

Laman Struggles Towards Morning

Mornings are no time for a sick, old man's rejoicing.
Mercifully there may not be another,

For all night I have struggled in and out of sleep
Or death—
A fever and a darkness seeping through my soul—
Troubled by what seemed to be my father's voice
Spreading with sorrow through the tangled images
Of slender trees with sweet fruit burning with whiteness
And blackened visions of Jerusalem in flames.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!

How bitter to be dying here
So far from my Jerusalem
So far from all the ease, and comfort
And the pleasure of my younger days

Clasping tightly to this single ruby
Taken quietly from all the silver, gold and precious stones
We placed in front of Laban's short lived greed.

It is a bitter gem,
So hard and red.

I have held it often to the sun
And seen the light glint crimson through its heart

And cursed my father and a younger brother
And cried my rage and misery toward the sky
Lamenting even loud enough for God to hear.

— Randall L. Hall