

LILITH

By Enid Dame

kicked myself out of paradise
left a hole in the morning
no note no goobye

the man I lived with
was patient and hairy

he cared for the animals
worked late at night
planting vegetables
under the moon

sometimes hed hold me
our long hair tangled
he kept me from rolling
off the planet

it was
always safe there
but safety

wasn't enough. I kept nagging
pointing out flaws
in his logic

he carried a god
around in his pocket
consulted it like

a watch or an almanac

it always proved
I was wrong

two against one
isn't fair! I cried
and stormed out of Eden
into history:

the Middle Ages
were sort of fun
they called me a witch

I kept dropping
in and out
of peoples sexual fantasies

now

I work in New Jersey
take art lessons
live with a cabdriver

he says, baby
what I like about you
is your sense of humor

sometimes
I cry in the bathroom
remembering Eden
and the man and the god
I couldn't live with

Raphel Patai
THE HEBREW GODDESS

In the last years of the century,
Lilith became Director of Freshman Composition
at an engineering college.
This career advance surprised her.
Her talents didn't fit the job description.
She never dreamed they'd take her.

This story is the same in many cultures:
in Gilgamesh Sumer in Kabbalistic Poland.
The girl always starts out at the bottom
a lowly female demon always on the night shift
always ends up somehow at the top
of something, for an eyeblink
before they find her out.

It was more exciting in the old days
when she got to sleep with God.

Now she learns computer terminology
chooses textbooks hires tutors
makes coffee for the whole department.

Her computer keeps feeding her messages.
An image trembles on the screen then disappears.
Where did it go? Nobody here can tell her.
It's a miracle! The techies treat it casually
as shed once treated Adam
or her own history.

She makes her inner office
into a sort of garden
not unlike the one shed left:
ferns swirl steamily in radiator heat,
primroses change color,
Wandering Jew shoots off toward the ceiling,
Swedish ivy hunkers down among his roots.

She brings in yardsale lamps with maps around their bases.
Lights are soft brown moons here cats eyes stare from wallboard.
Her owls drop feathers on industrial gray carpet.
She could take off her clothes here.
But she never does.

Once she spilled coffee
down computers innards.
It typed a message for her
backward, on the monitor:
MESSIAHS GOTTEN STUCK IN TRAFFIC.
THIS PINHEADS GETTING CROWDED.
THE ANGELS AREN'T DANCING.

Her students
are mostly earnest boys from other countries.
They want to make it in America.
They know computer language.
But private stories scare them.
Especially their own.

They come to office hours
to protest their grades.
She fidgets with her hair
(cut short now, but still red),
tries to seduce them
into writing poetry.