

Somewhere Near Palmyra

ROBERT A. REES

"The glory of the City was the temple of the sun."

—Will Durant

He saw something that morning
deep among the delicate leaves
burning against the Eastern sky
The sun and suns,
radiance enfolded
in oak and elm
visages of light
luminous as seer stones
rinsing the still grasses
personages of fire,
jasper and cornelian,
dispersing the morning dew:
images that bore him
through dark of night,
terror of loneliness,
blood of betrayal,
the ache of small graves,
to death from the prison window
where, wings collapsing
through the summer air,
he fell—

And I know, kneeling
among the secret trees
this winter morning
where no birdsong rings
among the barren bush
and no leaves spring green,
where darkness thickens and gathers
among the withered weeds
and my tongue is a fish
under the river's roof,
that I too see what he saw—
sun, light, fire—
images of glory
flashing through the
morning mist.