

Another Annunciation

Imagine, a story that didn't make it in,
But it must have been part of the story behind
The story we have.
Poets have to guess at these things.
While the other women bearing spices stood, bewildered
In the empty tomb
Knowing together what was really true
Wondering how they would explain
The light that had come to them,

Another scene must have been playing out.
Mary, his mother, living with his friend now
Sweeps the floor as dawn breaks.
Finally, blessedly alone, she lets the tears flow
As she remembers
The pitiful lightness of His dead body,
Down from the cross and stiffening in her arms,
Absurdly light, and helpless, the beloved light
No longer in his eyes
Gone.
Remembering again, his tiny body
Held to her breast, in a stinking, swept-clean stable
Remembering the day when it all started,
Herself a growing girl, sweeping the floor, as today
Staring at a pile of sweepings
As the room filled with light and the angel's voice said
"Hail, favored one!"

Now, again, she stares at the sweepings,
Glad of her tears, glad of the women who said
We'll go. You stay here. It has been enough for you.
And as her tears wet the dust, she knows
She is not alone
A voice says, gently, "Hail, favored one
Your Lord is with you" And she turns and sees
The twinkle in his eye that was always just for her.

He is laughing, delighted at her surprise
Yes. Really. I am here.
You knew I would come. I told you I would:
Remember?
She knows that body. Has held it in her arms.
Now she has to touch every inch of him
Count, as she did when he was new born

Every finger and toe
All there. There are wounds now. Dried blood
Deep holes
Her fingers linger tenderly

But when she asks, "Does it hurt?" he simply laughs again
As a happy new mother would laugh, holding her child,
If you asked her, "Did it hurt?"
And you saw in her delight
The absurdity
Of that question.

He says to her:
If you asked a mother, gazing at her child
About the birthing moments before. If you asked her,
Did it hurt?
What would she say?

Woman, what would she say?

