

i. My voice.

On that sweet afternoon of banishment
(before the misery began)
I brush the cool and friendly grass
of Paradise with naked feet,
until the woman and the man
raise their heads and watch me pass.
She makes a loud lament.
He roars with righteousness and heat.

Adam and Eve undo my covenant.
They shut me out from Paradise.
I offer nourishment,
happy to keep their life
secure, but they will not recognise
my ways, as separation turns to strife.

I know a man, who has no child.
He leaves his father's home and follows me
on a journey to a distant land.
I promise children – like grains of sand
on the shore – and years go by frustratingly
till Abraham is reconciled
to famine and war and the parting of ways
and he and his wife become withered and ancient of days.

He cuts his ancient foreskin with a knife
and his ancient childless wife
cackles with helpless tears
at being pleased after all these years
and, this time, giving birth.

From my mountain high above the earth
comes my covenant, my voice.
My word leads Israel. My people rejoice;
they offer sacrifice and speak of mystery.

They build a temple to my name
and, in a courteous and priestly game,
chosen ones seek high serenity.
They turn their face from inconvenience -
abandoning my ways
for love of gold and smiling dominance.

The hurt runs deep.

I will drive them from the land.
I long to let my fury blaze
and call down death
and make the children weep,
but I hold back my hand.

Tired, after a stooping day
with wood and stone and passing words of play,
you come to wash your feet and take your food
and, with a blessing on this neighbourhood,
you lie down to sleep and hear
me whispering of how these days will end.

I call my Nazarene. I send
him with no staff, no rucksack - naked feet -
through the gates of death where he will greet
the silent ruins of hate and fear.