
Azazel

Lynn Levin

So it was by the luck of the draw
that he died to purify and I survived
as goatishly as I could
in the wilderness.
And which of us was better off was hard to say.
His blood became a kind of bleach or soap
and mine a species of dung.
Like the boy who did not break the pitcher
but was beaten for it anyway,

it was my lot to be blamed.
Therefore after a frolic
I often hung my head in self-pity
pretending to graze.
I did this so often the hart
accused me of being a glutton
for punishment.

Believe me: the first year was the worst
for I was alone and misery loves company.
But each year brought me another
innocent sister or brother,
and the gossip from town was rich.
We multiplied. We organized a herd.
Every morning we bleated
our thanks to God
who had not made us human.

Lynn Levin is the author of two collections of poems published by Loonfeather Press, A Few Questions about Paradise (2000) and Imaginarium (forthcoming 2004). Her poems have appeared in Boulevard, The North American Review, One Trick Pony, Judaism, The Jewish Women's Literary Annual, Jewish Spectator, and elsewhere. She teaches at Drexel University.