

## Host

I sent the women away. As God's my witness,  
if one of them had kicked off, I'd have smacked her,  
and we had to work fast while it was light.  
It was hot and we didn't have enough of anything.  
When I think of the *waste* – don't get me started on that;  
why he encouraged her, I'll never know,  
he wasn't a woman's man I'm sure of it.

We swaddled him tighter than his mother ever did,  
but there was still seepage  
and it wasn't getting any cooler.  
I was glad to get out of there. We closed up  
and went home and took a day for ourselves.

Word got round soon enough. We had to move him.  
When we rolled back the stone the stench hit us  
worse than Lazarus. Then up *she* comes,  
screeching and wailing, didn't even recognise us.  
Couldn't let her see it. So I told her he's disappeared,  
and off she flaps, blundering into the gardener.  
He knew her for a whore, told him not to touch him,  
said, "You don't know me." In the end,  
he promised to meet her in Galilee, just to get shot.

As we lugged out the body, the grave-clothes burst open  
and a host of bright, buzzing creatures flew out  
and dissolved into the morning sunlight.  
We stared at each other for a moment. Nobody spoke.

We hid him until nightfall  
and burned what was left.

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