*A Speckle of Fig and Jasmine*

There’s Jasmine, skipping past the Old City Walls
With her satchel and her pony-tail
And a Hey, look at me!
“What eez your name?” we bandy
And I exclaim she has a pretty name
Before the morning breezes waft us on our separate ways
Me to the Sabbath, Jasmine to her doings
In the shade of a fig tree, where chickens scurry
A tourist bus wheezes up the slope and Jasmine bounces by
Like a blossoming placard for a meeting between enemies

Or brothers - in grief and blood and newborn hopes
Dashed against the rocks -
Something we forgot in our prayers, could be
That’s where we should have started from this time around
Like winter, reaching out of thirsty pods -
The way the seasons taught us.

The light of revelation is breaking
Far away, a crashing light
Charges us with words,
The sole immortals here:
“Es Stand, it stayed,
The sweetness stayed,
A speckle of fig stayed
On your lip.”

\* “Es Stand”, a poem by Paul Celan, written during his only visit to Jerusalem in October 1969.

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