

DALE BJORK

THAT MEN MIGHT BE

Where she walked,
Trees were quiet with the leisure of monkeys,
And the dew on the leaves seemed forever.

When she walked,
Gliding among idle gazelles,
The mist curled behind the cut of her ankles.

She moved easily among the beasts.
The soft sweep of her hand brought brown bears to her side,
And yellow blossoms from the dark earth.

She strolled with lions
Through herds of grazing cattle
And gazed at the shoulders of great bulls.

She palmed white flowers of hanging vines
Whose blue leaves clung to her smooth arms.
But all this is known.

And it is known that he who came
In bodily shape like a serpent
Dripped poison into her unblemished ear;

That she sank her teeth into mortality
And roamed awhile; how the vines drew back
at her approach and the lions turned away.

How then she saw the garden perfectly fruitless,
The flowers and beasts as in still-life
And deep within her own still life, a hunger and a promise.

How Adam wandered off—his wife dead to him—
And lay long in the wet grasses
(Monkeys sat among glistening leaves, pondering)
Before biting that sweet-skinned, violent fruit.

And it is known that then the wind cried
Like wild cats in the night, and the deer fled,
Driven by their hot blood;

That the sword of the cherubim flashed, sang death,
And cut the cord that fed that bright, green womb.
All this is known.

And some say she was weak,
Given to fainting spells and dark fantasy,
That her head was easily turned.

But I say:
Chavah, mother of many,
Through a thousand wombs, you are my mother.

And through a thousand births, I am your son.
Let men speak of sin; I will sing of joy.
Let the wandering children of earth

Be one with roaming lions and muscled bulls,
With wild blue mountain flowers,
In remembering your name and your heavenly hands.

Let it be known among your sons
That God has gently dabbed
Your smooth and sweat-streaked brow;

That he has dressed your sorrow in raiments of praise,
Your mourning in robes of delight.
Let it be known that your eyes are clear

(Once sightless, so deep was your seeing in Eden);
That your bold hands are bright with the blessing of heaven,
Bright with the blazing of suns.

Eve, mother of many,
Through a thousand fruitful wombs, I hear your name
And sing your dying for your sons.