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Druid Note

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DRUID NOTE

nothing is what you tell me I've
earned for all my work, but
consider what I've brought to
you and all it must be worth:

the vial sweet with golden
syrup, and the neck I used to
carry it, the sunrise trapped
within its glass, and the box it
will be buried in;

the seven digits left to
twitching on my charred and
severed hand—

you see it and you shiver,
counting, deaf to
my demands.

If nothing is what you
owe me for everything
I've done, consider what
I've given you and the
nothing that I've won:

a hundred dawns spent by the
water as the sun did its work
and boiled, and the empty
wrist I rightly earned when
gathering the spoils;

the pain that I was forced to
bear as the vial seared into
my skin—

and when you tear it from
my neck, I will know that pain
again.

if you owe me nothing for
my work and missing hand,
then you may give me
nothing— if nothing is what
I demand:

nothing is a silver cowl to
protect me from bad luck, and
nothing is your severed
fingers to prod what I cannot
touch;

nothing is a silken
string to suspend my
new belief
that once you've taken what you
want you'll kill me in my sleep.

OREN ROBERTS