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## Adam's Song

James Richards

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# Adam's Song



James Richards

Tommy was the first pet I had in Eden,  
*par'a-keet*'' seemed to fit—*small parrot*  
*with long tail, the color of apple, new leaf,*  
*and lemon; harsh, irritating song.*  
I called it *screaming* at first but my softer side  
said, "Song, Adam, song."

Eve taught me about *mu'sic*—*a medley*  
*of sounds and tones, as of the wind.*  
Cain taught me that some music is hard  
to hear: "Father, I have killed Abel  
and buried myself where frozen stars  
draw black flowers from my grave."  
That was a song.

I clipped Tommy's wings that day,  
*with scis'sors*—*a cutting instrument, two pivoted blades.*  
I gathered the yellow, green, and dark  
red shadows in the valley of my palm.  
Eve sang a music I could hardly hear.  
I inserted one-by-one into the warm earth of Abel's grave  
the cool *feath'ers*—*lighter than flowers, less afraid*  
*of flying; colorfast and hardened by a harsh song.*