
found the happy food. You placed
it on your tongue and smiled contentedly.

Maw and paw were both agreed
that you had indeed
discovered a truly golden taste.

Paw gave the bride a second view
and Samson held a feast as young men do.

iii. The Bridal Song.

(Judges 13:12-20.)

Samson eagerly went down
to Timnah where the cliffs are sheer –
happy at last to win
his heart's delight.

Thirty youths at the edge of town
with envy and fear
and a furtive grin
waited for the Israelite.

They watched without a sound
as you calmly stood your ground -
your feet set wide:

I will leave my Timnite love behind,
and offer tokens of defeat –
a silver studded belt and linen sheet
for each man here - if you find,
in seven days, my secret. If you decide
to take these terms, when seven days are gone
all studded belts and linen sheets are mine
and I will wed my lovely Philistine
and sing my secret bridal song:

Out of the eater, something to eat.
Out of the wild and mighty something sweet.

For three whole days the thirty youths in turn
set out to find your secret and, the more they tried
to claim the prize, the more their fury grew
until they remembered Samson's bride:

Find that secret or we swear
your father's house will burn!
Because of you
that Israelite could strip us bare!

She turned to you with tearful sighs
and made an urgent plea:

Why do you hate me and hurt me so?
Won't you tell me your sweet mystery?

You gently drew her eyes
to yours, longing to explain:

I keep my mystery from everyone,
including maw and paw. They do not know.

She clung and wept for days on end:

I have no joy, no love, no friend.

And when the seven days were nearly done
you could endure the sweet sad pain
no more. You whispered to your bride,
who swiftly spread the secret far and wide,
and as the seventh sun went down
the youths with mocking pride began their song:

Honey is sweet! We lions are so strong!

The breath of Adonai with raging frown
took hold of your face:

You have walked my farm and set
my heifer to your plough!

You slaughtered thirty men in some sad place
and took their studded belts to pay your debt
and came back home and stepped inside.

Then one of those youths made a wedding vow
in Timna, where the cliffs are sheer,
and whispered happy secrets in the ear
of Samson's bride.

iv. Flaming Rattle Snakes.

(Judges 15:1-8.)

In those early autumn days
when golden wheat is heavy with life
you arrived and wanted to gaze
at your much loved beautiful wife.

You stood there manfully
with a wild kid goat and a blissful grin
till the door was opened carefully:

I'm sorry, boy, but you know you can't come in.

That voice had more to say
as, hurt and all alone,
you slowly drew your breath and looked around
and heard, in a distant way,
the firm but friendly tone:

My girl was quite upset,
when you went to ground
after losing your bet
and everybody thought you were gone for good.
It seems we just misunderstood.

There might be a way to adjust the plan
now that she's married to another man.
Her little sister would be right for you -
wholesome and pretty and clever too.

Samson was pale and his voice was cold:

You who know my hurt will understand
the havoc which must now unfold
on this cursed land.

You caught three hundred rattle snakes
and, two by two, you tied their tails with wire
and dipped those tails in oil and set them on fire
and flaming rattle snakes writhed and squirmed
across the land, as vineyards crops and olive groves burned.

The Philistines knew how it all began – that shameful day
when your father-in-law from Timnah town
gave you a bride, then took her away.

They walked to the house of father and bride,
and threw a flaming torch inside
and watched it all come burning down.

Samson's temper frayed, he was ready for war:

Rivers of Philistine blood will settle the score!

Through the menacing wave
of your mighty hand
havoc came to the Philistine land
to frighten maim and shock

and you went down
with a mournful sigh and a weary frown
to live on your own in the cave
of the Mighty Rock.

v. Jawbone Hill.

(Judges 15:9-20)

The Philistines came to Lehi town
in Judah land to watch and stare
and tote their guns and make a fuss.

A deputation with a genteel frown
made their way across the field
and quietly appealed:

Your hostility is quite unfair.
We're Judah folk, so don't blame us
for the wild behaviour of that crazy man.
He's not from Lehi. He's Tribe of Dan.

The Philistines looked with jaundiced eye
and gave a slow and calm reply:

We expect to meet the prisoner soon -
bound, please, and delivered by noon.

Men of Judah – three thousand strong –
heard the news and hurried down
to the mouth of Samson's cave:

In our opinion there's nothing wrong
with being mighty and mean and brave,
but the Philistines don't quite see it that way,
so why do you bring such disarray
to our trouble-free town?

Samson smiled. His voice was loud:

Men of Judah are a mighty crowd,
but please don't say that you're coming to fight.
Dead bodies are an ugly sight.

Three thousand men of Judah stood tall
and howls of laughter went roaring high:

We want your permission to tie
you and hand you over. That's all.

Samson nodded and smiled. The idea was good:

Wrap my arms in loops of twine
and hand me over to the Philistine,
but try to avoid any shedding of blood.

The roars of laughter shook the ground
as you waited with cheerful ease to be bound.

Two arms tied and up from the cave
and the rush of the fearsome Philistine
horde and the sound
of Adonai's breath
and the burning twine
and the wild and looping wave
of the donkey's jawbone risen from the ground
and Samson's howling writhing dance of death:

With the donkey's jawbone - donk, donk -
on the skulls of the Philistine - clunk, clunk -
I have, sweet Adonai, visited the lash
of your breath on this vile uncircumcised trash.
You put my enemies under my feet,
and proudly I dance on their dead remains,
but when that claw-like dryness pains
my throat, will you leave me here to die
in the blazing noonday heat?

Adonai spoke in the blink of an eye
and those who live nearby will always say
that the water flows 'to this very day.'
The water flowed and you drank and all was well.

Jawbone Hill is the name
of the place where the men of Judah came
with their whoops and cheers
and smiles and easy praise
and Samson was sheriff in Israel
in the Philistine days
for twenty years.

vi. The Horses Of Philistine City.

(Judges 16:1-3.)

When a sheriff needs a break
he is well advised to take
himself to another town,
where he can go and get a drink
at the saloon or walk around
or sit alone and think.

Now Jawbone Samson was brave and tough
but a sheriff's job is never pretty
and, whenever he'd had enough,
he'd hop on the saddle and high tail to Philistine City.

You were leaning at the bar one day with a weary eye
when a Philistine lady stood nearby –
hands on her hips and lips inclined to jeer:

If you want to learn how to smile, step right in here!

Your reply was guarded and discreet
but soon, like a prairie fire in the noonday heat,
the word spread far and wide:

The business lady has Jawbone Samson inside!

Now the Jawbone Samson name
brought memories of bitter shame
and cruel and dark defeat
to the high and mighty Philistines.
With folded arms and bloody minds
they gathered outside the hotel:

We'll let him have this one last night,
but the rising sun will spell
his demise. Tomorrow will be sweet!

But slyly, at the midnight hour,
you got out of bed
and took the horse of every Philistine and led
them galloping through the city and out of sight.

No one saw in the shadowy gloom
the stony Philistine faces glower.
No one heard them seethe and fret and fume.

vii. Delilah on the phone.

(Judges 16:4-22)

When Delilah, beautiful and bold,
welcomed Jawbone Samson to her bed,
the city bosses came with bags of gold:

Throughout this city lively praise
is heard for your appealing ways
and for the mighty change in Samson's attitude -
quite forlorn with love and easily lead.
If you asked, he might convey
the secret of his keen prowess,
and we would solemnly express
our most beneficial gratitude.

On the evening of that day,
Samson heard Delilah on the phone:

If you won't tell me how
to get you here and tie
you down right now,
I think I'm going to die.
I'm all alone!

His eager voice came down the line:

I'm on my way,
My wild and darling Philistine!

You came through the door with heroic pride,
and Delilah clasped her hands and sighed
and wore her sweetest and most hopeful frown:

Won't you tell me how to tie you down?

In a pleased and passionate display
you moaned and fell across her bed
and called for seven unused leather bandoliers:

Now tie me down, my love, and take my heart!

Delilah's binding work was swiftly done
and then she raised her voice with wails and tears:

The Philistines are here, my love. Run!

The seven leather bandoliers, like thread
in a flame, effortlessly came apart.
You rose up and laughed and held her tight
and, with a whimper of delight,
she protested playfully:

You're so cruel! You're mocking me!
You're the meanest man in town.

A second time you raised her hopes:

If you really want to tie me down
all you need are seven unused ropes.

Once again she tried
and one more time she failed:

You should be jailed!
You've hurt my pride!

Then Samson brought her fingers to his hair:

You hold the secret of my strength right there.
If you take my seven long dark strands
and tie them tightly to the brass frame
of your bed, you'll have me in your hands.

She did as she was told and then she cried:

The Philistines are coming, my love. Hide!

She watched you rise from sleep
and laugh and wildly stare,
with her broken bed frame dangling from your hair,
in a slyly taunting carefree game.
She drew close and looked you in the eye:

How can you say you love me when you keep
me out from your sweet confidence?

Day after day she scolded, wept and whined -
every mournful plea and every sigh
pounding the tall dark shore
of your proud reticence
and flooding the inlets of your mind -
till, hounded to death, you could take no more:

My maw once met a man of God
and my paw made a sacrifice of blood
to hear these words: 'No unclean food, no wine
will pass his lips. No blade or knife
will touch his head. He will bring new life
to every tribe in Israel
and kill the hated Philistine!'

The secret was out. She could tell.
She called the city bosses on the phone.
They brought their bags of gold with eagerness
and she cradled Samson's sleeping head
with a pleased caress.

No word was said
as she admired the modestly displayed
bags of gold and the rhythm of metal on stone –
the resolute and sharpening blade.

She gave a sign.
The blade was brought.
The head was shaved.
She urgently cried out:

Flee, my love, the hated Philistine!

You awoke to the jubilant shout
of catcalls, whoops and cries.
They pinned you down on the lady's bed
and with the blade that shaved your head
they gouged your eyes.

They bound you and lead you away
to a half-forgotten place below
the city jail, where day after day
you heaved at the grinding mill and fed
on the hope that the hair on your shaved head
would begin to grow.

viii. Brooding might.

(Judges 16:23-31)

They gather and give thanks
in serried ranks
for freedom from a hateful power
and then, at daylight's dying hour,
with venomous delight
in the Philistine's high vaulted holy place,
they demand to see your bloodied face.

You appear on that barbaric night,
lead by the hand of a frightened boy,
and, as they watch you turn
and blindly greet
the howling twisted joy
of warriors pining at Delilah's feet,
they do not see your gouged eyes burn.

You would seek the best
of vintage wine,
if she were thirsty, and would bring,
if she needed nourishing,
a feast and if she felt the shame
of nakedness, you would not rest
until her face, folded in some fine
well-woven cloth, smiled and spoke your name.

You would proudly build
a mansion, if she longed to hide
from winter's chill or summer's cruelty.
If she were ill, you would run to her side
calling for a healer, skilled
with potion, spell and remedy.

From far and wide at this fast fading hour
your long sworn enemies
are drawn to the enchanting sight
of Samson's boastful might
imprisoned by Delilah's devious power.

You call amid the wild festivities,
for one last vision of her face.
No answer comes as you gaze
into the laughing canyons of this place
with absent unseeing eye.

Under the brooding archways of the night
you hear the chanting of Delilah's praise
and prepare, with measured breath
and arms raised in flight,
to call down the curse of Adonai.

Betrayed silent and alone,
you heave the waiting stone
with the vengeful grimace of death.

ix. The dove.

(John 1:12-14.)

Feet on fallen stone
step gently. Wreckage is explored
with patient hands and laboured breath,
and hope is brought to birth and death
by a lonesome eye.

The dove has flown
like a flashing sword
streaking the sky
above this defiled place
and, where the broken hero lies,
grieving comrades recognise
a pale and empty face.

With tender brotherhood
for their once wild and laughing champion
they place you on the bier and kiss the wood.
With warrior-like unison
they raise you high – the sacrificial lamb.
With passionate ritual
they walk - sure foot, sad face, gestures calm -
to the place of burial.

High above the open grave
and the stony eyes of grief
the glimmer of wings in flight
is more unsettling
then fire or crashing wave –
a sweetly crafted blade to rend
apart the pride of disbelief.

Let this story sing
the mad news of delight,
with no beginning and no end,
between the giver and the grateful one.
Foolish Father, faithful Son,
we glide and soar with the dove -
a shadow-free conspiracy in love.

I am the telling of this tale.
I pitch my tent on earth.
No soft and smiling clutch
on life and no restless touch
of any man brings me to birth.

I am the lamb, the happy feast. I hail
the amiable ways of fatherhood.
I am His voice – His Word made flesh and blood.

x. The whip.

(John 2:13-22.)

With arched brow
and curious eye
he notes the scattering sheep,
as I move with arm held high
and writhing whip.

Wandering what to protect and how,
his refined and furtive hands
hover with urgent skill
among the coin of distant lands,
as the marketplace grows still.

He knows my face.
He has watched me walking past
that dark and perfumed place,
where the priestly cast
surrenders to his smiling influence.

Beneath the sly familiarity,
the easy nonchalance
the silk, the scent, the silent watchful eyes,
I see the lion sitting on his prize –
those gleaming stacks of currency
like a city gloriously displayed.

Our eyes meet.
My hands reach down and heave.
The table tilts. The jingling cascade
tumbles to the ground. Turmoil takes hold
as countless fingers relieve
their pent up hunger for gold.

The lion leaps back. His finely manicured feet
avoid the table's bruising edge,
as my whip curls, wild with rage,
and all that busy nest of thieves
(the greedy eye, the money-grubbing hand)
are torn apart and scattered randomly.

I come to where you take your stand –
at Timnah where the cliffs are sheer.
You kill your lion and smile with victory
among the vineyard's golden leaves.

I let my whip fall to the ground
as countless feet appear
before the temple wall - echoing
the ageless sound
of unchanging litany.

An urgent whispering
more powerful than the wind
holds me and lifts me high
like a builder with that final stone
beneath the waiting sky –
triumphant and alone:

This house of glory is my child,
who calls my name on earth.
I will greet him at the end of days
and proudly raise
him to the shining mysteries above.

Like a whip – graceful and wild –
I bring down a second birth
and unleash the fire of love.

xi. My wild Samaritan.

(John 4:1-54.)

I sit at Jacob's well
beneath the cruel sun
and it seems the world is dead
and hope is gone.
Then, with a jar on her head,
she comes my way and casts her spell.

My friends have volunteered
to visit the nearby town
in search of bread and wine and meat.
They warned me with a friendly frown
to rest and avoid the noonday heat,
but I could see their eyes express
a silent weariness
before they disappeared.

The lady wears her mask of scorn
with playful ease,
yet in this treacherous and ancient land,
she cannot hide love's torn
and wounded memories.

May she be raised by kindly wings and fly
to that great city where all proud command
is overturned in the blink
of a stranger's eye.

She waits for my quiet plea:

Give me a drink.

And the taste of triumph plays on her devious grin:

A Jew wants water from a girl like me,
a wild Samaritan?

Hope lurks half concealed
in her bold sharp glance
and I join her wayward game,
stepping out to dance
along the worn out battlefield
where every hatred finds its name:

If I told you how I live,
if you knew where I came from and when,
you'd ask me for water. I would give
and you would never thirst again.

I am, in her eyes,
just another boastful clown.
Her voice has no hint of surprise:

When Jacob and sons
with their cattle and sheep
drew water from this land,
that well was dark and deep,
but I see no bucket in your hand.
How will you reach down?

You stand with feet apart, alone and proud,
as you call those Timnite youths to guess
the secret of your wedding song,
but I can only pine and bless
and cry out loud:

This love of mine I gladly give -
wild and sweet and strong.
From deep within it comes to pour,
like never ending streams,
among the dreams
of all who live.
Come and drink and thirst no more.

Those Timnite youths,
on learning of your secret ways,
parade their victory,
but when I speak my simple truths
the lady answers with a gaze
of disbelief and mockery:

I'll take that living water, please,
so I won't have to come here on my own
to let my bucket down and heave and groan.
Give me that life of ease.

I tell her with a friendly smile
to get that husband of hers and bring him here -
knowing she's had five. For a while
she loved each one, but now she lives in fear
of promises with her most recent man.

I make my story known,
of how it all began
with wild and kindly playfulness.
I watch her standing silent and alone
and, in her eyes, a pleading gentleness,
but my friends have returned.

They firmly place their views
on full display -
tight-lipped and concerned
and staring at her wild Samaritan feet.

She smiles and lowers her jar to the ground,
knowing we will meet
again quite soon, then turns round
and calmly walks away.

Curious and grave,
with a tantalising question taking hold,
they circle me like silent monuments:

Did Rabbi misbehave?

Nothing is said, no airing of views,
as they impatiently prepare
the meal – the best ingredients
spiced with stories loudly told
of skilful bargaining and angry news
of malice and deceit
and how the local women stare
like whores on parade.
The work is done and proudly displayed:

Rabbi, you must eat!

But I calmly wait
beside the earthen jar:

I have food that none of you can see -
the one who sends
me, tells me to reach far
into the open wounds of hate.
Here the warfare ends.
Here the harvest has begun.

I can see her, in the distance, eagerly
and proudly beckoning.
She is calling us to an unlikely gathering -
my wild Samaritan.

xii. The bread.

(John 6:1- 58)

Every fevered face
howling for victory
in this forsaken place
fills me with dread.

My peaceful offering of bread
stirs a frenzied appetite
for blood and proud command
as they come to make me king. I flee
and on the waiting hills I stand
until the Father, in the dark of night,
whispers to the Son on earth.

The lake below begins to heave and groan
as I step, barefoot and alone,
onto the swirling deep where love gives birth.

You come with your wild kid goat
to gaze at your beautiful bride
and jeering Timnite eyes politely note
your request and ask you to wait outside.

You play your wild and burning game
with rattle snakes and vines and fields of wheat,
but when those countless naked feet
follow me ashore and gathered round,
they call on me to save
and raise them up. In Moses name,
with a pitiful unsettling sound,
they cry out for bread.

I tell them how the prophet is long dead
and all his bread is turned to stone:

I am my Father's longing to be known;
I undo the ashes of the grave.
I am the bread that Moses cannot give.
Touch and taste and eat and live.

xiii. Stones.

(John 8:3-59.)

You shake your long wild hair
and wave that donkey's jawbone in the air
and the world roars with delight –
as if the world were Israelite,
but, when I call the world to celebrate
my own sweet victory,
I hear the voice of hate:

> *We found this woman – a vile reprobate -*
> *with legs spread wide*
> *in a shameless act of infidelity.*
> *If we come*
> *and join your new Jerusalem,*
> *you should understand*
> *that sinners like her will be taken outside*
> *and stoned to death by God's command.*

I put my finger on the sand and write,
about deceit and all its cruel ways
and how the sickly taste for blood
and the sweetness of the kill
lurks in every judge's solemn gaze.

I raise my angry chin,
and calmly turn my head:

> *The one who has no sin*
> *may cast his stone with skill.*

I continue writing in the dust
exploring greed and lies and lust
till the lady and I are left alone
and not one single stone
is raised. The accusers have fled.

From their perch of scholarly repute,
they speak of old Abraham with praise
but fail to see his wild and windswept ways.

When I am lifted up – bruised and alone -
in that hour of grief
my nakedness will silently refute
all frozen disbelief.

I speak my father’s name
and accusations rise and howls of shame
and each hand lifts one stone.

xiv. The gates of Jerusalem.

(John 12:27.)

Among the welcoming displays
at the crowded city gates
ragged voices heap
the winning champion
with wild and easy praise.

My business lady waits
as I go cruising by –
a knight in shining armour on a jeep
with arms held high –
and like a woman proudly spun
in some euphoric dance the city sings:

Hosanna! King of Kings!

I reach the temple steps and climb
and note the heedless pantomime –
the cheering crowd in this hallowed place.

A breathless follower speaks
of well-travelled and admiring Greeks
who want to shake my hand and see my face.

I take a long and weary breath:

I am the buried seed.
If you love me, let me lead
you through this place of death
to where the dark is overpowered by light.

Your enemies wait in the shroud of night
for the calmly rising sun
to reveal their power,
but their scheming is undone.
You rise up from your business lady's bed
and the galloping horses have fled.

I call out to my friends
who cringe and cower
with quaking heart
among the shades of disbelief:

Whoever takes my part

will greet the foolish one who sends
this word of flesh and blood
but, if you deny his fatherhood,
the dark will be your judge, your grief.

xv. My Father's vine.

(John 15:1-17.)

Father and Son unite
in the swirling ageless fire
of love's wild mystery.

We breathe and bless,
no need to touch or taste or see,
no need for faith in this pure light,
where hope surrenders all desire -
the end of the pursuit of happiness.
I am my Father's vine. With every coil
I cling like a mournful clown. Each thirsty root
is touched most tenderly
as I draw pleasure from the soil.
His pruning helps the ripening fruit.

If you, my branches, are cut off from me
you will be thrown into the fire and burn.
You will writhe and turn
like a man who will not choose
belief, when a woman brings the news
that she is carrying his flesh and blood.
He turns on fatherhood
and, in that unforgiving state,
falls into the certainty hate.

I long to be tied down by love
and let Delilah cradle me to sleep.
I let my strength be drained away
with trembling sighs
and those who take my strength can gouge these eyes,
as I stumble and shove
like a plodding beast in the deep.

I bless love's faltering display
and when the dance of hatred ends,
the foolish faithful ones will be my friends.

xvi. The cloth.

(John 19:31-20:10.)

Feet set apart, eyes calmly raised -
easy and cold and well appraised
with the dead and their naked colouring;
two need a helping hand and the crack
of a broken leg rings loud and clear.
The third man, limp as an empty sack,
hangs lifelessly and the tip of a spear
breaks open a watery trickle of blood.

Well-groomed elders appear.
They speak my praise.
Prisoners of high status and the fear
of shame, they come to make good
on their furtive respect for my forthright ways.

Hoisted high and carried solemnly,
I am honoured, silent, still
and these remains receive most graciously
the offer of a rich man's burial.

At the opening of the tomb
mourners quietly make way
for the hands who held me from the start.
She comes into this waiting gloom
to stroke my hair and touch my face.
She draws back. The cloth falls into place,
covering my head. Her silent heart
returns to the light of day.

The cloth on my face is like a screen
between two worlds - one of sight and sound
and passing time and constant breath.
The other world, beyond the reach of death,
is where my Father's foolishness is found –
waiting, alert, unheard, unseen.

I hear you calling out to Adonai.
With lone heartrending cry
and deathlike frown
you seal the enemy's fate.
The Philistine temple tumbles down
and the only survivor is hate.

The veil is torn. Lies and cruelty dance
their desecration on the earth.
They lord it over innocence
but my mad love will bring a second birth.

I will wade through every battleground
and wipe from every wound the putrid mud
of hate. My living flesh and blood
will draw their pain. I will be bread
in every hungry hand, wine for every thirst
and, where gentle souls are cursed
with mockery, I will wrap myself around
their nakedness and shame. My love will be
warmth in the winter, cool shadow in the sun
and I will bring to every bed
of suffering unfailing care
and to every prisoner
the dawn of liberty.

I bring to every war, every flicker of strife,
every whim of rage, my love, my life
and, only when my Father's fire is spilled
in all the furrows of this wounded place,
will he call on me to rise
and remove from my face
this cloth and you will recognise
in me, strange friend, the enemy you killed.