

NLB Online Repository of Artistic Works

JAEL (working drafts)
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Note: Content layout and formatting are as received from author.

23/11

DRAFT 1

one of Yahweh's many hired hands

Jaeh

- 1 Call me the reluctant assassin.
- 2 ~~ill~~ ~~equi~~ Unbaited and ill-equipped
- 3 but for the blade of my wits,
- 4 I ~~can~~ ~~look~~ ~~at~~ ~~death~~
- 5 as swift as one of Yahweh's hired hands
- 6 Yes, I can ~~not~~ ~~meet~~ ~~death~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~eye~~
- 7 and not be able to tell us apart

4 I ~~live~~ ~~with~~ ~~death~~ ^{have lived with a lifetime of}

5 ~~in~~ ~~my~~ ~~father's~~ ~~house~~ ^{in words I cannot mouth}

6 ~~looking~~ ~~you~~ ~~through~~ ~~your~~ ~~eyes~~ ^{in the}

7 ~~in~~ ~~my~~ ~~silk~~ ~~and~~ ~~robe~~ ^{I look}

7 that ~~feels~~ ^{robs} ~~as~~ ~~a~~ ~~woman's~~ ~~gut~~ ^{her} ~~of~~ ~~flesh~~

~~I have known pain~~ I have guts
and ~~that is why when I nailed him enough~~
to nail S. —

guts

DRAFT 2

Jael

Call me ~~the~~ ^a reluctant assassin, hands
one of ~~Yahweh's~~ ^{the Lord's} many hired ~~hands~~ ~~to~~ ~~do~~ ~~his~~ ~~work~~.

Unbathed, and ill-equipped
but for the ~~power~~ ~~of~~ ~~my~~ ~~wits~~,
known pain, lived

is I have ~~lived~~ ~~with~~ ~~a~~ ~~lifetime~~.
with a lifetime of death;

→ I ~~claim~~ ^{claim} no payment
but the blood of a job well done

→ my only working ~~proof~~ ^{brief}

the rob I cannot mouth
in my father's house,

~~the~~ silk and robe that rob
a woman of ~~her~~ ^{edges of her} ~~her~~ flesh

Yes, I can ~~meet~~ ^{meet} death in the eye
and not be able to tell us apart

I have ~~not~~ ^{not} met death in my own eyes,
in my own eyes, ~~and~~ ~~that~~ ~~is~~ ~~all~~ ~~I~~ ~~can~~ ~~own~~,
and that is why

~~the~~ ~~my~~ ~~the~~ ~~womb~~ ~~that~~ ~~is~~ ~~the~~ ~~surface~~ ~~for~~ ~~my~~ ~~breath~~,
must ~~be~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~air~~

stench

~~Yes~~, I have stood ~~often~~ ~~on~~ ~~the~~
on the ledge and

I have ~~stood~~ ^{felt} walked to the edge
and ~~met~~ ^{felt} death ~~is~~ ~~calling~~ in the wind,

There is not a day
swept through this desert

~~and~~ I claim no payment ~~from~~ ~~the~~ ~~Lord~~
but a ~~leaf~~ ^{my name} ~~of~~ ~~Yahweh's~~ ~~love~~.
~~of~~ ~~Yahweh's~~ ~~love~~.
in ~~the~~ ~~day~~

the ~~leaf~~ of Yahweh's love.
demands

inked
proclamation in blood,

DRAFT 3

Jael

And with the hammer she smote Sisera,
she smote through his head,
Yea, she pierced and struck through his temples.
(Judges 5:24-27)

Call me a reluctant assassin,
one of ~~the Lord's~~ ^{Yahweh's} many hired hands.

Untrained and ill-equipped
but for the ^{white} blade of my wits,
my only working brief ~~is~~
~~is~~ ^{my} I have known pain, lived
with a lifetime of death -

~~the words I cannot mouth~~ ^{choked back} ~~in my husband's tent~~ ^{in my father's house,}
~~under the white walls of my father's house,~~ ^{husband}
the womb that must break
~~each month's every month~~ ^{the surface} for breath, ^{Kenite}
~~silk~~ ^{weave} and robe that rob a woman
of edges of her flesh.

There is not a day
swept through this desert ^{is the stream}
~~that~~ have not met death ^{wide and blank} in my own way,
known it ^{as turning a blind eye}
on my own time,
~~set it~~
~~on my own eyes.~~

Death is all I can own
and that is why I claim no payment
for my deed ~~but my name is not~~ ^{to have} ~~in blood,~~ ^{bringing} ~~the demands~~ ^{taking} ~~of Yahweh's love.~~ ^{Sisera to his knees,}
~~the~~ my heart fad by the river

DRAFT 4

JAEL

wife of Heber.
battle at Taanach by the waters
of Megiddo.

And with the hammer she smote Sisera,
she smote through his head,
Yea, she pierced and struck through his temples.
Judges 5: ~~24-27~~ 26

Call me a reluctant assassin,
one of Yahweh's many hired hands.

Unbathed and ill-equipped
but for the virgin blade of my wits,
my only working brief
is to have known pain, lived
with a lifetime of death -

updated → 26/11/2001

the words ^{that first no} ~~choked~~ ^{the womb that} ~~back~~ ^{is} ~~mouth~~
in my father's house,
under my husband's tent;
veil and robe that rob a Kenite woman
of edges of her flesh ~~with~~ ^{surely} ~~the~~ ^{break}
the womb that must ^{surely} ~~break~~
the surface for breath.

~~There is~~ ^{sheeps}
Not a day/swept through this desert,
we and blank as turning a blind eye,
~~and that~~ I have not met death
in my own way,
~~known it~~ in my own time.
~~Death is all I can know,~~

That is why I claim no payment
for bringing Sisera to his knees, ^{steadfast} my heart ~~leached~~ like a foot of prayer
as I ^{at the} washing my hands ^{at the} ~~at the~~ ^{round} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~hilling~~ ^{peg} ~~peg~~
~~at the river mouth~~ ~~at the mouth of the river,~~
~~of his~~ flowing from his temple.

Draft 5

JAEEL

And with the hammer she smote Sisera,
She smote through his head,
Yea, she pierced and struck through his temples.
Judges 5:26

Call me a reluctant assassin,
one of Yahweh's many hired hands.

Untrained and ill-equipped
but for the virgin blade of my wits,
my only working brief

is I have known ~~death~~ ^{suppressed} lived ^{if quick}
~~with a lifetime of death;~~ ^{at its hand on my back,}
^{update ->}

~~my A Kenite woman~~ ^{years of words that}
~~the words that find no mouth~~
~~in my father's house,~~ ^{her}
~~under my husband's tent;~~ ^{her}
~~veil and robe that rob a Kenite woman~~ ^{have bed me}
~~of edges of her flesh;~~
~~the womb that must surely break~~
~~the surface for breath.~~

Death is all I can own,

Not a day sweeps through this desert,
wide and blank as a ~~blind~~ ^{blind} eye,
that I have not met death
in my own way,
in my own time.

and that is why I claim no payment
for bringing Sisera to his knees,
my heart steadfast, ~~like a fist of prayer hymn~~
as I wash my hands ^{at peace,}
at the mouth of the river ^{suppressing a smile}
flowing ^{forth} from his temples.

update → 27/11
update → 27/11

tear flows like a river.