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Mark Bennion

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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,
them 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