

Arts, Letters, & Entertainment

Belladonna

I stand upon the icy glacier
An exile of the poisonous heart
Condemned to live my life alone
Condemned in my prison of stone
My eyes of snow-driven blue
Stare out upon the killing sea
Across the blood stained reef
Home to you
The long black hair that dances on the wind
Exudes the essence of the deadly bloom
The blood I bleed, blackened incense
Black behind an alabaster guise of innocence
And I long to touch you
To lay warm in your arms
But to do so would condemn you to death
Watch your brittle skin crumble,
Like the ancient rose
So I dwell alone on my steel island
Poison arctic flower
And I dream of your kiss

-Janet Francher
1991



Haiku from Molinario

frost on the windshield
chilling my morning
sky sings silent blues
-lcm

london bridge swirling
cardinal in Notre Dame
feeding the masses
-lcm

just like Rimbaud
mirrored souls sold. yes
my mind escapes
-lcm



wood must be easier
to work with than paper.
sculptures breathe, i suffer
-lcm



The Modern Acts

by Gary L. Brazzell

Editor's Note: This is a two part series. The second Act will follow in the Dec. 11th issue.

The stark moonlight glittered against the silver shekels as they fell through the silent, black night. The owner of the field bent down to count the coins he had poured onto his weaved mat. He looked up to Judas and whispered with some surprise, "These are temple coins."

"Yes," replied Judas. "I threw them to the ground before the high priest as I told you I did, but he sent them back to me by messenger. This money is not good enough for him. It is blood money."

The man grinned at the irony of it. "So you are paying me for the field with the same money that was used to arrest Jesus. They look very common for such important coins. I would expect it to burn my hands or at least give light." The man knew he was torturing Judas. He glanced up toward Judas to catch his expression. The expression he wore was not as the man had expected. It was simply exhausted. His speech was a little slowed by the pitiful face above him. Afraid to look at the face again, the man directed his attention toward the money and finished his attack less forcefully. "I am disappointed." He finished counting the thirty coins and stood erect again. Still not daring to look into Judas's face, the man said, "It's all there. The field is yours."

"It's not mine. I have purchased this field for the

numbers of the brethren." Judas saw confusion in the face of the man, so he explained. "I will never be able to atone for my sins against our savior, but the Lord in his loving memory will forgive me." At hearing that, the man glared at Judas with skepticism, but Judas continued undaunted. "Now, I am left with the question of the money that was gained in the sin. Before, it repulsed me as it does the priest, but now I see that it can do good just as any other money is capable of doing good. So tomorrow, before my brethren, I will offer this field as a gift, that we may have a place of our own to gather and worship."

"They look very common for such important coins. I would expect it to burn my hands or at least give light."

The man shook his head and faced the ground. He thought about the various warnings he could give to Judas. He could tell Judas how unwise it was to bring the matter up again at all. But something caught all the words in the man's throat. He was usually not so moved by the troubles of others, and he found it odd that he should feel anything for this man of all people. His only response was, "Go to your brethren then." The man faded into the blackness, and Judas pulled his heavy robes tighter against his

body to protect him from the cold night. He turned and began his long walk back to Jerusalem. He traveled to the heart of the city where brown, dusty, two and three story buildings stood crammed together. The street was a dark series of steps. Each step was about five feet long and seven feet wide. Where the steps ended, the buildings began. Judas turned toward one of these buildings, pushed open the wooden door, and entered into a glowing, warm room.

The expressions of the nine men in the room were not as warm. The Kethiothian felt more uncomfortable than usual as he looked into the room of Galileans. Some of their faces were accusing. Some showed pity for Judas. And some showed fear for him. Judas liked none of these faces.

"What is wrong?" he asked as he walked farther into the room.

There was a moment of silence because none of the disciples present wanted to talk. Eventually, Matthew spoke in a low toned whisper. Matthew was one of the ones who wore a face of fear for Judas. "Peter and John wish to see you in the upper room," he said. Judas looked to the ladder that lead to the square hole cut in the ceiling. He took a deep breath, went to the ladder and climbed to the upper room.

Peter and John were already expecting Judas when he emerged through the hole. "Welcome, Judas," John whispered timidly.

"Thank you. What is the

matter?"

Peter spoke with the strongest voice Judas had heard since he had entered the house. "Where have you been tonight?"

"I was on the outskirts of the city, with a man who owned a field."

"Now, I'm asking you one last time. What were you doing tonight?"

Peter continued his questioning. "What were you doing there?"

Judas frowned, bit his bottom lip, and turned the questioning back on Peter. "Why are you interrogating me? What is wrong?" No one gave Judas an answer. They just probed his face for some sign of secrecy. "Stop torturing me like this! Tell me what is the matter!"

John answered, "Jesus Christ our Lord was amongst us today teaching about how a man can grow in spirit and how this path of growth leads to the Kingdom of God."

Judas interrupted, "It is always good when our Lord visits, and I am sorry I missed him. But I do not think that my absence was any call to treat me this way."

John's words became stronger and more fluid with his second attempt to speak to Judas. "It is not your absence that we were concerned with Judas. In the middle of his teachings, Jesus suddenly became very sad. He looked

to Peter and said, "Peter, you must find Judas. Do not allow his gift into your hands for this is not the plan for him."

Peter took a step toward Judas, "Now, I'm asking you one last time. What were you doing tonight?"

To this point, Judas had been somewhat inspired by the good deed that he had done. This one deed was the only thing Judas could concentrate on for his entire trek home. It was the only thing that could make him feel good about himself anymore. His larynx seemed to swell, and his eyes began to sting. As he raced to the ladder, he managed to choke out the words, "Just making more mistakes."

Judas didn't bother to climb down the ladder. He just dropped to the lower floor. The impact sent shocks through his wooden sandals into his calves. He strode out the door quickly. None of the other disciples moved, except for Matthew.

Matthew hesitated for a few moments. Then, with sudden determination, he darted for the door. Those few moments were too long. Matthew peered up and down the moonlit street and saw nothing but shadows. He stepped out to the middle of the street and called upwards with the full force of his voice. "Judaaaaas! Judas!" Matthew, trying to decide, looked to his left and his right. Now his emotions had wound his body like a tight coil, and he felt the need to move. He turned to his right and began to run down the street.