

MIA NUSSBAUM

[The Chapter of the Rending in Sunder]

And then I began my habit
of walking at night
to get rid of the strings,
witherings. The Lord revealed to me
that I am full of birds
turned smoke and hookèd strings.
I say to the Lord, Lord take
a string. I have named it
mesas ringed with beeswax wicks,
footsteps sowing up my stairs,
tambourines in trees.
Then a tedious, gruesome miracle
unfolds, for the Lord takes
the string and what attends it.
Walking over a grate
there is the sound of the grate.
Margarita Mondays mean exactly
that. I say, how could I eat?
I ate. And how can I sleep? I shake.
The Lord says, look at the branches,
how they braid over graves.
And the Lord says, look at the HandiMart,
a bright, ordered box.
They have their grief, the people there.
Now the tableaux mass color, now the tableaux
fall down. I say wet pavement keep on
holding me up. Wet pavement hold me
up. Now the fetishes crumble,
now the meteors cup. The Lord says,
I meant of it a blessing. And I say,
I made of it a curse.
The Lord says, sound of roots,
sound of shoots, sound of
asphalt, sound of cars.
I say, I am walked into
deeps. Here are the jewelthreads
and throbbings that I need
to leave. The Lord says, chomp
and be chewed, alleluia. Sever
and stitch, alleluia. Exceedingly,
the Lord says, *bar; barr; barrr.*

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I say snowfield? Snowfield?
Piñon roasting? Chaparral?
The Lord says, is what you want
the terrible free? And I say
to the Lord, Lord speak.
And the Lord says, sound of earth in orbit,
its muffled, its four-chambered beat.