

Pietà, or an Apologia to my Unborn Child

My beloved,
hastening to be born –
 Profoundest thoughts enfold me
 at your coming.
How can I but love and fear at once –
 and to what end?
 I ask that you forgive
 all that I hope
 and cannot bear to hold in hope.

A Sistine imagination
breathes of touching hands
 at last...
 not unlike
 that Adam awaiting life –
 awaiting
 expulsion from Eden,
 should he live.
 To live is to err –
to err, invite the grief and troubles
of a race
whose First Disobedience remains
a mark unstruck,
 a punishment
 all too long prolonged.

Could I in all sincerest love
 present you with a world
 so far removed from ease?
 An empty paradise, suspended
 from a golden chain,
 not ever to be found regained:
a struggle midst mankind,
 and little more.
 A discord, or a dream,
 a monster then, a monstrous thing...
 and all paths lead to suffering.

Did ever I ask you, if you would
 be here and mine, my babe?
How could I promise,
 when you sought from me,
my heart, the promise of a life of joy?
 I could not give.
How much I would!–
 but could not give:
 a promise not for me to give,
 my life-more-than-a-life

yet to be born!

Yet more, if you would hate your lot,
 this poisoned crumb of life,
 and would return –
 what should I think,
but pray that Saturn guide me;
 cruelty bid me kindly be:
 two hands seizing, murderous, torn;
 devouring once-my-child amidst
 the blackness
 of a bleaker dream...

Mad mercy, cruel mercies,
 of heart that loves too much
 to let beloved things exist in horror still –
 Ivan Ivanovich, remember,
 bloodied in his father's arms,
 whose hollow eyes,
 aflame with the terror of a love
 wrought mad in strife;
 might it be better that you died
 before you truly suffered life?

Done because we are too menny,
 my dearest dear, my child-in-being.
We only kill the things we love.
We love, mayhap,
 mayhap, too much.
 How could I not,
 when blood and flesh,
 and flesh and love,
has made a babe-to-be in me?
 A part in all and all of me:
 a beauty and a glory whole,
 but, blameless, rendered cursed?

And should I have the heart
to give you peace, my All-Beloved,
 or let you ripen
 to a death-in-life,
 now
dying to be born?