

Love was touch and unity.  
Parting and joining. The Trinity  
Was flesh, the mind and the will to be.  
The world grew through me like a tree.

Flesh was the citadel. But Rome  
Was right as rain. From my humble home  
I walked to the scaffold of pain, and the dome  
Of heaven wept for her sensual son  
Whom the Romans slew.

Was it I who was old when you hung, my Jew?  
I shuffled and snuffled and whined for you.  
And the child climbed up where the dead tree grew  
And slowly died while she wept for you.

The *goyim* wept for the beautiful Jew.

*Ruth Stone*

#### S A G U A R O

Buttoned up, nailed, exactly riveted ribs  
Coming together at the top of the idiot head  
With a bloom and pale shock of what might be hair.  
Don't endanger yourself, but feel that green skin.  
They're so human. The stubs at the ends  
Of those beseeching arms with little fruits  
Like maimed fingers. And the high whistle  
Air makes rushing up those spines. You feel  
That presently when they have grown more arms  
They will be useful. Do something. March in file.  
*Ruth Stone*

#### T H E P E R I P H E R Y

You are not wanted  
I said to the older body  
Who was listening near the cupboards.  
But outside on the porch  
They were all eating.  
The body dared not  
Put its fingers in its mouth.  
Behave, I whispered.  
You have a wart on your cheek  
And everyone knows you drink.  
But that's all right, I relented,

It isn't generally known  
How clever you are.  
I know you aren't appreciated.  
The body hunted for something good to eat  
But the food had all been eaten by the others.  
They laughed together carelessly outside the kitchen.  
The body hid in the pantry near the refrigerator.  
After a while it laughed, too.  
It listened to all the jokes and it laughed.

### SHOTGUN WEDDING

The bride is not yet married to the groom.  
Caught in the last pose of a matron's dream,  
She is a father's nightmare of illusion.  
Trailing ribbons of gauzy particles,  
The bridegroom's chariot  
Exhorts the maidenly throngs  
In fireworks, explosions!  
They approach the zenith  
Rowing the air like a pair of swans  
With blood-red eyes.  
In snowy plumage, restive,  
With folded wings  
They tender themselves, ready to leap  
And spread their fans to the showy entrances.  
The musical anguish and anti-joy  
Rumble in earth like thunder of fissures;  
Warning too late of the descent  
Into the anxious fingers and mouths  
Of the hungry tribe.

*Ruth Stone*