jezebel

no  i can’t say

anything about that  wither my fingers
             as the hazel branch
             burn my eyes
             be i smitten  be i hurled
             by his brothers and his sisters
             from my window to my death

i can’t say the marriage fell apart

round about the time

i stopped doing his ironing

round about the time i stopped

round about the time for breaking bread

when fear black blossomed

and his mother’s spittle and his sister’s spite

soured on my face

fustigate me desert winds!

be i accursed  bludgeoned  poxed
i can’t say that i fell
fell for the wrong person
made the wrong choice

falling is predestined

i have only myself to blame that he lacked
vision to see my loyalty

i can’t say
falling hurts
struck be i incinerated and my tongue
timely plucked by demons

falling for the wrong person
is allowed
only sometimes
when falling
works to his advantage
when his advantage is to hold all the cards
he the king

although
miserable i

castigate and chasten me!

it probably requires some ironing too

and sex
the deep abyss of silence
that surrounds the sex of the abused

i can’t say
the circumstances

my ears be hacked    thwart my thoughts!

but sex is a good bargaining chip
tell that to your daughters    at least

i can’t say anything about sex
    because it’s unsavoury he says
    and if he says so then [ ]

balsam for his ears!

there’s a tussle over that
tussle    a euphemism for battery that goes unreported
i can’t say that either

BAAL I beseech you!

i can’t say that i worked hard to build our home
that i toiled to bear our children
that all my labours were for them

i can’t say that i sacrificed myself
because the woman who works too hard
concerns herself with the material
is jezebel far from home
scorned maligned

the material must only be a man
who stitches a woman’s lips
holds the privilege of provision

working too hard
is only allowed
when working too hard
works out

there are questions surrounding this
that i must not ask not now
not then

patience
then chastity

temperance

charity

diligence

kindness

humility

i have been a virtuous wife

smite me!

vented be their wrath

wind-whipped on my skin
i can’t say 

i sold myself short 

because i sold nothing 

    all i had were the chirpful mornings of my youth 

    a fickle fate 

and trust which i freely gave 

as if all adventures in trust 

were for the taking 

to be pillaged 

    hack my limbs! a plague descend on me! 

    i am dust under his feet 

    and the feet of my sons 

    cast me to the ground my flesh 

    be ripped by dogs! 

i can say none of this 

because there is no evidence 

(they will think me mad) 

it is only what i know in my heart 

it is my life 

    every minute and every hour of the life i built 

    on sand