

Genesis, Chapter 3, Revised.

And, after finding that Adam and Eve had eaten the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, the Lord God gave them skins to clothe their nakedness and banished them from Eden.

And Eve said: “But you put the serpent here yourself, and let him speak.”

And Adam said: “And you made us, and the tree of good and evil.”

And Eve said: “Didn’t you know this would happen?”

And the Lord God said: “I knew.”

And Eve said: “Do you know what happens next?”

And the Lord God said: “You bear two children and one kills the other.”

And Adam said: “After that?”

And the Lord God said: “More of the same.”

And Eve said: “So why test us?”

And the Lord God said: “For how else am I to know that you really love me?”

And Eve said: “You’re selfish as the serpent.”

And Adam said: “You’re ten times as cruel.”

And the Lord God went trembled and wavered and vanished. And He left a pile of robes on the wet grass. And a serpent slithered out of them. And Adam chased the serpent to the garden wall.

And Eve dropped a large rock on the serpent’s head.

And Adam and Eve held hands and walked along the wall, as they were sometimes wont to do after they had finished the daily gardening tasks that the Lord God assigned them. Evening was falling, and Adam felt ashamed. For when the Lord God had accused him, Adam had said, “This woman you put here gave me the fruit to eat.”

And Adam said, "I'm sorry."

And Eve said, "I'm mad, but I'll forgive you."

And Adam said, "I was afraid."

And Eve said, "I know."

And Adam said, "It is the fruit of that tree. I am not happy like I was."

And Eve said, "Me neither."

And Adam and Eve looked at their joined hands. And it seemed that the new feeling would overcome them, that there would be no escape.

And Adam said, "What do we do?"

And Eve said, "What about the tree of life?"

And Adam said, "We could find the fruit."

And Eve said, "Then we won't die."

And Adam and Eve walked along the rows of the orchard, searching for the tree of life. They passed persimmon trees, and figs, and pomegranates, and the grape arbor where Eve loved to fall asleep in the afternoons. But they knew each tree and knew the taste of its fruit, and none were the Tree of Life.

And Eve said what they had both been thinking: "Maybe it's not in the garden."

And they took off the skins the Lord God had given them and went naked. For they already knew each other's bodies like they knew their own. And they picked much fruit and put it in the skins to carry. And they went out at the gate at the east of Eden. And there was a meadow, and it was purple like the twilight sky. And at midnight they curled up together in the tall grass and slept. But they did not make love as they usually did. For they remembered what the Lord God said, that their children were doomed to kill each other.

And they walked for a long time. And they drank from streams and lived on roots and berries.

And they ate the fruit of new trees. And sometimes they became sick from eating this fruit. But none of these new trees were the Tree of Life.

And they were mindful of the Lord God's curse, knowing it would be in their nature to fight and find fault. So each sought out the best in the other. And each was gentle when the other erred.

And they took turns leading, and gathering food, and keeping watch against the jackals, whose cries at night were like wails of human pain.

Sometimes they couldn't stand the sight of each other and walked far apart for weeks. But they always stayed just within sight. And after some time, the woman came back and said sheepishly, I saw this star. Or the man came back and said sheepishly, look at that bird. And they walked together again.

And after a while, this new life fully occupied the man and the woman. And they forgot about the Tree of Life. And they forgot the Lord God's warning. And they made love again in a field. And the woman gave birth to a daughter. And the woman gave birth to a son. And the woman's pain in childbirth was great, as the Lord God had warned. And so the man learned tenderness.

And the only thing they could remember of the past was that they must always watch for the desire to condemn and to wound, to blame and to sneak. And also that they must forgive when they wounded anyway. And they taught this watchfulness to their children. And they taught them also forgiveness. And they got better at it, until the desire to inflict pain moved only quietly in them, like a tamed wild thing.

And after years of living this way, the man and woman and girl and boy tired of wandering. And they built a house in a green valley. And in an intuitive way, as if they had gardened their whole lives, they collected the seeds of the nearby fruit trees and planted them in neat rows. Finally, as

the first saplings emerged, the woman gave birth to a third child, another girl. And the man, taken by some fancy, said they should call her Eden—a string of sounds that pleased them both, despite having no meaning.