



1-1-2001

Joseph Smith

Mark Bennion

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Recommended Citation

Bennion, Mark (2001) "Joseph Smith," *BYU Studies Quarterly*. Vol. 40 : Iss. 1 , Article 16.
Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq/vol40/iss1/16>

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Joseph Smith

for Robert Hayden

After the pearl shines in the last country,
a ball of spindles, an iron rod,
a dove fashioned from gold plates
belonging to me like skin, free as sky,
after it brightens the unlit corners; after it is banners,
sun, tsunami, grand canyon, undercurrent;
after it sears the antipodes and septentrion;
after it is more than two missionaries
walking from door to door: a vessel, a seer,
a primary schoolboy, a wrestler jailed
in the Missouri reeds, tarred, seeing salt
in distant mountains, in handcarts, in Zion,
a mystic steeped in knowledge and burden,
a translator shall speak at the bar,
and not with Roman toga, not with princes
and medals and crimping pins,
but with Jesus' arms far extending,
his children carrying the asp and lion,
New Jerusalem will start to gleam.

—Mark Bennion