The Birth of Skepticism

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"Conscia mens recti famae mendacia risit, 
sed nos in vitium credula turba summus."  

As Mary’s secret Dyes the Grass  
I wrestle with the awe.  
That once white marble surely stained  
to red fermenting maw.

We played in pinkish petal beds,  
a poor player was I.  
so bothered by this blasphemy,  
for Hecuba I cried.

So softly sing— the sin is safe  
escape this sullen flood,  
and bleed clean out the covenant  
in streams of sudden pause.

Was once a garden— now a grave,  
the most untimely trend.  
Was once a woman— dirt and rock  
was not our written end.

If rain should reap you from that bed  
and lead you to the lake,  
Sink low, Madonna, wait for me—  
to keep your secret safe.

1: From the Latin poet Ovid: The mind conscious of innocence despises false reports: but we are a mob always ready to believe a scandal.

Joe Heinlein