

JEZEBEL

I am no whore. I know a woman shouldn't drink,
should not, at the end of the night,
choose the one most worthy of her

love, for a while. Two hundred years
ago, they would have burned me
or dropped me in a river.

I'm not thinking of witch-hunters
when I stand in the smoky room,
under red and gold neon signs.

*One who puts on armor
should not brag
like one who takes it off.*

In the morning, before we dress,
I sit on the edge of the bed.
I remove gauntlets

breastplate and chain mail
pack them in my bag,
with my red toothbrush and pillbox.

*I will have vengeance
for the wrongs done to my people
I am their Queen.*

*So may the gods do to me,
and more, if I do not make your life
like the lives of my murdered priests.*

Sometimes I am small enough
to fold into my wooden box,
a memory of myself.

I am not heartless. Each love
still resonates within me. I hold on
to a small part of each one as a treasure.

Rules bend for no woman.
If I fight I will lose
even in victory.

Freedom is one woman's choice
I am no whore.
I am victorious.

*When Death came for me,
I adorned myself, painted my eyes
to meet him. Jehu, my Death, said,*

*"This woman, trampled by horses,
whose blood paints that wall,
deserves burial. She was*

*a King's daughter."
When Jehu's men searched
they found only hands, feet, and skull*

in the dust.

So a harlot ends,
pieces, thrown into eternity.

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