

**MICHAEL E. STONE**

ISRAEL

***Jerusalem Wrapping***

Jerusalem is a city wrapping a city.  
 At its center, like the kernel of an apricot,  
 the ancient city is built around  
 the threshing floor, the Temple.  
 Pierced by the mount, the axis  
 linking heaven and earth,  
 sacred up there with sacred down here,  
 Jacob's ladder.

Today's city lives, breathes around its center,  
 the streets and shops and markets,  
 synagogues, monasteries and churches,  
 and neighbourhoods where people live  
 ordinary lives. A mix of  
 meeting points where you can buy  
 girls or grass, soda or shoes,  
 bread, biscuits or beans.

Yet holy joy and love and life  
 are stamped on its hidden, inner face.

**GARY CORBI**

USA

***Stranded***

Ropes strain beneath bundles stacked on a donkey's flat back.  
 Strands threaten to separate. A departing bus seeps  
 smoke from every steel pore, a roaring beast stranding me  
 beside the beckoning Damascus Gate. I don't mind.  
 I could remain here awhile, immersed in this crowded  
 street's bellow and the pungent grip of drifting odors.  
 There's a solitary wonder found in wandering.  
 My longings fit neatly in narrow beds and knapsacks  
 though I'm unsure of the source of my twined desires.  
 Exotic stories I silently read in childhood?  
 A stubborn shying from a bridle led, routine life?  
 To escape from a world in which I felt unwelcome?  
 They're too subtly interwoven to unravel.

