

This poem was written by Zerubavel Gil'ad who immigrated to Palestine in the early twentieth century from Russia. His poetry, like that of many of the early Zionist poets, reflects his love of his new homeland and its people.

*Pomegranate Tree in Jerusalem*

The pomegranate tree in my garden adorns itself  
with golden foliage like honey  
of citrus. I remember your eyes  
even the shallow of their lashes  
amber.

“Tell me your name,”

I said to you when we met  
suddenly in a deserted  
lane. It was a hot day.  
A hard wind. And you ever  
new.

A moss-covered wall, silent  
beside us,

Bloomed at sight of you  
with the song of bees.

“There are flowers  
behind this wall,” you said,  
your eyes singing.

The electric light went out.

You lit

a Sabbath candle in a weekday  
candlestick. Blue,  
blue beat the shadow

of the pomegranate tree on the window and a song  
close as a tear.

And now the electric light!

The candle pales and the gold  
of your eyes was shed, lost  
Between wall and wall.

It is no longer a bush and not yet  
a tree but

its blossom lights up in red fire  
on a golden fire, and a pale green  
thread of grace

despairing and tranquil.

“Stop, stop,” you

whisper,

“Lest you wake the pain.”

