

Eve Addressing the Serpent that Mirrors Her, as Painted by Hieronymus Bosch

You looked more like me
than anything else
I'd met yet, except
for him. That chest
like mine, cascade
of blonde hair,
fingers my size
wrapped around fruit
someone unlike any
of us forbade.

Is familiarity why
I said yes? Did I trust
you like I trusted myself,
and did I trust myself
because nobody
had told me not to
yet? That's what they
call sin, isn't it? A woman
elevating her own voice?
That is how we configure
temptation, and by "we,"
I mean Bosch, I mean Focus
on the Family, I mean
my own faulty memory filtered
through the retellings
of others. Only in flashes
do I see the story I sometimes
think is truth: a serpent
more like Adam, sizing
me up and saying, *Please, add
something. There must be more
than what you already are.*

To Jesus, After You Let My Brother Die

It's not like I didn't communicate my needs.
I didn't wrap my words in burial cloths.
There were no subtleties or vague spaces.
I am not you, giving parables. I gave
the obviousness of begging: Lazarus.
Sick. Come. There are no excuses, though
you may not think you owe me one. I'm
never quite sure with us—the line between
authority and friendship, Lord and loved one?
I just know whoever you are left us. One disciple
whispers that you stalled on purpose—
stayed two days teaching elsewhere when
you could've scurried home to us. The back
of my mind assumes holy intent, but the front
screams loud enough for your hearing. Like always,
I unroll myself in front of you, readable. Just
this once, let me read you back.

Resurrection Bruises

Then [Jesus] said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put in my side...' —John 20:27 (NRSV)

Pink wounds named for exes,
ex-friends and ex-fixations,
the first woman I consciously
liked, the man who couldn't
be "present." Manipulations'
slashes, rejections' gashes,
knees still skinned from girls
who booed me in that eighth
grade assembly. Marks of
melancholy in permanent
remission. Insecurities' imprints,
though their contents have been shed.

Sometimes they seem pointless,
but they tether me to a shared
story: we were human, and it was fifty,
seventy-five percent bangs-you-up
bullshit, and none of us technically
survived, not without intervention.
We were human, and we didn't
imagine the pain of it, though it will
seem far off there, except when
an angel hand grazes a marred wrist
and says, *He has a scar there too.*