

The Martyr of Kerioth

I

At dusk I walk the busy city streets,
But I hear not the Passover conceits.
My mind's inflamed with contradictory thoughts,
This plan of sacrifice is wrong and fraught.
The full moon gives the gloaming eerie light
A presage to a dire and dreadful night.

II

From Galila, Yeshu'a min Natsrat
Preached love, without conditions, from the heart,
Forgiveness and redemption just through grace,
And this applies to all, not just one race.
The Temple rituals now discredited,
Salvific sacrifice itself is dead.

III

For three years now, Yeshu'a preached his creed,
Together with The Twelve, including me.
Yehud and Galila, sometimes Shamrayn,
We mixed with all kinds; none was put to shame.
The other twelve were all Galilaya,
Outsider, I alone Yehudaya.

IV

Yohanan Ma'mdana, now was dead.
He'd been a holy man, or so they said.
The new Elya, whom Malachi foretold.
He taught and baptized with a zeal untold
He preached a Messianic sacrifice,
And an apocalyptic paradise.

V

Yeshu'a and the others were entranced
By this fanatic whom the mob romanced.
Yeshu'a had been blessed with Logos truth
And we all preached it throughout, forsooth.
But now they dream of Messianic spree,
This hyperbolic Hebrew fantasy.

VI

A week ago, to achieve his martyrdom,
Yeshu'a brought us all to Urishlem.
Yeshu'a spent the week creating strife,
To force Sanhedrin's hand to end his life.
But I, Outsider, have been asked to act
The role of traitor, this to seal the fact.

VII

Accordingly, I met, reluctantly,
The High Priest to discuss my treachery.
I'd lead his guards to him anon that night,
When he'd be in a secret, quiet site.
This would avoid a public turbulence,
And all I asked was thirty silver pence.

VIII

I gather with the others at the hall,
As I have done so often with them all.
Tonight, the mood is tense and unbeknown,
The Prophet and the Twelve are here alone.
Yeshu'a now is already reclined,
Along with Kefa and B'nai Zabdai.

IX

These lieutenants would all know the plan,
They'd know that I would be the traitor man.
The rest would only know of his high death,
Since he had been foretelling his last breath.
So, this will be our Last Supper of bread,
Tomorrow our Yeshu'a will be dead.

X

Yeshu'a stuns us all with a decree,
He says that one of us a traitor be.
The lieutenants are shocked just like the rest,
It seems my role was secret to his breast.
But now he speaks as if he's been misplayed.
The actor traitor has now been betrayed!

XI

Yohanan bar Zabdai sits with our Lord.
Shim'on then prompts Yohanan, "Ask him who."
Yohanan whispers in the Prophet's ear,
The conversation is too low to hear.
Yeshu'a dips some bread into the wine,
And passes it to me, so I must dine.

XII

Yeshu'a makes no effort to explain
My role was only ever part of plan.
I'm publicly denounced in my betrayal,
As if my actions were of my travail.
The Prophet's not the only sacrifice,
I am also obliged to pay a price.

XIII

It's then that I recall a scripture verse,
A close friend in a psalm turns traitor perse.
So, I'm forever to be cursed for this,
An obscure connection to a Hebrew myth.
For just another way to link this man
To the Messiah Ma'mdana planned.

XIV

I lead the High Priest's men to olive grove,
I kiss Yeshu'a on the cheek and go.
In Potter's Field I meet an angry mob.
With ropes in hands, I know their gruesome job.
I'm to be lynched – O, what ironic chord –
I'll meet the Father first, before our Lord!

Yehuda Skaryota

(Judas Iscariot – Judas from Kerieth)