

A Girl Named No Mercy

Robbie Taggart

—*Hosea 1; 2:15, 18, 23; 8:7*

She digs a hole and blows into it
plants the breath of her mouth
and waits for the storm

She waters the seeds until
her garden of wind sways with
the rhythmic cadence
of her father's imprecations

Each gale becomes
a brother or sister
infinite in number
and beloved as the sun
Though they looked into her
dark infant eyes and named her
the girl on whom no one
shows mercy

and her older brother
whose raucous laugh
causes her to flinch
is called Jezreel—a
scattershot divine planting,

the tenderness of her
father's whispered stories
holds her still like strong arms

When he's home
his music is a balm
and when he's gone
his absence fills every room

Like an injured cat
her mother lies curled
in the corner nursing
her newborn sorrow

You are my people
the girl chants to the wounded imma
and the sickly suckling child
and will always hold my heart

She has made a covenant
with the beasts of the field
and a promise to every sparrow
to cherish and be cherished

Every fig tree has become Jacob's ladder
she climbs and descends with angels
she smells the ghost
of the coming smoke

She sees every instant as a door
God might walk through
to call her father away
or tell her she is loved

There are doorways
into the infinite
everywhere she turns
and from beyond—
the scent of hope

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