

Who Hated Whom?

We need new words.

He came into my room
In the darkness,
In the night.
He touched me.

“Doesn’t that feel good?
“I love you.”

No, no, no,
It feels like I want
To pull away and hide
But where can I go
It feels like hate,
And my heart cries its response,

“I hate you!”

Tsk, tsk, tsk.

You must not hate.

It is sin.

I?
I must not hate?
Who hated whom?

But you said...

You acted
And called it love,

I feel a response,
I feel, “I hate you!”

Action.

Echo.

You acted hate.

My heart echoed hate.
An echo produces no sound

No substance.

It pushes back the sound,

Spoken substance.
Who spoke?

We need new words.
We need true words.

Who is at fault?

When a cake is bitter?

The baker

Or the cake?

Who acted?

Who responded?

A drought,
A flight for refuge,
One

Two

Three deaths,
Bitterness!

Do not call me pleasant,
Not Naomi.
My name is bitter,
Mara!

Orpah wept
And hugged
And fled.

Ruth wept
And hugged

And entered in.
Her love wrapped

Bitter Mara,

Drew her out.
Ruth and Mara
Together in bitter life,
Together in love.

Kinsman redeemer
Left his shoes

And ran away.

Boaz picked up the shoes,
Drew Ruth and Mara
Out of bitter life

Into pleasant life
Mara's heart responded
"Don't call me bitter,
Not Mara!
My name is pleasant,
Naomi!

We need new words.
We need true words.
We need understanding.

God saw Job,
Named Job, "A man
Blameless and upright.
He reveres me,
Draws near me
And turns from evil,
Resists the slanderer."

The slanderer saw Job,
Accused Job, "Not a man
Blessed, not blameless
Not so in himself
Remove blessing
Then hear him curse you,
See him flee you.
He will turn to me,
Draw near the slanderer."

"So be it"

The slanderer stole
And killed
And destroyed
Hope

Job, alive in pain,
Herds gone,
Children dead,
Hope destroyed,
Flesh in torment,
Opens mouth,
Pours out despair.

Job's friends came to grieve,
To sit with Job,
Outside,
Heard despair,
And took the slanderer's seat.
"Sin, sin, sin.
You despair!
If you were blameless,
You would have hope,
You would be blessed.
God blesses righteousness.
The righteous know this
And hope."

Job alone in anguish,
No friend to enter in,
To sit in the grief of despair,
To be present, silent hope
For him who has no hope.
Cried,

“I have a Redeemer,
If only I could see him
Sit with me, hear me,
Here with me,
Inside.”

The slanderer
Stole

Hope

Dashed

Hope

Deferred

Hope

Hope — a presence

Despair — an absence

Absent hope

Present despair

Hope is air

Absent hope

Absent air

Job despaired

Desperately

Gasped for air

Gasped for hope

Job’s cry was not despair

But a reaching out

Past slander through despair

For air. For hope.

We need new words.

We need true words.

We need understanding.

We must distinguish action

And response.

We must cast out

The giver of hate,
the bitter sower,
the hope destroyer.

The hate beaten
The bitter wounded
The despair gasping
Wrap them in love
Call them
Beloved!
Pleasant!
Hope!

We must embrace, draw out

New words, true words,
Understood, distinguished!