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.”