

LADY WIFE

AH yes, I know you well, a sojourner

At the hearth;

I know right well the marriage ring you wear,

And what it's worth.

The angels came to Abraham, and they stayed

In his house awhile;

So you to mine, I imagine; yes, happily

Condescend to be vile.

I see you all the time, you bird-blithe, lovely

Angel in disguise.

I see right well how I ought to be grateful,

Smitten with reverent surprise.

Listen, I have no use

For so rare a visit;

Mine is a common devil's

Requisite.

Rise up and go, I have no use for you

And your blithe, glad mien.

No angels here, for me no goddesses,

Nor any Queen.

Put ashes on your head, put sackcloth on

And learn to serve.

You have fed me with your sweetness, now I am sick,

As I deserve.

Queens, ladies, angels, women rare,

I have had enough.

Put sackcloth on, be crowned with powdery ash,

Be common stuff.

And serve now woman, serve, as a woman should,

Implicitly.

Since I must serve and struggle with the imminent

Mystery.

Serve then, I tell you, add your strength to mine

Take on this doom.

What are you by yourself, do you think, and what

The mere fruit of your womb?

What is the fruit of your womb then, you mother,

you queen,

When it falls to the ground?

Is it more than the apples of Sodom you scorn so,

the men

Who abound?

Bring forth the sons of your womb then, and put

them

Into the fire

Of Sodom that covers the earth; bring them forth

From the womb of your precious desire.

You woman most holy, you mother, you being

beyond

Question or diminution,

Add yourself up, and your seed, to the nought

Of your last solution.