

## THEY ASKED PILATE TO HAVE THEIR LEGS BROKEN

ἡρώτησαν τὸν Πειλᾶτον ἵνα κατεαγῶσιν τὰ σκέλη<sup>1</sup>  
(John 19.31)

they've all gone in  
and while they eat the golden calf I stand outside  
stoning Caiaphas

Annas got away he's hacking the website  
adding scare-quotes to the cartouche like locusts  
flanking the glyph of the lamb while the Jordan  
runs red with blood, squirms with the tadpoles  
of plagues averted, cut short with a few  
smart blows to the legs

they brought the spear, the clouds  
unfolded, and after the blood, water  
caught in a cup cleaned on the outside  
dregs of a life lived in the shadow  
of Egypt

they bring it to Pilate and he washes  
his hands in it  
carefully, one gold ring at a time

then hush a moment and listen as he raises the dead  
branch broken just now from the tree of the knowledge of good  
and evil by a noose lighter than an evening kiss  
its leaves dry as paper, whispering

*quod scripsiscripsi scripsiscripsi scripsiscripsi  
scripsiscripsi scripsiscripsi scripsiscripsi scripsiscripsi  
scripsiscripsi scripsiscripsi scripsiscripsi*

till he plunges it in, lifts it dripping  
high over his shoulder to sprinkle the people with  
truth

and they did not cease  
the sword did not sleep  
and they built  
Jerusalem

little wonder their impatience now:  
this is taking too long please break their legs  
there's a party on please break their legs  
we can't wait forever please break their legs  
this is a bit of an eyesore please break their legs  
when will this be over please break their legs  
and take them down

κατεαγῶσιν: that they be broken