



10-15-1991

## Dawn's Early Light

Sam Lackey

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/westview>

---

### Recommended Citation

Lackey, Sam (1991) "Dawn's Early Light," *Westview*: Vol. 11 : Iss. 1 , Article 5.  
Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/westview/vol11/iss1/5>

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at SWOSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Westview by an authorized administrator of SWOSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [phillip.fitzsimmons@swosu.edu](mailto:phillip.fitzsimmons@swosu.edu).

# DAWN'S EARLY LIGHT



illustration by  
*Mongo Allen*

*by Dr. Sam Lackey*

Swords aflight catch the storm;  
Flames circle flames across the sand;  
The desert's veins run red and black.  
Fire drives out fire until the dawn.  
Walls of the heart  
Will test the steel.

Two visions shimmer in the clouds:

Out of the cradle of the East,  
Suckled on lead and the milk of the sword,  
A man rises up on towers of fear  
That darken the mind and sever the heart.  
The conqueror comes,

Giving freedom  
To nod  
And to smile  
And to laugh  
And to rape  
And to kill.  
A triumph of ONE will  
To join...or to die.

. Freedom of holding,  
Not tasting,  
The sword.

The freedom to ride the great lie  
To the crest.

The freedom to put  
Freer souls  
To the test.

The second vision, locked with the first,  
Swirls and streams like rain on a stone.  
Each living drop is driven by winds  
That rise from the heart, where courage begins...  
And where freedom is love,  
Where freedom is love.

This tide sweeps away the nods and the smiles,  
Is soon cutting away the clay feet of greed  
And hammering back the conqueror's sword,  
With ten thousand drops that cut to the heart  
Where the steel of the free  
Meet the test of the fire.

And the stone glazed with lies  
Shatters back to the core  
Where pride, guilt, and steel...would then make a stand.

But no center would hold.  
No center could hold.

And fire meets the silence.  
And War leaves the land.

Now, through the hiss of the sand and the sea  
The craters speak  
Of the silence of wounds...

Down amidst the rubble of your dreams  
Beneath the swirling dust and  
Fading embers of a scream  
That clogged your throat  
When you first heard the news,  
Now silence sits.

Heavy, a great stone on your chest  
Each breath slips out like water  
Through your hands....  
To get it back  
Requires a supreme act of will  
And memory.

Time itself hangs freeze-frame in the eye.

Yet into this stark crater in your life  
Will tumble strange new soil.

They are fragments, falling in from other lives  
(broken loose by shock)  
Often igneous...shaped and shattered  
By the heat.

And in the pit, where all you held  
Was blasted to the rock,  
Deep waters trickle in from hidden veins.  
And roots once stopped by stone  
Find bright fissures and pass through to  
Deeper soil.

Time drops new seeds and passes on.  
No need to plow around the stones.  
For it is in the end  
That life begins again.

The craters speak again.  
Now of the silence in the child-like and the slaves  
And those who echo like a stone,  
Robbed of the light in their days

Robbed of children...and the door that makes a  
home.

"Never, never can you fuel the fire of tyrants,  
Even if the flames will then rise higher, skyward,  
out of reach,  
And throw their sparks, at will, across the land—  
Leaving but one poisoned well to drink,  
One poised tree for seed.  
The tyrants soar, a law unto themselves...  
Raining blood down on the land,  
Dark blood so deep into the sand.

So where then is our hope  
When the craters disappear,  
When the dunes have washed the blood away,  
And tyrants stir again?

Our hope's in those who love their freedom  
And the freedom of each soul  
Enough to die,  
Enough to live,  
To fight  
To stop  
And to forgive.

Our hope is in our heroes  
From ours and many lands  
Who rise up by the thousands  
Faith...deeper  
Than the sands.

Who rise by tens of thousands  
Love...deeper  
Than the sands.

Our heroes are a beacon,  
A bright shield in the night,  
For all to find a path to peace  
Without the need to fight. ■

*DR. SAM LACKEY, whose major area is writing, has been a professor in the SOSU Language Arts Department since 1970*