

Blasphemy is the Child of Faith and Doubt

1. Eve Stands at the Bureau Mirror

holding a smaller mirror. Views her spine,
so scoliated she has only one real hip.
Turns, count her ribs down each side.
Always the same number: one short
on the left. Her old man—thin, pale,
bent as the bone that made him—now
long gone, she ponders pros and cons
of setting the story straight. Her reptile
memory glides behind her eyes. Who
would believe a word she says?

2. Lilith Discusses Her Impending Divorce

“He was big and dull. A hulking child. Always
pointing at things, crowing the silly names
he made up.

Look at *me!* I have been folded
in the black wings of Lucifer, I have felt all
his silky tongues. What could I feel for a
for a foolish creature who prattled ‘pussy,’
giggled ‘tits’? Who wanted lots of ‘kids’? Yes,
he called them kids. Finally I called on God,
my lawyer: ‘I want out! Let him marry
that blond doxy who gave You (oh, don’t
imagine I don’t know) her body once, to do
with as you liked. Hell, let him have the house.’ ”

3. Magdalene Admires Her Old Man’s Body

“It was risky to marry a second Jew after
the first hurled himself under iron wheels—
history, politics, fate, and faith. Thanks,
my comfortable dear, for only minor
terrors—bankruptcy, high blood pressure,
your mother’s fat (she should rest in peace).
Thanks for taking after your father, all brain

and tough muscle. I mean God the Lawyer who fathered us all. Your lean brawn is your birthright, I suppose. But you both know possession in perpetuity is outlawed in most States. So, old man, old dear, you must have *earned* your body's beauty. Were you munificent? Did you hug lepers, rescue desperate wives from stony death? Give your goods to the poor before we met? Were you a Jew as good as Christ? I see my Christ, my brooding boy, my first love, in your length of limb, the Jacob's ladder of your ribs. Oh, you ivory Jesus, you antique piece of work lying cruciform beside me in our cozy bed, can you see me as I saw myself: beggar, long-haired whore, kneeling at bony feet to wash or kiss them? Saint me. Come to me in a burning bush."