

L A M E N T A T I O N , by Arta Romney Ballif

And God said, "BE FRUITFUL, AND MULTIPLY—"  
Multiply, multiply—echoes multiply

God said, "I WILL GREATLY MULTIPLY THY SORROW—"  
Thy sorrow, sorrow, sorrow—

I have gotten a man from the Lord  
I have traded the fruit of the garden for the fruit of my body  
For a laughing bundle of humanity.

And now another one who looks like Adam.  
We shall call this one "Abel."  
It is a lovely name, "Abel."

Cain, Abel, the world is yours.  
God set the sun in the heavens to light your days,  
To warm the flocks, to kernel the grain.  
He illuminated your nights with stars.  
He made the trees and the fruit thereof yielding seed.  
He made every living thing, the wheat, the sheep, the cattle,  
For your enjoyment.  
And, behold, it is very good.

Adam? Adam  
Where art thou?

Where are the boys?  
The sky darkens with clouds.  
Adam, is that you?  
Where is Abel?  
He is long caring for his flocks.  
The sky is black and the rain hammers.  
Are the ewes lambing  
In this storm?

Why your troubled face, Adam?  
Are you ill?  
Why so pale, so agitated?  
The wind will pass  
The lambs will birth  
With Abel's help.

Dead?  
What is dead?

Merciful God!

Hurry, bring warm water  
I'll bathe his wounds  
Bring clean clothes  
Bring herbs.  
I'll heal him.

I am trying to understand.  
You said, "Abel is dead."  
But I am skilled with herbs  
Remember when he was seven  
The fever? Remember how—

Herbs will not heal?  
Dead?

And Cain? Where is Cain?  
Listen to that thunder.

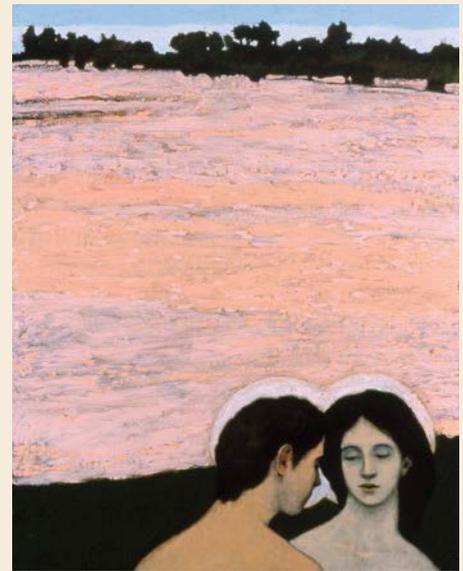
Cain cursed?  
What has happened to him?  
God said, "A FUGITIVE AND A VAGABOND"?

But God can't do that.  
They are my sons, too.  
I gave them birth  
In the valley of pain.

Adam, try to understand  
In the valley of pain  
I bore them  
fugitive?  
vagabond?

This is his home  
This the soil he loved  
Where he toiled for golden wheat  
For tasseled corn.

To the hill country?  
There are rocks in the hill country



Adam & Eve  
Brian Kershnik

Cain can't work in the hill country  
The nights are cold  
Cold and lonely, and the wind gales.

Quick, we must find him  
A basket of bread and his coat  
I worry, thinking of him wandering  
With no place to lay his head.  
Cain cursed?  
A wanderer, a roamer?  
Who will bake his bread and mend his coat?

Abel, my son, dead?  
And Cain, my son, a fugitive?  
Two sons  
Adam, we had two sons  
Both—Oh, Adam—  
multiply  
sorrow

Dear God, Why?  
Tell me again about the fruit  
Why?  
Please, tell me again  
Why?