



Pilate's Wife

Hilda Doolittle, H.D.

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A feminist, spiritual novel recasting biblical history in the tradition of Lawrence's *The Man Who Died* and Kazantzakis's *The Last Temptation of Christ*.

Veronica—Pontius Pilate's wife—is beautiful, brilliant, and weary of a life spent in her boudoir and the Roman court. When one of her lovers sends her disguised as a servant to a seer, she feels suddenly alive, experiencing "sudden pre-visions of inner splendor." The seer, Mnevis, arouses the artist, the dreamer in her, eventually telling her of a Jew, a "love-god," who believes women have an important place in the spiritual hierarchy. What follows is a chain of events in which Veronica commits the one genuine act of her life, offering Jesus a "way out" before his crucifixion.

This revision of biblical history—in the tradition of D. H. Lawrence's *The Man Who Died* and Kazantzakis's *The Last Temptation of Christ*—is not just a novel; but part of the ongoing dialogue about the feminine and divine. *Pilate's Wife* was written by H.D. in 1929, revised in 1934, and is now finally published by New Directions, edited with an introduction by H.D. scholar Joan Burke. It is a testament to Alicia Ostriker's claim that, among the women poets and novelists of this century, "H.D. is the most profoundly religious, the most seriously engaged in spiritual quest."

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