1998

Fragments from Judas's Gospel

Bruce Beasley

Follow this and additional works at: http://ir.uiowa.edu/iowareview

Part of the Creative Writing Commons

Recommended Citation

This Contents is brought to you for free and open access by Iowa Research Online. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Iowa Review by an authorized administrator of Iowa Research Online. For more information, please contact lib-ir@uiowa.edu.
FRAGMENTS FROM JUDAS’S GOSPEL

1. And Jesus instructed the twelve again, saying
   What you understand I will take
   from you now like a wound

2. Whoever believes in this
   will perish

3. From the figtree, learn its lesson:
   it shriveled, branches to root,
   a few hours after he touched it

4. Sell everything you own (he said)
   and give it to the poor.

   She drew forth the precious alabaster
   jar of nard, anointed him
   with her hair. The poor (he laughed)
   you have always with you.
   His feet slathered with the priceless
   ointment. All around us,
   the fatted lamb, baskets of fish
   (Lazarus, corpulent, sprawled at his side)

   This is my body, he kept telling us

5. Because they alone understood him,
   he would not permit the demons to speak.

   For the rest of us, garbled
   parables
   (The Kingdom of Heaven is like
the rendered
tallow, fat of the lamb;
like the bridegroom
who lies with his bride,

in joy, and then in bleeding)

Meaningless
speech, lest we turn and be saved

6. And he marveled
at our unbelief

7. Mary said to the angel,
Do with me as you must,
only spare my life,
for my sins are grave indeed

8. They sat mending their nets
when he called them,
arbitrary. The fishes
slapped at the flat stones, slashed
with their gills.

He who comes with me
will be like this, he said,
and held the stilled fish in his fist.

9. The healed lepers
sat by the roadside,
begging, still scraping at their scabs.
The healed blind man lay with the flies in his eyes

10. Barabbas, drunk in the brothel, shouted
Jesus has set me free
11. He said to Peter, the Kingdom built on your rock is a desolate kingdom; I will give you its keys

12. Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar’s,
unto God, that which is God’s:
for once, I could obey him, and with a kiss

13. O you of little faith,
Lazarus is laid again into the grave.
Take your comfort in his going down to Sheol since your disbelief has made his raising fail

14. And Jesus turned to me, his weeping servant Judas, saying
See you
tell no one these things