

Lehi's Dream

I sleep to murmur and cracked wheat.
My eyes half-open, kaffiyeh rolled back,
lamp on and trimming, the goats and camels
spin away. My tent door unfolds
onto the valley of Lemuel's venting.
A wind rushes forward, sifts the chaff
of my resistance. I walk on a trail
of yucca and stone. Low clouds cover
the noonday sun, and I keep moving
beside a green river, beside a tar fountain
where men count hooks in their bait,
make nets out of their addictions.
Mothers weep at their children fishing.
People carry dice and chandeliers, shout,
Mint. Manners. Go to the building,
the building, the building. Laman
and Lemuel wander in the wisps of light,
then whirl away. In the fog
I bow my head, taste salt in the air.
The voices rise, my mind pushes on.
Up ahead Sariah and Nephi peel fruit
in a white garden. Sam begins to speak.
The path forges among bellows
and raw meat. I recall the dust
of my gold staircase and hear
a sandal lift from Jerusalem stone.
I gird myself against upheaval,
burrow into frontier religion.

—Mark Bennion