

The Hymn of Kassiani

Frank Turner

I've heard that they call me the woman
Who has fallen into many sins
They made me bear myrrh to the burial
And at the graveside, I began to sing

Woe to me, all of you sinners
I'm the lady of a moonless night
The darkness to me is my ecstasy
But for my sins I am far from contrite
They dragged me away from the library
I was cast to the bride-show's harsh light
Where I told the king I was better than him
And thus earned Theophilus' spite

And Theo, he thinks I still love him
But I know him, and he knows not a thing
They call me Kassiani
The woman who rejected the king

The emperor, he tore down the icons
The images and words thought divine
But in the quiet of my cell I redrew them all
And the name that I signed with was mine
I was scourged with the lash for my impudence
My tears were a fountain of brine
But I conceded no defeat, my groaning heart beats
With defiant blue blood Byzantine

And Theo, he thinks I still love him
But I know him, and he knows not a thing
Don't disregard me as a servant, know me
As the woman who rejected the king

Yes I hid from his eyes when he visited
But don't dare think me frightened or meek
I was sick of his ineffable condescension
And I will not kiss those sacred feet
I will make his footsteps into music
To be heard by both heathen and Greek
They will mock his meanderings in paradise at twilight
And they'll remember me: Kassiani
She who hates silence when it's time to speak

And Theo, he thinks I still love him
He knows not the multitude of my sins
They will sing my song after Byzantium has gone
The woman who rejected the king

I've heard all the things that they've called me
It's just so many arrows and slings
Leave the glory to the stepmother, and to the son
I'm the woman who rejected the king