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D'irth

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ball of fire drop like a heavy burden from the ceiling. She was thrown off her seat and set whirling around sideways, knocking over chairs like bowling pins, until she landed in a heap near the door, her shoulders resting in the lap of the cigar man. Her hands jerked up to shield her eyes and she found that her hair was burned away.

"You're going to be all right now," the man said.

He lifted her bodily and carried her through the front door before she felt her own tears running like clear and clean water from the corners of her eyes, past the tops of her ears, and around the sides of her naked scalp.

He set her down in the middle of the street, and she saw the flames jumping from her apartment windows.

He passed a hand before her eyes like a hypnotist. "Lady," he said, "do you know who I am?" His red, anguished face was perfectly familiar.

"Yes," she said. "Just go and save the others."

When he left her, she stared again at her apartment. Each window gleamed like the very eye of dawn.

D'irth

"Listen, woman, you have no wight
Within, just wayward growth, a blight
On love; let doctors make it right."

These words woo Jane and soon efface
The child now stirring for its place
As equal in the human race.

But woman in her whispers: "Spare
This baby's blood, free flesh to wear
A bonnet, suck for milk and air."

But proud flesh hears the witching word
Of gnostic faith: "This kill's no murder;
baby flesh is mother's turd."

Though protests screech to stay her hand,
Their scream like fire of God's command,
She treads on coals to fairyland,

For she has heard the siren's pearl
And elbows through the chiding whirl
To buy a death to spare a girl.

Obliging imps delude her then
To see as waste what is within.
Obliging pixies salve her sin.

As clouds conceal the sun at noon
The goblins suck from pulsing womb
Her babe, not ready yet to bloom.

Her mind then hugs the painted myth:
What crunched a baby wanting breath
Was really neither birth nor death.

Night plants her heart in sinking sands
As doctors wash their Pilate's hands
And trash a life's unraveled strands.

Alone she ducks the burning sky
And burrows east to find the lie,
But every bell's her baby's cry.

Then mothers camp upon her mind
Engraving guilt with steadfast grind
Until her womb becomes her rind.

No Puck can witch the Judas rift
That cut a homeless soul adrift,
And chucked her Maker's living gift.

Mike Vanden Bosch