x. The whip.

(John 2:13-22.)

With arched brow
and curious eye
he notes the scattering sheep,
as I move with arm held high
and writhing whip.

Wandering what to protect and how,
his refined and furtive hands
hover with urgent skill
among the coin of distant lands,
as the marketplace grows still.

He knows my face.
He has watched me walking past
that dark and perfumed place,
where the priestly cast
surrenders to his smiling influence.

Beneath the sly familiarity,
the easy nonchalance
the silk, the scent, the silent watchful eyes,
I see the lion sitting on his prize –
those gleaming stacks of currency
like a city gloriously displayed.

Our eyes meet.
My hands reach down and heave.
The table tilts. The jingling cascade
tumbles to the ground. Turmoil takes hold
as countless fingers relieve
their pent up hunger for gold.

The lion leaps back. His finely manicured feet
avoid the table's bruising edge,
as my whip curls, wild with rage,
and all that busy nest of thieves
(the greedy eye, the money-grubbing hand)
are torn apart and scattered randomly.

I come to where you take your stand –
at Timnah where the cliffs are sheer.
You kill your lion and smile with victory

among the vineyard's golden leaves.

I let my whip fall to the ground
as countless feet appear
before the temple wall - echoing
the ageless sound
of unchanging litany.

An urgent whispering
more powerful than the wind
holds me and lifts me high
like a builder with that final stone
beneath the waiting sky –
triumphant and alone:

> *This house of glory is my child,*
> *who calls my name on earth.*
> *I will greet him at the end of days*
> *and proudly raise*
> *him to the shining mysteries above.*

Like a whip – graceful and wild –
I bring down a second birth
and unleash the fire of love.