

Two Swords Bleeding

One sword rose up in a field
where Abel's sheep lay burned, with blood still running red
and drying hard on the altar stones as it dripped.

Cain, with tool in hand (no doubt a harvesting stone—
ground cleanly sharp its whole way down
to ease along a row of grain and drop the heads
into a waiting pouch), looked hard, and harder
with an eye that could not wait.

A once clean, harvesting instrument, threw another lamb
on the altar, where, blood with blood, the smoking drops
alerted God of a sacrifice that Cain should not have made.

The other sword, a piece of wood with nails,
with Cain's good friends, took all the drops of blood—
from all of bleeding time, and every body stabbed and cut,
or ripped; and every mutilation every curse might groan,
with every lie and sabotage and plot and grinding teeth,
and every cheating dollar, every sweaty, dark affair,

and every climbing star that seeks to shine upon its own,
but turns upon itself at last in hating all alone—
and bluntly in its vinegar shed all its healing pain,
and took upon His body all the sin and its disdain.

This too alerted God of a sacrifice that Cain should not have made,
but had he not—but had he not,
we'd still be in our pain.

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