

 SEX, DRUGS, AND ALCOHOL

Then, are we to believe that Eve,
still damp in her drying, understood
the snake's tongue—having never seen
a snake before just naming one?

When still Catholic and virgin,
she feared sex, drugs, and alcohol —
strangers until her first stepping out
passing on the bong, the beer,

fake laughing at dumb jokes.
While they toked, her mind
searched for a ride home
& the room got spinny,

the wallpaper pattern crawled
upstairs to sinning — again.
They wouldn't wash off — 3 sins —
not in her parents' shower — 4—

before Sunday Mass — again — 5 —
without confession the stain grows
red at the edges and burns her
blame on her choice to go out.

And shall we think that Adam
still clay—lunged and parched
did not ask for a drink
of apple—sweet or tart?

Now, drink is easier than narcotic —
legal tonic of priests and nuns —
she still passes the bong and hits.
She declines with peace signs instead.

She says yes in bed, to men.
Yes to selection — no to some,
yes to others. She prefers
the power of Yes, I will.

Wasn't Sarah the voice on Moriah
who spoke sense into Abraham:
God gave him a choice—boy or ram
& Sarah didn't birth him for nothin'?

She is making her choices now,
who, where, and how — much & often.
That one mickey slipped in her glass
rendered her set on redemption.

Who seduced, who murdered,
who severed the head on the wall?
Bethulia is a small town, scared
and she only wanted to save it.

Today, they thank her on the hill
while her enemies flee afraid from
the place she hides sins' offspring
— forsaken, kept, or slain.

 WORK TO DO

I like to think he was swimming in pure amniotic fluid
— save the champagne that first night.

I kept his space pristine: no wine, no lattes, no secondhand smoke.
I like to think of him on our first escape to the sea — the Priel —

his toddled footprints in foamy morning sand where, in the shallows,
I blew in his face, so he held his breath, submerged, & swam.

I like to think I leave him swimming in the purest atoms of H & O,
breathing air that is trusted breath, absent soot & acidic mist.
Instead, I leave him the task of cleansing it

without the tools, solutions, sponges to do it.

I leave him beaches awash in medical waste
& honeybees choking on pesticides.

I leave him molten roads in scorching heat.
I leave him flames performing seed serotiny.

I leave him, instead, with work to do.

BONNIE AMESQUITA

 A CREATION STORY

— *From The Family of Man*

In the beginning was the warm scented
sweated embrace

A woman cradled in her lover's arms

She can smell him

Wants to crawl inside his skin

Be with him complete

And in their embrace

Her fingers

His flesh

A child is conceived

She grows big in belly

Her legs widen their stance

And she wonders if the summer heat

Will ever end

She rubs the small of her back

Strokes her belly

Cradles it with her arm

Feeling the kick and tumble

A child dancing in her womb

To music its father plays on an old guitar.

Pain then

Her womb ready to open

And still the pain

The pain

God's curse and blessing

The woman cries out

Crouches and pants

A head crowns

And then with a rush of blood and water

A small body with arms legs feet toes

Wails for all the world to hear

I am here