

11. *Kitchen Cockroach*

When thou art scorching in thy flames,
when thou art howling in thy torments,
then God shall laugh, and His saints shall sing and rejoice,
that His power and wrath are thus made known to thee.

They burn it with fire like rubbish

Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds

THIS all-consuming fire — once pointed hot,
now spread throughout the galaxies and in
my blood, and in my stove-top in the shot
of gas that joins you like the desert jinn —
your form perplexes as you briefly flare.
Your life, repulsive, I incinerate.
Of this, in any terms, are you aware
of your own dodge, then doom? Is this fire hate —
or love? or Judgment's energy that burns
and purifies its own mistakes and goes
to ravage through all hopes as it returns
unto the martyred Source of kiss and blows?
Is your pain lesser than Saint Lawrence felt?
Am I like you or God to see you melt?

The first EPIGRAPH is from Christopher Love's 1650? *Hell's Torments*. **E2**: from Psalm 80:15, The [1979] Book of Common Prayer, p703. **E3**: from the Bhagavad Gita 11.35, tr J Robert Oppenheimer. The first line refers to the initial compression of the universe into a single point from which the Big Bang of creation exploded. In Arab legends *jinn* are creatures from smokeless fire who can shift shape in human or animal form and who can aid or hurt humans. **St Lawrence** was a Third Century martyr who was burned alive on a gridiron. His offense was to present the poor when he was asked to display the treasures of the church which had been committed to him. Girolamo Da Santacroce (1485?-1556?) painted "The Martyrdom of St. Lawrence," now in the collection of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City, MO. **Am I like you**: "I am convinced that God enjoys relationships with creatures other than humans. The lives of all creatures are enriched because of the presence of God (who) is much more complex, compassionate and interesting than our (traditional) theological formulations have imagined" —Nancy R Howell, The Kansas City Star 2009, Apr 22, C11. **Judgment**: "Assassins cons and rapers / Might as well die." —Steely Dan, "King of the World." →«The Fall + Postmodern Faith + Love Locket».
